

## Our Weekly Sermons By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

### God Guards His Own.

"And who is he that will harm ye if ye be followers of that which is good?" I. Peter, III., 13.

We judge of the quality and value of the land by what it produces, and, its being made under certain conditions to give forth directly to our needs increases its value to man. The condition of a man's heart or inner life, and his activity on right lines, increases his value to society, the church and the world. Faith and works must go together in order to the highest good to the individual and to the community.

Suspend a plumb line, twist it in one direction, let it go, it will not only unwind itself but wind up in the *opposite* direction. See yonder wave at sea come on and break on the shore and recoil, until the undertow becomes even most dangerous. So in our swinging away from forms and ceremonies, from the chill of a cold, dead church, we have (many of us) gone to the other extreme in condemning works of faith, until the religion of many, far too many! is simply a song in the house of God—feeling good—a kind of "I am so happy" condition, and while fields "white unto the harvest" are ready for the reapers with scythe keen, multitudes are doing no good, extending no invitations to Christ, but clapping their hands and exclaiming "I am so glad," "I am so happy."

I. Notice the good spoken of here in my text "followers of that which is good." Good and evil have existed since the Fall with one or the other of these forces man allies himself. These are opposing forces, and as a result men are arrayed into two great opposing armies. To distinguish between good and evil takes careful thought. So hidden or marked is "evil" that men are deceived. Sometimes "evil is called good and good evil."

Having nothing to do is thought by some to be good, very good. How many have indulged in idleness to their undoing. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Many a father has learned and many a son by sad experience knows idleness to be a curse.

Strong Drink, by some is pronounced good. But let men who have become slaves of drink, answer, honestly answer, if it be not evil, and only evil.

The Card-table and the dance are pronounced by some good; but wrecked fortunes at the gaming-table, and blighted character coming from the associations of the ball-room speak in thunder tones that both alike are evil!

Sabbath Desecration has been indulged in as good. But God by his providences on the individual or nation, has shown that His law cannot be broken with impunity. The trend of sin is always downward. The road one of descent, the traveller going with increased momentum, until the fatal leap in the dark! Penalty may long be delayed, but come it must, come it will. Yonder tree that fell at the first breath of the gale, looked extremely sound, but for ten or fifteen years had been getting ready for that gale, rotting at the heart. So men say "look at me, I am strong as ever." Men who have for years sinned against body and soul. But, in fact, are decayed rotten trees, who at the first touch of disease go down to death, at the first stroke of sickness down they go! The same law prevails in our higher nature. "Dishonesty is as good as honesty," some say; I, it is not! Every act of my life is embryonic, if evil it will produce evil, if good it will produce good, here and hereafter. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." If evil downward and evil, until the last cry will be like that of Altamont "My principles have poisoned my friends, my extravagances have beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife, and is there another hell? Oh thou blasphemed, but most indulgent Lord God, hell is a refuge if it hide me from Thyrown."

On the other hand the tendency of good is upward. Heaven is represented as a mountain, we must climb, the ascent is often difficult, but if heaven reward my pains we will not murmur.

It is not worldlings that have done most for humanity, talk as they may; but lovers of this Bible, men and women influenced by this Word, who have given the uplift to humanity. Education alone has not done it, or Greece would have swayed mankind. Not physical culture only, or Rome would have been master of the world. Nor is the power in art, or Italy would stand first among the nations. Or Paganism, or the Indians of our land would have held this continent. But the good that comes from God and as revealed in the Bible has lifted up mankind the world over.

The very essence of religion is being good and doing good. The nearer we reach the summit of a hill the harder the climbing; the higher the eagle soars, the more difficult the ascent, and there comes a point where foot can climb and wing can soar no more, but in this upward tendency of man in the following after that which is good, the higher he goes the easier it is to climb. To this actively the Bible points, and christians are called to "fight the good fight," "See that no man take thy crown," "followers of that which is good."

"Followers." How many want to be leaders. Much delay is caused and many blunders are made in the work of God, by good persons whose great ambition is to be leaders, when if they would but be "followers," imitators of that which is good, victory would come to Israel. Too many leaders is dangerous. Listen to Gideon. The three hundred have been divided into companies of one hundred each. Still the order is "As I do so do ye."

