

THE SABBATH.

O day of rest and gladness,
O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright;
On thee the high and lowly,
Before the eternal Throne,
Sing Holy, Holy, Holy,
To the great Three in One.

On thee, at the creation,
The light first had its birth;
On thee for our salvation
Christ rose from depths of earth;
On thee our Lord victorious
The Spirit sent from heaven;
And thus on thee most glorious
A triple light was given.

Thou art a cooling fountain
In life's dry dreary sand;
From thee, like Pisgah's mountain,
We view our promised land;
A day of sweet reflection,
A day of holy love,
A day of resurrection
From earth to things above.

To day on weary nations
The heavenly Manna falls,
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls.
Where Gospel-light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living water flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.

DR. JOHN WATSON ON PREACHING.

For the Reviewer.

Dr. John Watson has so recently given to the world his ideas on Preaching in his Yale Lectures that one might suppose he has little further to say on the subject. As if in response to some of the criticisms on that course as well as on some of his other recent publications he has however just given an additional contribution of great value and still greater interest as indicating his own position. At a conference in Sion College he read a paper on "The Positive Note in Preaching." He declares that modern preaching has very largely lost the positive note, that while in our father's day the preacher was sure of everything, the modern occupant of the pulpit seems not to be sure of anything. The one tendency is of course a natural revulsion from the other, but it has gone altogether too far. The preacher ought to be positive for he is chiefly a prophet with a message from God to the world. He may have his doubts, but if doubts come on him, let him face, fight, master them in secret and stand before men with unclouded face. The dynamic of one man believing with all his heart is incalculable. Doubt can be got anywhere; faith ought to be supplied by the pulpit. The preacher must catch the accent of the Apostle. "We believe and are sure." We must take care, however, that he is positive about the right things and in the right spirit. Here he distinguishes between the facts of Christianity which constitute Religion, and the theories which are Theology. Among the positive facts he enumerates, Revelation, the Deity of Christ, Redemption by the Sacrifice of Christ, the grace of the Holy Ghost, the life to come with moral distinctions. Among theories he would place Inspiration, the Kenosis, Substitution, Sphere of the Will, Eternal Punishment, and these theories he thinks should be advanced with diffidence. In drawing the line at this point probably most Evangelicals would be disposed to differ from Dr. Watson, and would place eternal punishment e.g. amongst revealed facts, yet there is a great truth underlying his position. The church has always asserted the fact of Inspiration for example, but it has never formulated any theory of inspiration. It has asserted along with the Apostle Paul the vicarious character of the sufferings of Christ, but it has never been able to formulate any complete theory of the Atonement. Practically every wise preacher draws a broad line between facts and theories. The former he proclaims as a herald; the latter he suggests only as helps to show the reasonableness of the facts for doubting minds. As regards the facts Dr. Watson would have the preacher speak with the utmost confidence. They may think that if they are positive they will offend some of their hearers. No, he says; with exception of a handful of Unitarians, all Christians, Roman, Anglican, Scots, Non-conforming, hold the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, revelation in Holy Scripture, Salvation by Christ's Sacrifice, the forgiveness of sins, the judgment, the life everlasting. Within this wide

field the preacher can count on the sympathy of the mass of his hearers and find ample room for strong clear unwavering speech. Having excepted the Unitarians he digresses to indicate his estimate of them. He admits that through such men as Channing and Martineau they have done good, not by denying the divinity of our Lord, but by affirming God's Fatherhood. But this gospel, he says, is now common to the whole Christian church, and there remains for Unitarians nothing distinctive but the denial of that truth which gives strength and joy and victorious force to Catholic Christianity. Altogether it must be said that this utterance of perhaps the most popular *litterateur* of the day is by far the most satisfactory statement of his theological position that he has given so far to the world. If some things in it show plainly that he is ill-fitted to be a teacher of theology it is at least reassuring to know that he is in full sympathy with the great features of evangelical truth and that he would fain have these proclaimed with all positiveness. This will do much to relieve the anxiety of many regarding his teaching and quiet the movement which has prompted the action against him for heresy. It will be felt on all hands that it is far better to have gained such an ally for evangelical religion than to force him into antagonism.

IMPATIENCE WITH GOD'S WAYS.

Man is a creature of very little patience. He soon gives out, quickly tiring in the race, easily losing heart in the struggle. In one view of the matter this is not at all surprising. We might almost wonder that the average individual displays as much tenacity of purpose and courage of heart as he does. When we consider how weak as an organism man is, how his life is but of yesterday, and pursued by innumerable, nervous worries and distractions while it lasts, we may not marvel that tempers are sometimes ruffled and that courage often breaks down under the strain. That man should frequently be impatient with his fellow men is then scarcely a wonder.

The sad fact, however, is that not alone with his fellows does every man now and then fall to quarreling, but he even dares at times to manifest impatience with the ways of his God. Man is under frequent temptation to criticise his Maker. The moral degeneration of humanity began with an insinuation which was a criticism. "Yea hath God said?" And ever since the fall humanity has been more or less industriously following the lead of the tempter in tempting God. God does not suit men. In the view of some He acts to hastily, while others anxiously inquire. Why does His chariot so long delay its coming? It is difficult to please everybody, and not even the Almighty could hope to do that, even if it were not beneath Him to make the attempt.

With reference to this human impatience with God's ways, several things deserve to be said. For one thing, would it not be well to ask whether God has not good reason for being impatient with our ways? Do we always please Him? Do we invariably fulfil His ideas? Do we not disappoint His plans, so far at least as weak, human obstructionists can do that? "I do not frustrate the grace of God," said Paul; but do we not frequently frustrate some offering grace? And when we execute the divine orderings at all, it is often only in a dilatory and half-hearted fashion that we perform them. It is narrated by a recent biographer of General Grant that the only occasions when the great Union general confessed to a feeling of impatience was when, after having issued the correct orders to bring certain troops into position, he was compelled to wait in suspense while the orders were being tardily executed. Is not the Almighty, if we can conceive of such a thing, tempted to impatience when the explicit and reiterated commands of His Word are but partially and slowly being obeyed?

It would seem, therefore, that mortal man, inattentive to duty as he often is, rules himself out of court when it comes to judging the works of his Creator. And yet men presumptuously do criticise the divine methods, and insist on making plans for providence. It is with many a congenial task to plan for others, and the adjudicative process is apt to be carried up to the spheres and systems of deity. Every sinner knows how God could have done this or that in better fashion than He did. Every infidel has at his finger ends half a hundred palpable mistakes of God. And the worst of it is that the Christian believer himself is tempted to join at times in this style of higher criticism, secretly fretting against God in his heart if not openly