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regarded as the voice of God's Spirit. And these two things are both true : the one would want its foundation if it were not for the other ; the cry of the Spirit is nothing for me unless it be appropriated by me. I do not need to plunge here into metaphysical speculation of any sort, but simply to dwell upon the plain practical teaching of the Bible—a teaching, verified, I believe, by every Christian's experience, if he will search into it—that everything in him that makes the Christian life, is not his, but is God's by origin, and his only by gift and inspiration. And the whole doctrine of my text is built on this one thought—without the Spirit of God in your heart, you never can recognize God as your Father. That in us which runs, with love, and childlike faith, and reverence, to the place "where His Honor dwelleth," that in us which says Father, is kindred with God, and is not the simple, unhelped, un-sanctified human nature. There is no ascent of the human desires above their source. And wherever in a heart there springs up heavenward a thought, a wish, a prayer, a trembling confidence, it is because that came down first from heaven, and rises to seek its level again. All that is divine in man comes from God. All that tends towards God in man, is God's voice in the human heart ; and were it not for the possession and operation, the sanctifying and quickening, of a living divine Spirit granted to us, our souls would forever cleave to the dust and dwell upon earth, nor ever rise to God and live in the light of His presence. Every Christian, then, may be sure of this, that howsoever feeble may be the thought and conviction in his heart of God's fatherhood, he did not work it, he received it only, cherished it, thought of it, watched over it, was careful not to quench it ; but in origin it was God's, and it is now and ever the voice of the Divine Spirit in the child's heart.

But, my friends, if this principle be true, it does not apply only to this one single attitude of the believing soul when it cries, Abba, Father ; it must be widened out to comprehend the whole of a Christian's life, outward and inward, which is not sinful, and darkened with actual transgression. To all the rest of his being, to everything in heart and life which is right and pure, the same truth applies. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" in every perception of God's word which is granted, in every revelation of His counsel which dawns upon our darkness, in every aspiration after Him which lifts us above the smoke and dust of this dim spot, in every holy resolution, in every thrill and throb of love and desire. Each of these is mine—inasmuch as in my heart it is experienced and transacted ; it is mine, inasmuch as I am not a mere dead piece of matter, the passive recipient of a magical and supernatural grace ; but it is God's ; and therefore, and therefore only, has it come to be mine !

And if it be objected that this opens a wide door to all manner of delusion, and that there was no more dangerous thing than for a man to confound his own thoughts with the operations of God's Spirit, let me just give you (following the context before us) the one guarantee and text which the Apostle lays down. He says, "There is a witness from God in your spirits." You may say, That witness, if it come in the form of these convictions in my own heart, I may mistake and falsely read. Well, then, here is an outward guarantee. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God ;" and so, on the regions both of heart and of life the consecrating thought,—God's work, and God's Spirit's work,—is stamped. The heart with its love, the head with its understanding, the conscience with its quick response to the law of duty, the will with its resolutions,—these are all, as sanctified by him, the witness of His Spirit ; and the life with its strenuous obedience, with its struggles against sin and temptation, with its patient persistence in the quiet path of ordinary duty, as well as with the times when it rises into heroic stature of resignation or allegiance, the martyrdom of death and the martyrdom of life, this too, is all (in so far as it is pure and right) the work of that same Spirit. The test of the inward conviction is the outward life ; and they that have the witness of the Spirit within them, have the light of their life lit by the Spirit of God, whereby they may read the handwriting on the heart, and be sure that it is God's and not their own !

And now, lastly, THIS DIVINE WITNESS IN OUR SPIRITS IS SUBJECT TO THE ORDINARY INFLUENCES WHICH AFFECT OUR SPIRITS. The notion often prevails that if there be in the heart this Divine witness of God's Spirit, it must needs be perfect, clearly indicating its origin by an exemption from all that besets ordinary human feelings, that it must be a strong, uniform, never-flickering, never-darkening, and perpetual light, a blink of vestal fire burning always on the altar of the heart ! The passage before us, and all others that speak about the matter, give us the directly opposite notion. The Divine Spirit, when it enters into the narrow room of the human spirit, condescends to sub-

mit itself, not wholly, but to such an extent as practically for our present purpose is wholly—to submit itself to the ordinary laws and conditions and contingencies which befall and regulate our own human nature. Christ came into the world Divine : He was "found in fashion as a man," in form a servant ; the humanity that he wore limited (if you like), regulated, modified, the manifestation of the divinity that dwelt in it. And not otherwise is the operation of God's Holy Spirit when it comes to dwell in a human heart. There, too, working through man, it "is found in fashion as a man ;" and though the voice in my heart be not only my voice, but God's voice there, it will obey these same laws which make human thoughts and emotions vary, and fluctuate, flicker, and flame up again, burn bright and burn low, according to a thousand circumstances. The witness of the Spirit, if it were yonder in heaven, would shine like a perpetual star ; the witness of the Spirit, here in the heart on earth, burns like a flickering flame, never to be extinguished, but still not always bright, wanting to be trimmed, and needing to be guarded from rude blasts. Else, brother, what does an apostle mean when he says to you and me, "Quench not the Spirit"? what does he mean when he says to us, "Grieve not the Spirit"? What does the teaching which enjoins on us, "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning," and "What I say to you, I say to all, Watch!" mean, unless it means this, that God-given as (God be thanked!) that conviction of fatherhood is, it is not given in such a way as that, irrespective of our carefulness, irrespective of our watching, it shall burn on—the same and unchangeable? The Spirit's witness comes from God, therefore it is voracious, Divine, omnipotent ; but the Spirit's witness from God is in man, therefore it may be wrongly read, it may be checked, it may for a time be kept down, and prevented from showing itself to be what it is.

