

—Proleg., ch. i. 6. We have seen very extreme, and, as we think, very foolish, statements made in connection with what is called verbal inspiration, but we have never encountered a writer who takes the extreme position which Alford has described. We have never met an author who holds that Satan's words, "Ye shall not surely die," or the words of the servant in the parable, "I knew thee that thou art an hard master," or the words of Job's friends, which are cited only to be condemned, are "absolutely and separately true." Such an idea could certainly never have entered the mind of one who had apprehended the doctrine we have advanced. Whatever is consistent with perfect truth in an ordinary writer is consistent with it in an inspired writer. And no one surely would impeach the truth of the narrative of a trial, because it contains the sworn testimony of a false witness. It is only when it is supposed that inspiration deprived the sacred writings of their human characteristics that such a notion has any plausibility. The very highest doctrine of inspiration which we have ever seen, save in the caricatures of opponents, does not imply any interference with the individuality of the writer, or with his liberty to use the ordinary modes and forms of speech at their current value. It guards him, in his writing, against the perverting influence of ignorance and bias, but binds him to no cast-iron mode of expressing his ideas.

A very simple negative test of inspiration may be given. Suppose all ignorance, prejudice, and bias in reference to the matter treated of, and so far as it is dealt with, absent from the mind of an uninspired writer, then ask yourself would his narrative necessarily be different from what you find in Scripture? If so, provided your judgment is correct, the Scripture account cannot be inspired. Or, to take a concrete example: Imagine the four Evangelists apart from inspiration, in actual possession of the very inscription placed over the cross, written, not as Alford says, with apparent bias, in Greek, but as John assures us, in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, and imagine these Evangelists free from all defect or bias which could warp their judgments, and then ask yourself, would their narratives be necessarily different from what we find them? If they could not have written as they have, then, of course, we must fall back on some lower view of inspiration. But if ordinary authors so endowed with perfect knowledge of the fact, and free from mental and moral defect, might have written such narratives as we find in the pages of the four Evangelists, then there is nothing in these variations inconsistent with the most complete inspiration.

The popular objection against the inspiration of the Bible, based on the fact that its writers do not use scientific terms in their references to nature, disappears when it is understood that they were at liberty to use language with the same freedom as other authors. When it is said that the sacred writers, in speaking of the sun standing still on one noted occasion, and of his rising and setting daily, expressly contradict the facts of science, it is strange the objectors do not discover themselves, with unpleasant frequency, contradicting the facts of science when they speak of sunrise and sunset. It is stranger still that they have never observed that the most noted men of science are quite as much guilty of the contradiction as the sacred penmen. We turn to one of our greatest American astronomers, and on the first page of his book we read, "On the approach of the sun to the horizon in the early dawn his coming is announced by the grey eastern twilight." On the next page, "While this motion continues, the sun at noon, when culminating on the meridian, reaches each day a point less elevated above the horizon, and the diurnal arc or daily path described by the sun grows shorter and shorter."—(Mitchell's Pop. Astron., p. 1, 2.) And must we believe that this astronomer was in profound ignorance of the elementary principles of that science to which he had devoted his life, because, like other people, he speaks of "the daily path described by the sun?" Sir J. Herschel does not hesitate to write: "The sun, which at a considerable altitude always appears round, assumes as it approaches the horizon a flattened or oval outline."—(Outlines of Astron., p. 34. If inspiration involves, as we have endeavoured to show, a two-fold authorship throughout of the Holy Scriptures, so that they are at once completely human and perfectly divine, no objection can be more futile than that which is based on the fact that the sacred writers use popular language in the ordinary sense in which it is employed by mankind at large, and even by our highest scientific writers.

The inaugural proceedings of the session then closed.

## LITTLE BY LITTLE.

Little by little the time goes by—  
Long if you sing through it, long if you sigh;  
Little by little—an hour, a day,  
Gone with the years that have vanished away;  
Little by little the race is run,  
Trouble, and waiting, and toil are done!

Little by little the skies grow clear;  
Little by little the sun comes near;  
Little by little the days smile out  
Gladder and brighter on pain and doubt;  
Little by little the seed we sow  
Into a beautiful yield will grow.

Little by little the world grows strong,  
Fighting the battle of right and wrong.  
Little by little the wrong gives way,  
Little by little the right has sway.  
Little by little all longing souls  
Struggle up nearer the shining goals!

Little by little the good in men  
Blossoms in beauty for human ken.  
Little by little the angels see  
Prophecies better of good to be;  
Little by little the God of all  
Lifts the world nearer His pleading call.

