

the nations to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. His living-words, the sunshine and the rain, dissolve the dead tree and build up the living. And this is a symbol of what is true of moral and spiritual relations. God's word is powerful to blast or bless men as they unwisely or wisely relate themselves thereto. Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it? Is decision of character necessary to render human action effective? "The One supreme in this virtue is God Himself. He cannot deny Himself. To the merciful He shows Himself merciful, and to the forward He shows Himself forward. That God's word cannot deem-ness is powerful let delusion tremble testify. That He hates filth let horrible plagues bear witness. That He is an abomination in His sight when men would of His own accord except the heart let the delusions of the priests who still slaying the murder of the Son of Man were not solemnly recorded entire State's Court lest they should be defiled!"

May Blind or Guide.

What a powerful light to blind or guide is the word of God! No will, no mind, no conscience, no affection are so affirmative as those of God. No interference in the workings of things can equal His own. He reigns in this unbreakable fashion, making the spiritual the supreme interest in His universe. The sons of men who in all circumstances make this interest their chief aim in life are the children of faith. It is these who find the word of God powerful, ever bringing them into influential relations and large places. The men whom Moses summoned to enter the Promised Land were unable to enter in because of unbelief. They were slow of heart to believe all that God promised. And a slow heart, what is it but a carnal, self-indulgent, spiritually unenthralling heart? And with such God is displeased because they deem themselves worthy of high things—things in keeping with their true natures. They prefer leeks and onions to liberty. They take not on the believing man's burden, and so remained strangers to his high aims and divinely deep joys. The Israelites, released from Egypt, chose the squatter's doom. They were tramps for forty years instead of enterprising citizens of the world, taking possession of it for God. Laying up their talent in a napkin, they regarded God as hard, reaping where He had not sown. Their wilderness experience could be no other than murmuring about water and food. The powerful word of God brings nothing but disappointment and grief to those who through unbelief seek first what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed. God has ordered the nature of things that man cannot live by bread alone. The attempt to do so is lawlessness or sin. Sin alone excludes men from the guidance and fellowship of God. It is unbelief which prevents men from entering every promised land to which God invites them in every age. It is in the redemptive power of God's word that its liberating and progressive energy is most gloriously exhibited.

The Word of Life.

God's last word to us is not death but life, not guilt but grace: "Come now let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." And His word is to prosper in the end to which He hath sent it. Its transforming power is to bring forth instead of the thorn, the fir tree. Did it not turn Paul from being a fiery persecutor into a min-

ister of the grace of God to all people? And he himself tells us his case was intended, among other things, to be a pattern of what God's living and powerful word can effect. It said to him go forward, cease to maltreat your kinsman, and instead bring light to your own people and to the Gentiles. God's word of power comes to men to give them life and to give it in abundance to bring them into a large nation, to cause the wilderness and solitary place to blossom as the rose and the men of the city to flourish like grass of the earth. This word by its energy is a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. Look at the historic effects of Christianity. Contrast its civilization with that of ancient Rome, and then raise the cry "Back to Christ," in the name of the principle of cause and effect and what conclusion can you reach but that He has made good the claim He made when He commissioned men to preach His gospel, that all power in Heaven and earth was given to Him.

The energy with which God has endowed creation possesses transformative and in consequence growing attributes. The sun has in it the power which appears first at the blade, then as the ear, then as the full corn in the ear. Or to change the figure, the path of the sun is as the light of the dawn which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. God works in Old Testament times in the world, making distinct disclosures of His character and purposes as they were able to receive it, and in this last age in His Son who was the very essence of His essence, full of grace and truth.

The Real Light.

The faintest streaks of dawn are the same in quality though not in intensity, as the sun in noonday splendor. The light which guided Abraham was dim compared with that in which we walk. Yet dim as it was it was real light. Let us, however, not forget, though real, it was also dim. Isaiah saw as David did not, and Jeremiah beheld as Isaiah did not how worship was not confined to Zion's hill. Eternal truth received its color from the conditions of those to whom it came bearing healing in its beams. This powerful word of God is like the rising sun. At first it gilds the mountain tops, but ascends until there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, the last of the prophets.

