

to change the heart. That change is wrought by the Spirit of God through the truth. From the vision of the Love of Christ in giving Himself a ransom for us, there springs up in the heart a responsive love to Him, through which the soul is transformed into His likeness.

"Talk they of morals? O Thou bleeding Love!  
The grand morality is love of Thee."

Our blessed Lord, who anticipated the phase of error we have spoken of as well as all others, provided a perpetual antidote to it in the sacred Supper. Every time that Ordinance is observed in the way He appointed, it calls vividly before the minds of His people the shedding of His blood as an atonement for man's sin, and makes plain thereby what is the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which brought the Son of God to the dust of death, that it is an evil and a bitter thing which the Lord God hates. And the believing communicant, thus instructed through Divine grace more and more dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness.

"The Cross once seen is death to every vice."

## Golden Text Sermonette.

BY THE REV. A. B. MACKAY, D.D., MONTREAL.

For the Review.

Matthew xxiv. 42. Watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come

Jesus our Lord is coming back to this earth again. In regard to this coming there are two evils against which we should guard. The first is the heresy of denying that He is coming. The second is the lunacy of fixing the time of His coming. The heresy and the lunacy work into each others hands and it is hard to say which of them has done the greater damage.

We are sure the Lord is coming because we have been told so again and again in the Holy Scriptures. We are sure no one can tell the time, because Jesus says "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of Heaven, neither the Son but the Father only." Those who profess to know the time claim to know more than Jesus did—and that is presumption. Those who say that His coming means nothing more than the political and social, moral and spiritual improvement of man, laugh at the church's dearest hope—and that is mockery. Let us beware both of this mockery of mockers, and this presumption of lunatics, and listen to Jesus who says "Watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." If He is not coming, what could be more absurd than to watch for Him? If we knew the hour when He is coming, where would be the need of watching, until that hour came. But if we knew that He is certainly coming and yet are utterly ignorant as to when He is coming, then we ought to watch for Him all the time. As Augustine says "The last day is hid from us that every day may be observed by us."

The coming of Jesus will be sudden and unexpected. Everything in the world will be going on as usual when He appears. Men will be eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, hoeing and grinding, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the very moment He appears. A Greek proverb says "The feet of the avenging deities are shod with wool." Therefore no one can hear their approach, they come without the least warning. Thus shall the coming of the Lord be. Therefore He says, Watch! Be wide awake, be expectant, be ready to receive me.

He who watches is a faithful and wise servant, who when His master comes is found busy at the work given him to do, and who is highly promoted for his faithfulness. He who says in his heart, (whatever he says in his head, his theory about the Lord's coming may be quite Scriptural) "my Lord tarrieth," is an evil servant who tyrannizes over his fellow servants and feasts with his Lord's enemies, and who is cut asunder and has his portion with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Watch therefore.

## A "Degenerate" Church.

J. MERVIN HULL.

This is the adjective used by many in referring to the church to-day. Disheartening facts are brought forward to prove the accusation. In many cases

worldliness triumphs over spirituality. Fellowship is swallowed up in society. Some professing Christian are shown to be dishonest; some, even, lead impure lives.

These painful facts cannot be denied. I believe, however, that many, including some Christians teachers, especially evangelists, make a serious error in the use of these facts and the inferences which they draw from them. It is represented that this state of things is a special mark of our own time; that the church has fallen from some high estate which it once held and is revelling in iniquity. It is prophesied that the knell of doom is soon to sound above the church of Christ unless there is a thorough cleansing out of all iniquity, and this is made the warning call for many crusades of reform, some of them as incoherent and fruitless as those of the Middle Ages.

A brief glance at the New Testament churches from a somewhat unusual point of view will show the error of such judgment. The New Testament churches are commonly referred to as if they were entirely composed of such men and women as John and Paul and Stephen, and Phoebe and Priscilla. The modern church is too commonly judged by the latest scandal or embezzlement with which some church-member is connected. But Judas was among the twelve; Ananias and his wife, a portion of the fruit of Pentecost, lied to the Holy Ghost; in Corinth, some were weak and sickly, and many were asleep; preachers of false doctrines came among the churches of Galatia, and they found plenty of listeners; endless genealogies and old wives' fables at times displaced the gospel; Paul was in peril among false brethren; Hymeneus and Alexander made shipwreck of the faith; Demas loved this present world; the Galatians did run well, but soon got tired; and in Pergamos, which held fast the Precious Name, and where Antipas was a faithful martyr, even there were those who practiced the idolatrous and licentious rites of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. This is only a partial list of the evils which beset the church while some of the disciples and holy apostles were still upon the earth. If such things could destroy the church it would have perished in its infancy. But it was founded upon a rock, there was given to it the power of eternal life, no man could pluck his own from the hand of Christ, the gates of hell could not prevail against his church.

Therefore, the church lives and stands to-day. The accounts of good and evil are not posted up and balanced every week. Mr. Ingersoll does not offset Mr. Moody. Whenever Christ liveth in a man, no man can set on him to hinder him; no, nor angles, nor principalities, nor powers. The church has lived in weakness but in mighty power through the centuries. It shall live until the end of the world. It is still far from being free from every spot and blemish, which is cause for humility and penitence, but not for hopeless despair. Certainly no scheme of theological housecleaning can be the remedy. Probably, Jesus was right when he said that wheat and tares would be found growing together unto the end of the world. But there is such a thing as the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.—  
*Presbyterian Messenger.*

## The Amiability of Skeptics.

I believe that every grace and virtue in human character is rooted in the love of God. I believe that no moral beauty or fruitfulness exists in this fallen world apart from "the true Vine." And yet we often see skeptics who are kind-hearted and benevolent. The question is, Would they have been so if they had not been born and lived under the influences of the Gospel? A writer, discussing the subject, used the comparison of a rosebud. If the rose is cut and placed in water, it will blossom sooner than the sister buds that are left on the bush—but the bloom will leave no seed. So ran the argument. Unbelievers of the first generation may display even more than ordinary Christian virtue, but it is of a kind that does not propagate itself, and the agnostic of the second generation usually displays a very low phase of ethical development.