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God's Man.

SERMON PREACHED IN THE BLOOR STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TORONTO.

LIKE many others in the ministry of our Church, Mr. Rae came to us from the ranks of the teaching profession, receiving his preparation therefor in the High Schools of Bowmanville and Port Hope and in the Normal School, Toronto, and later in the Collegiate Institute, St. Catharines. When he ceased to teach he was first assistant master in the Public School, St. Catharines, where, during his college course, he had charge of the Haynes Avenue Presbyterian Mission church for about three years. He graduated from Knox College in 1887, and was called almost simultaneously in Dutton and Wallacetown, in Paisley, in Caledonia and in Acton, his present field, where he was ordained and inducted on the 23rd of August, 1887. Mr. Rae has taken a prominent part in the Sabbath School work of this Province and is at present one of Provincial Normal Instructors of the Sabbath School Association of Ontario for the conducting of Sabbath School Institutes for the training of teachers. In his own Church he is Convener of the Sabbath School Committee of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston.

TEXT, 1. Timothy, vi., 2.—"O man of God." God's man is four times presented to us in the revelation of truth. The perspective is changed each time he is seen but *the man* is the same. May the spirit of the Lord give us eyes to see, that, as we look "with open face," we may be "changed into the same image," that others may see in us that which shall commend us to them as men of God.

Our first view of God's man is given to us in Eden, as Adam, directly from the hand of God, is presented before us. The distance at which we are compelled to stand is so great that we fail to comprehend the beauty that is in the picture. We speak of "open countenances" and "transparent souls," as characteristics of the friends that we love, but all these are, at best, veiled, because of sin. But not so was Adam, as crowned with innocence, he reflected back again, undimmed, to God the light of his Maker's countenance. The lines of delineation are few, yet the man is clearly seen. "Created in the image of God," three essential features are plainly marked, viz., *knowledge*, intuitive of God and duty, *righteousness* or perfect conformity to the moral law of God, and "holiness as an inward estate of the soul," while in his hand he holds the sceptre of "dominion over the creatures." With a material body, formed of the dust of the earth, and a spotless soul, in perfect correspondence with God, he stands before us. Do you see him? Are you satisfied with the picture, or do you ask for something more? If so, look with me at the second view given to us of God's man, as he is outlined for us in the ten commandments. Here the delineation is more complete. Standing behind the commandments and plainly sketched by the divine hand, is the image of the man that God calls his own. Note his features! He is monotheistic, and standing reverently before his God, he requires no idols or images to aid him in his worship. He always pronounces the name of God with reverence, and so lives as not to dishonour his Maker. Six days he labours in each week, for God's man must be industrious and thrifty, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord and is by him kept holy. One day in seven he gladly gives to God and rejoices in its rest and worship. His parents represent God in the home, and to them he gives honour and obedience. The life of his neighbour is safe beside him, his home, also, is secure, for God's man wears the white ribbon. He earns his bread and desires it not without price. His tongue is untipped with slander, and covetousness finds no place in his soul. Is not the picture clear and beautiful? May no hand mar the outline! Look, there stands an artist before it; his brush is in his hand; he is about to touch the picture. In my eagerness I step forward and say "Surely you will not mar the photograph that I think so beautiful!" He answers, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law of the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." * * * "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." The divine hand then moves the brush, and God's man, retouched, becomes more plainly seen. The marble-like figure begins to be suffused with the glow of positive quality, the eye is made more gentle and lovely, and the possibility of anger ceases. The white ribbon changes its place and is made to flutter at the heart, and the whole man, *unchanged in a single outline*, becomes more beautiful in the rosy tint of love than ever before. Do you ask is it possible thus to live, or have the laws of God ever been so kept? Our God has anticipated this unsatisfied longing of your soul, and has therefore given a *third view* of His man in the person and character of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Jesus Christ was a