And the practical conclusion that comes from all this, is just the simple advice to you all: Do not wonder, in the first place, if that evidence of which we speak vary and change in its clearness and force in your own hearts. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Do not think that it cannot be genuine, because it is changeful. There is a sun in the heavens, but there are heavenly lights too that wax and wane ; they are lights, they are in the heavens, though they change. You have no reason, Christian man, to be discouraged, cast down, still less despondent, because you find that the witness of the Spirit changes and varies in your heart. Do not despond because it does. Watch it, and guard it, lest it do. Live in the contemplation of the Person and the fact that calls it forth, that it may not. You will never "brighten your evidences" by polishing at them. To polish the mirror ever so assiduously does not secure the image of the sun on its surface. The only way to do that is to carry the poor bit of glass out into the sunshine. It will shine then, never fear. It is weary work to labour at self-improvement with the hope of drawing from our own characters evidences that we are the sons of God. To have the heart filled with the light of Christ's love to us is the only way to have the whole being full of light. If you would have clear and irrefragable, for a perpetual joy, a glory and a defence, the unwavering confidence, "I am thy child," go to God's throne, and lie down at the foot of it, and let the first thought be, "My Father in heaven," and that will brighten, that will stablish, that will make omnipotent in your life; the witness of the Spirit that you are the children of God.

British & Foreign News.

ENGLAND.

The Primus of Scotland has been very dangerously ill, but later accounts are somewhat more favourable. Bishop Eden, who is suffering from paralysis, is in his seventy-ninth year.

The *Manchester Guardian* says that the Bishop of Liverpool, who, as junior prelate in the House of Lords, will necessarily be much away from his diocese, has arranged with Bishop Hellmuth to act for him in his absence.

There is about to be constructed by a London firm a steamer for the Universities Mission, for service on Lake Nyassa, Central Africa. The vessel is to be constructed of steel, and will be sent over in 800 packages, and put together in Africa.

On Wednesday, at the synod of the English Presbyterians at Liverpool, the Moderator read a letter from the *Bishop of Liverpool* regretting that his engagements

prevented him from showing the synod any mark of respect or esteem. His lordship added:—"Accept my best wishes and thankfulness that there are so many points on which we are so alike, though we do not agree about Church government."

The promotion of Dr. Blakeney, vicar of Sheffield, by the Archbishop of York, to the newly-created archdeaconry of Sheffield will be received by all conscientious Churchmen with great satisfaction. The archidiaconal stall of Nottingham will be assigned to him, which for a long time has had no official representative. His archdeaconry comprises four rural deaneries and one hundred and four parishes.

On St. Phillip and St. James' Day, May 1st, the Consecration of the Rev. Dr. Ridding, as first Bishop of Southwell, and of the Rev. Dr. Linton, to the new See of Riverina, New South Wales, took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in the presence of a considerable number of people. The Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by a number of Bishops, was consecrated. Among the Bishops taking part in the ceremony was the Bishop of Algoma.

Preaching on a recent Sunday Mr. Spurgeon remarked that the distinctions of the Athanasian Creed were doubtless absolutely necessary at the time it was written. He, however, liked the Creed of Thomas, "My Lord and my God," much better. It was short and pithy, and no man could call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Spurgeon in addressing the theological students about to leave for the summer recess, cautioned them against falling in love with young women while they were still in course of preparation for the ministry. He said: "That is not good for students. Keep yourselves to yourselves. Come back as some one puts it, with your hearts and manners uncracked. Walk in the fields like Isaac, by all means, and meditate ; but don't lift up your eyes for Rebecca. She will come soon enough."

At a meeting in connection with the Bishop of London's Fund, held at Willis's Rooms, the Archbishop of Canterbury moved a resolution declaring that the continued increase of population in the suburbs of London required a sustained effort to supply the means of public worship and religious instruction. Dr. Benson pointed out that while there had been a serious diminution in the receipts of the fund, the population of the diocese of London was increasing at the rate of about 40,000 a year.

The fourth annual meeting of the Church Parochial Mission Society was held at Willis's Rooms, under the presidency of the Bishop of Rochester. Rev. S. W. D. Fox read a report, which stated the income of the society to have been during the past year over £5,174, in addition to £2,000 specially contributed for the Church Army, which has been carried on as a subsidiary work under control of the council. The Church Army, it was stated, had now fifty stations in different parts of the country, and its work at Manchester, Birmingham, and Dudley had resulted in a great increase of candidates for confirmation and communicants.

It is unfortunate that the York Convocation should have wasted so much time in discussing what may appear to outsiders to be merely trivial matters of form. These "wretched little preliminaries," as the President justly stigmatized them, prevented sufficient attention being given to the burning questions of the day, and a second session is to be held in July. In our leading columns we comment on the discussion as to Lay Administrations and the Diaconate. We observe that the motion in favour of establishing a ministry of women, in harmony with the primitive system of deaconesses, was postponed. Churchmen should be prepared to meet these questions. It is quite evident that there is now to be a crusade on behalf of Sisterhoods, and that they are to be brought forward in all directions at Conferences and other gatherings, apparently with the object of procuring some official recognition for conventual institutions formed on a type more or less Roman.—*The Record*.

LONDON, May 22.—The Wycliffe celebration was concluded last evening with a great meeting at Exeter Hall. Earl Shaftesbury presided. Distinguished clergymen and other persons were present. Canon Taylor moved that the quincentenary of Wycliffe's death affords a suitable opportunity to commemorate his work as a patriot and church reformer, a translator and preacher of the Holy Scriptures. Canon Taylor said the great work which Wycliffe did for the Church is now in danger of being overthrown. We should be-