The quality in God's word in virtue of which it caused men to grow in wisdom through the ages regarding God and what duty He requires of man is its energy, a quality which the friends and foes of true religion have too often combined to deny it. The friends of the Bible have treated it as a hot-house plant, to be tenderly invironed lest its life should evaporate like a vapor, instead of regarding it as a tent from which the sun of eternal truth emerges like a strong man rejoicing to run a race.

This powerful word of God has transformed the speech of men, causing terms of reproach to become epithets of honor. Our very dictionaries testify that inspiration belongs to the perpetually operative word of God. They tell us to be meek is to be self-controlled and gentle, not easily irritated or provoked. To be meek, according to the pagan idea, was to be mean-spirited. As far as the east is from the west so far is the heathen idea of agape or love from that of Scripture.

Perpetually Operative.

What if the framework of the Babylonian account of the flood is similar to that of Scripture? What about the contents of the two? They are as different in their significance as the word love is to the heathen and to the Christian mind. And why? Because the word of God is powerful in transforming the minds of men, and as an inevitable result their institutions, literature and laws. This

perpetually operative word is bound to win the day. To be against it is to fight against God, and to meet only shame and defeat. To be with it is to attain to victory and honor. Christ must reign. Life, and not death, is to be the issue of things, for the word of God is perpetually existent and operative. And He who speaks and it is done is not to finish His work with a death's head upon the apex of things, but with a throne and on it the Prince of Life.

The kingdom of heaven does not come with observation. We do not find it by looking to the east or to the west. It is within men. The perpetually existent and operative word of God appraises the seen by ascertaining the spirit underlying it. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision attest the presence or absence of the kingdom of God, but the spirit informing these. It is the spirit that gives life to every form in things great or small externally.

Christ and Small Things.

It is in small things that principles have been often first discovered of universal importance. Newton in the fall of an apple apprehended the law which forms the tear and the planet. Qualitatively the universe is of a piece in things physical and spiritual. A drop of the ocean reveals the chemistry of its far-reaching, fathomless waters. For this reason Christ in the spiritual sphere made much of little things. He includes in His report on the state of religion the widow's mite. He magnifies quality and not bulk when He makes the man of one talent the subject of condemnation.

Sin is best seen in its essence when apprehended, not in tragic but in ordinary connections. We are disposed to judge sin by its consequences. God deals with its intrinsic nature. Hatred we all acknowledge to be sin when it murders its object. Unholy anger, the germ of murder, is criminal in God's sight.

In the Epistle of James we are taught that "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill." This teaching comes to us in connection with a custom modern as well as ancient, and which only the living, powerful word of God would lay bare as sinful. Its form is far from repulsive, giving a front seat to a millionaire and a back seat to a poor man! What user in any church is without sin! And who shall stand if iniquity is thus dealt with? Sin, in short, when brought under the criticism of the living, active, heart-searching word of God consists in unlikeness to God. He requires likeness to Himself as the duty of man and angel. Our prayer must be not that we fast twice in the week, or give tithes of all that we possess, or are sound in literary theories of Islamic or other prophecies and thank God for the same, but that He would make us to know wisdom in the hidden part.

Conduct and Life.

The Church in Ephesus was noted for its works, and toil, and steadfastness, and hatred of false teachers, but God charges them with having left their first love and calls upon them to repent and do the first works, or else He will come and remove their candlestick out of its place. Motive counts for everything in religious interests. Out of the heart are the issues of life. In the very nature of things the judgment is taking place in us. We are sowing the to be. Man attains only to righteousness as he believes with the heart. It is not eating herbs alone or meat and herbs that shows us where men stand religiously. Each case is right when done with a heart grateful towards God. Here diversity of manifestation finds its unity