"Gideon blew a blast and all blew a blast, Gideon break his pitcher and all break their pitchers."

"Gideon shouted and all shouted 'the Sword of the Lord and Gideon!'"

Now-a-days in company of say three hundred christians, the pastor blows the gospel trumpet, eight or ten may respond and repeat the message during the week, but the other two hundred and ninety criticise the way the preacher blew, "too loud," or "too long." The pastor holds up the light, and a few hold up their lights, but the great majority keep theirs in their pitchers, pull them out a little on Sunday, put them in the pitchers all the week. The pastor shouts "Repent and be converted," and if somebody shouts "Amen!" the whole church is astonished and looks that way and wonders "what's the matter with that man?"

Oh, when shall the entire church fall into line? and after the Sabbath sermon, each member preach it to the unsaved during the week, break their pitchers of formality or pride and hold up the light, Monday and all the week.

If once all the lamps that are lighted  
Should steadily blaze in a line,  
Wide over the land and the ocean,  
What a girdle of glory would shine.  
How all the dark places would brighten,  
How the mists would roll up and away,  
How the earth would laugh out in her gladness  
To hail the millennial day."

II. Notice the question of my text "who will harm you?" Harm certainly comes to those who follow evil. The scoffer, the dishonest. Arrows keen from the almighty's quiver enter into their soul. But you who are aiming to do good, who shall harm you? You may fall into error through ignorance, but no harm shall come to you. Rev. Mr. Gallaher, when a boy was playing in the grounds of an Earl—a choice tree was broken by the boys in their play, the boys ran away except young Gallaher. The Earl was angry, ordered the lad to be taken to the guard-house, but turned suddenly and said to the servant who was leading the boy away, "Stop," and addressing the boy said, "boy what is your name?" "Henry



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M. Gallaher" said the lad. "Are you a relative of James Gallaher?" "I am his oldest son." The Earl waved his hand to the servant saying, "let him go, I know his father." You who belong to the King Eternal, the Father Almighty, who shall harm you?

The immediate consequences of right doing may be temporary loss, but not permanent. You are on the side of the mightiest Kingdom on Earth and Heaven. On the side one of who has broken the power of evil. I know the storm will strike you. I know you will be tossed on the angry sea. I know the rocks stand about you threatening wreck and ruin! But have faith in God, in Him who has said "all power is given to me in Heaven and in Earth," and ride out the storm.

Come with me and watch that ship caught on a lee shore, the gale increasing, her only hope is to cast anchor and ride out the storm. There she lies, let us look down upon her through the spray as we stand upon the heights. Wind and water combine to make her their sport. If dashed upon the rocks she must go to pieces, but there she rides, now on the top of the wave, now in the trough of the sea, but rising again and like a sea bird shakes the water from her wings. What's the secret of her safety? Her security is in a line that is unseen!

Down through the deep sea goes an unseen cable, carrying an unseen anchor to an unseen, but sure ground below. That ship is at anchor!

Blow on ye gales of adversity, let the waves of persecution toss this frail bark. While Angels and men watch me in the storm—with the anchor of my hope fast to the cable of strong faith, thrown not down but upward into the deep of heaven, to take hold on Christ the solid rock. I shall rise exultantly upon the crest of the wave and shout in joy "who shall harm me?" I am a follower of that which is good. What looks like failure often is suc-

cess. Were the Martyrs in the early church harmed? or was it their persecutors? St. Paul suffered by land and sea, was beaten imprisoned and feet made fast in the stocks, was it defeat or victory? Answer, ye who laid on the lash and led him to prison.

Luther confronted the whole power of Rome, was it victory or defeat? Answer! ye of the inquisition, ye Princess and Bishops Priests and prelates.

Wesley was stoned, hooted at and scorned by the cold dead establishment of his day, was it victory or defeat? Answer! ye who on hillside and moor sang the songs of Zion with hearts touched by the power of the new life!