man! As a man He was born. As a man He grew from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood. As a man He wept. As a man He prayed. As a man He suffered privation, want and wear. As a man He died, and as man shall rise, so He rose again triumphant from the dead. This second Adam, in whose countenance we see God and live, kept with the Spirit and the letter of the law, and though tempted, was yet separate from sin. Upon his brow was the wreath of self-sacrifice, and in His active and passive obedience to God's will, He suffered in behalf of fallen man that He might bring him to God. In His mysterious union of God and man, it became possible for Him to make such an atonement for sin, that God could be just and, at the same time, pardon the sinner. Oh, what a beautiful character; the fairest among the ten thousand is He. And passing on He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps. Every humble follower of Jesus Christ presents a *fourth view* of God's man, as through faith and the operation of the Holy Spirit he grows daily in grace and in the knowledge of God. Commencing from the second birth, he desires to do the will of God in all things, and though marred by defeats, the likeness of Christ is already formed within. He is very different from the man of the world. He believes that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The motives that govern his actions are good, as tested by the infallible word itself. He does not, when he stands before a question involving a moral issue, say as the worldling, "Is it profitable?" or, "Is it popular?" or even, "Is it useful?" But he brings it at once to the touch-stone of truth and inquires if it be right. Each of the other tests here named could be answered affirmatively if applied to either slavery or the traffic in strong drink. The Street Railway Company know that to run their cars on the Lord's day would be profitable, they hope it will be popular, and they emphasize certain useful ends that they say will be served, but God's man must seek to know what is his Maker's will and be sure that he votes in accordance therewith. God's man never divides his responsibility with another. He cannot say, "Let the other citizens determine this question, it does not much concern me," for into his hand God has put the ballot, and his responsibility to use it in the cause of righteousness is as clear as though the result of the poll were to be determined by it alone. Again, he cannot divide the responsibility with God, saying "Let providence determine the issue," for God's man must seek to do his Father's will. Oh, men of God, ye dare not stand idly by with the ballots in your hands, when the franchise is called upon to decide a moral issue, or, indeed, any question on which the welfare of your fellow-subjects may depend. God's man knows that he must die and that after death will be the judgment, hence he lives and acts as in the sight of his God.

These four views, if we ponder them, may furnish us with a standard by which we can measure our character, by which we may examine our lives, bringing to every thought, to every act an unfailing touchstone whose test will stand. Let us, brethren, then be ready in applying the test, careful in maintaining an unbroken record in accordance with it, and confident that, by God's grace helping us, we shall not fall short of its requirements.



REV. J. W. RAE.

Evil's whisper of loneliness was Christ's temptation; it made also His triumph. It was the dark and lustreless background which formed the fitting setting of His triumph. We, too, have felt the fear of trial as though God was not. It is the common cross and temptation. We, too, must only the more earnestly reach after God, until we draw Him nearer, and until He more fully fills our life; and so change our fearful cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" into "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."—S. D. THOMAS.

THE Greek Liturgy says: "We beseech Thee, by all the sufferings of Christ, known and unknown." The more we know of Christ's sufferings, the more we see that they cannot be known. Ah! who can tell the full meaning of the broken bread and poured-out wine? Those were words of sweet submission and love which Job spake, when God took away from Him property and children: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Those were words of sweet submissive love which old Eli spake, when God told Him that his sons should die: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." The same sweet temper was in the bosom of the Shunammite who lost her child, when the prophet asked: "Is it well with thee; is it well with thy husband; is it well with the child? And she answered, 'It is well.'" But, ah! here is greater love, greater, sweeter submission than that of Job or Eli or the Shunammite, greater than ever was breathed in this cold world before. Here is a Being hanging between earth and heaven, forsaken by his God, without a smile, without a drop of comfort, the agonies of hell going over Him; and yet He loves the God that has forsaken Him. He does not cry out, "Cruel Father!" but, with all the vehemence of affection, cries out, "My God, my God!"—R. M. MCCHEVNE.