

# The Evangelical Churchman.

A CANADIAN FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Vol. VIII.—No. 45. Whole No. 409. TORONTO, THURSDAY, Mar. 20, 1884.

\$2.00 per Annum in Advance  
Single Copies 5 Cents.

**The Evangelical Churchman**  
PUBLISHING COMPANY,  
TORONTO, CANADA.

DIRECTORS.

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HON. S. H. BLAKE, Q.C. J. GEORGE HODGINS, Esq., LL.D.  
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THE ANGEL OF THE RAIN BOW.

A cloud, like that the old-time Hebrew saw,  
On Carmel prophesying rain, began  
To lift itself o'er wooded Cardigan,  
Growing and blackening. Suddenly, a flaw  
Of chill wind menaced; then a wild blast beat  
Down the long valley's murmuring pines, and woke  
The noon-dream of the sleeping lake, and broke  
Its smooth steel mirror at the mountains' feet.

Thunderous and dark, a fire-veined darkness swept  
Over the rough pine bearded Asquam range;  
A wraith of tempest, wonderful and strange,  
From peak to peak the cloudy giant stepped.

One moment, as if challenging the storm,  
Chocorua's tall, defiant sentinel  
Looked from his watch-tower; then the shadow fell,  
And the wild rain-drift blotted out his form.

And over all the still unhidden sun,  
Weaving its light through slant-blown veils of rain,  
Smiled on the trouble, as hope smiles on pain;  
And, when the tumult and the strife were done,

With one foot on the lake and one on land,  
Framing within his crescent's tinted streak  
A far-off picture of the Melvin peak,  
Spent broken clouds the rainbow's angel spanned.

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

THE SUPREME MIRACLE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Among all the New Testament miracles the character of Christ is an ever-present and ever-living reality to the hearts of men. It stands out on every page of the gospel history with such distinctness of outline and such power of reality that

it is impossible to read the book without beholding the man.

And yet we cannot behold the man without feeling that God is here. No man can utter these words and do these mighty works unless God be with him. It is a true man who lives and speaks and acts. But if he is true he is more than man, for he claims equality with God. Is it too much to say that the unique character of Jesus Christ is God's perpetual demonstration, wrought out before the eyes of all generations, of the truth of Christianity? Yes, here is one miracle which we can all examine at our leisure—which we can in a sense see and hear and handle, of the word of life.

We have not seen him die on the cross; we did not see him and converse with him after he rose from the dead. These and other facts we receive on the testimony of eye-witnesses who recorded them. But can we read the New Testament without seeing and feeling the living reality of the character of Jesus in its matchless perfection, in its human tenderness, in its divine glory? Is not the character there before our eyes as truly and as vividly as if its possessor still lived and walked among us? Can we mistake it? Can we fail to see what it is and what it means?

Some one may say in reply, "We have the character, after all, only on the recorded history of those who reported the facts." True; but how could they delineate such a character if it had no existence in a living man? If they had no living example to draw from, if the real Jesus of the Gospels was not before their eyes, then they created the character. How could such men, in such an age, create out of nothing such a character of absolute originality and perfection? The greatest geniuses who have appeared in history, under the most favorable inspiration of clime and country, have often essayed their utmost endeavor, and accomplished no such result. How could the isolated and comparatively rude fishermen of Galilee do it without a living original? To say that they did, would be to account for one miracle for which there is evidence by taking refuge in another for which there is none. It is far more rational to believe that Christ lived and acted out before the eyes of his disciples the character which they have reported in the New Testament, than to believe that they could draw such a picture of godlike excellence without the living Christ before them.

If, therefore, we have before our eyes to-day, in these sacred pages, the very character which the apostles saw and admired and adored, then has God given to us, even as he did to them, the most sublime of all miracles, the most complete and satisfactory of all demonstrations that Christianity is true. The miracle of miracles, the proof of proofs, is the life and character of God's Son. It is the one miracle which both wins the heart and satisfies the intellect. When we see it as we do in the New Testament, we are compelled to feel that "God has spoken by his Son."

If a man cannot, or will not, receive this evidence of character; if he has no heart to appreciate or admire it; if there be nothing within him responding in homage to the character of this Christ of the New Testament, then we fail to see what further God could do or ought to do to convince and save such a man. Not to appreciate the character of Christ is to disown the highest exhibition of moral excellence the world has ever seen. What grander miracle could God work

before the eyes of men than to give the world this perfect image of his own moral perfections in human form, in the life and character of his own Son?—L. J. Halsey, D.D., LL.D.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

What is there in human life that does not pass into the mystical? In physical life you have not solved the problems of its quality and causation when you have proved laws of force and chemistry, and gravitation, and electricity; you have simply demonstrated its modes. All physical analysis runs up into mysticism—the inscrutable mystery of life—that which causes the operation of all laws—which causes motion, and growth, and assimilation, and function. It is a mystery of vital causation, as great and as inscrutable as the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the soul of a man causing his religious vitality, and motion, and growth.

Or take the analogy of human relationships. We are all familiar with the influence of one man upon another—how friend or lover enters into the affections, takes possession of them, and through these changes our character and rules our life; it is our commonest experience of the power of life. And yet how utterly it refuses to lend itself to analysis. This mystery of human inspiration is an indwelling that is utterly inscrutable.

"I will come in to him and sup with him;" is this a mere figure of speech? Does it mean no more than the suave sympathetic influence of man upon man? Is it to be superficially interpreted as the mere influence of teaching or example? Of course Christ does influence us in this way, his words of divine truth do influence our thought. His example of peerless holiness does influence our heart, just as those of any good man might do.

But is this all that is meant by Christ's indwelling? This would not be a sufficient explanation of the life of a vegetable or an animal. Is the spiritual life of the soul so inferior a thing that so contemptuous an explanation of it suffices? Is it not the probability that it follows the analogy of the lower domain of physical life? Can we conceive of life, in any form of it, as self-caused? Is not all life God-quickened?—a mystic product of some divine force that we can neither explain nor deny?

Is not my spiritual nature a witness? What is my susceptibility to Divine quickening? What is my capability of religious thought and feeling? I have a religious character that I can neither destroy nor ignore. And when Christ tells me that the Spirit of God speaks to this nature of mine, quickens it, enters it, dwells in it, all that is in me responds. I feel the harmony and the preciousness of the assurance, and its truth is attested by my consciousness. A new life is unquestionably produced within me, and is not this the most rational explanation of it?

This, then, is the fundamental thought, the great and blessed secret of a man's religious life,—"Christ in you the hope of glory." It is a consciousness in religious life which is full of inspiration, the source of all that is greatest in its achievements, of all that is most blessed in its experience. So Christian men gloriously struggle in the battle with evil, patiently bear with God's processes of discipline, triumphantly rejoice in their

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