Christ went to the cross! amid the darkening heavens and quaking earth, was it victory or defeat? Answer ye angels of God who sang at his birth, and touched again your harps of gold in glad Halleluiahs as he cried upon the cross, "It is finished." Make answer ye redeemed on earth, and Heaven. Make answer ye dying saints nearing the rest and home of Heaven. Listen I hear them "Victory—victory, through the blood of the Lamb!"

Go out from this service ye saints of God, ye who are followers after that which is good, with the assurance that no permanent harm can come to God's own.

Remember! "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms" Remember. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers." "Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good."

"Onward, upward, doing, daring!  
All for Him who died for thee  
Face the foe and meet with boldness  
Danger whatsoever it be,  
From the battlements of glory  
Holy ones are looking down  
Thou canst almost hear them shouting!  
Oh let no man take thy crown!"

### Rev. Manly Benson.

Rev. Manly Benson, the present esteemed pastor of Queen Street Methodist Church, Toronto, is the worthy descendant of a family of those U. E. Loyalists to whom Canadians are wont to revert with pride, as the founders of a now tri-oceanic-bound and consolidated British-Canadian nationality. Born in Prince Edward County, Ontario, April 27th, 1842; the early literary training of Canada's "silver-tongued clerical orator," was at Newburgh Academy, whence, having duly qualified for the profession of teacher, he for several years subsequently, pursued that calling with marked ability and success. The occupation of a merely secular instructor was not, however, the one designed by Providence, as the life-work of the gifted young lad, who at the early age of only ten years had consecrated his life and talents to the service of the Master, and it was, accordingly, with feelings of no ordinary gratification that his friends and the church at large greeted his admission to the Methodist ministry at the Hamilton Conference of 1867. On July 9th, of the same year, Rev. Mr. Benson was united in marriage to Julia, third and very amiable daughter of the Hon. Walter McCrea, now judge of the District of Algoma. To what extent the fondly indulged anticipations of a brilliant pastoral career have been realized, the aggregate of the increasingly gratifying results, from year to year, and extending over the period of half a century, abundantly show. In 1874, having previously completed the full three years term with much acceptance on the Ridgeway and Newbury, and one year on the Cooksville circuit, Mr. Benson became associated, as colleague, with the Rev. W. J. Hunter D. D., and subsequently (having declined the superintendency on his own behalf) with the Rev. Hugh Johnston, M. A. in connection with Centenary Church, Hamilton, and it was during the closing of his popular ministrations in that city, and largely through his efforts and influence, the Zion Tabernacle was erected, which to-day rears its stately dimensions among the splendid church edifices of the "Ambitious City." Mr. Benson's next appointments were at Stratford, St. Thomas, and Brantford, and in 1885, he accepted an invitation (the second time repeated) to the Central Methodist Church, Bloor Street, Toronto. In this connection it was, that his previously recognized executive abilities were exercised in so masterly a manner on behalf of the financial interests of the church, as to stamp him *par excellence* the "Champion clerical organizer and financier of the Dominion," a distinction which subsequent achievements in the same direction, coupled with his admirable management of Grimsby Park (Canadian Chautauqua) affairs certainly justify to the full. At the close of his Central church engagement, Mr. Benson assumed the pastorate of Berkeley Street Church and ministered to that congregation with unqualified acceptance.

In 1889, he entered upon his present charge at Queen Street, which terminates in June, when he will by the unanimous invitation of the official Board and concurrence of the Conference, authorities enter upon the pastorate of Dominion Methodist Church, Ottawa. In connection with his Queen Street charge, the success of Mr. Benson has verged on the phenomenal, as evinced by the facts of his leaving behind him a salary of \$2,400, a commodious free parsonage, a crowded congregation, and a membership roll to which has been added, from time to time, during the term of his pastorate about five hundred names. In their choice of Rev. Manly Benson, the managers of Dominion Methodist Church are to be congratulated upon having secured the services of a representative Canadian minister from the front rank, and his prompt acceptance of the invitation would seem to involve, on his part, a degree of confidence which, judging from the well-known kind and generous treatment of their ministers in the past, is not likely to be misplaced.

As a preacher Mr. Benson embodies in genial personal appearance, clearness of perception, elegance of diction, and thorough earnestness, the essentials that never fail to attract; nor, in this respect, do the numerous glints of descriptive eloquence and sparkling