—Leon Herbert.

## UNCONSCIOUS SERVICE.

The best and noblest service in life is prompted by love, and love works without consciousness of self. When in the house of Simon, at Bethany, that woman came with the alabaster box and poured the costly and fragrant ointment upon the head of Jesus, it was, on her part, an unconscious act, expressive of the supreme affection of a heart that would give all to Him. Even the disciples were blind to its meaning until the Master hushed their complaint with the revelation that this service of womanly devotion should evermore be remembered as a memorial of her. The fragrance of this simple act could never cease to exhale, because of what it was to her Lord. She knew it not, but her offering of affection had anointed His body for its burial—a deed of devotion which angels would have begged to render.

Duty is a task-master and galls the neck with its yoke, where love bears heavier burdens and sings with joy unconscious of its service. Whatever is done, impelled by the supreme affection of the heart towards Christ, is sure to be the right thing. That which for a moment appears to be a blunder, and which a cold, calculating spirit would avoid, proves to be just the right thing. Love has an intuitive perception, and going easily and straight to the accomplishment of its purpose, thinks that its work is so simple as scarcely to merit recognition. The fact that self is not thought of is the reason often why so much real good is accomplished. The word spoken in love by one who is neither great nor renowned is received and thought of for its own worth and need, while the same message spoken in eloquence of personal utterance is forgotten in the remembrance of the way and manner of its expression. The unconscious service of love is an irresistible argument that it is done for its own sake, and such words and acts are conquering forces. Men are brave to stand against influences back of which they see obtruding personal pride or planning, but let them be convinced that what is said or done is simply from a supreme desire for their welfare and good and they are broken down. When the Master welcomed His faithful servant the exclamation of glad surprise leaps from his lips, "Lord, when did we these things?" He knew it not until then that those deeds of unconscious service that prompted him to help the lowliest of his fellow men was remembered as if done for the King of kings. It is the unconscious ministry of loving hearts that is held in eternal remembrance.—*The Working Church.*

## KINDLINESS A BEAUTIFIER.

A beautiful person is the natural form of a beautiful soul. The mind builds its own house. The soul takes precedence of the body, and shapes the body to its own likeness. A vacant mind takes all the meaning out of the fairest face. A sensual disposition deforms the handsomest features. A cold, selfish heart shrivels and distorts the best looks. A mean, groveling spirit takes all the dignity out of the figure, and all the character out of the countenance. A cherished hatred transforms the most beautiful lineaments into an image of ugliness. It is as impossible to preserve good looks with a brood of bad passions feeding on the blood, a set of low loves tramping through the

heart, and a selfish, disdainful spirit enthroned in the will, as to preserve the beauty of an elegant mansion with a litter of swine in the basement, a tribe of gypsies in the parlor, and owls and vultures in the upper part. Badness and beauty will no more keep company a great while than poison will consort with health, or an elegant carving survive the furnace fire. The experiment of putting them together has been tried for thousands of years, but with one unvarying result. There is no sculptor like the mind. There is nothing that so refines, polishes and ennobles face and mein as the constant presence of great thoughts. The man who lives in the region of ideas, moonbeams though they be, becomes idealized. There are no arts, no gymnastics, no cosmetics, which can contribute a tittle so much of the dignity, the strength, the ennobling of a man's looks, as a great purpose, a high determination, a noble principle, an unquenchable enthusiasm.

But more powerful still than any of these as a beautifier of the person is the overmastering purpose and pervading disposition of kindness in the heart. Affection is the organizing force in the human constitution. Woman is fairer than man because she has more affection than man. Loveliness is the outside of love. Kindness, sweetness, good-will, a prevailing desire and determination to make others happy, make the body a fair temple of the Holy Ghost. The soul that is full of pure and generous affections fashions the features into its own angelic likeness, as the rose which grows in grace and blossoms into loveliness which art cannot equal. There is nothing on earth which so quickly transfigures a personality, refines, exalts, irradiates with heaven's own impress of loveliness, as a pervading, prevailing kindness of the heart. *Home Journal.*

## QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERS.

1. Why am I a member of this Church? Is it because I wish to serve Christ here below; or is it for the sake of company, respectability and fashion?
2. Am I a true Christian? Do I hate sin, love Christ, his people, and cause? Have I chosen God for my portion? Do I desire to be made holy?
3. As a member, what am I doing in the church? Do I feel that I have a duty to perform for which Christ will call me to an account?
4. Is there that reverence, that deference, that consistency, which right views of the sanctuary should inspire?
5. What is my conduct towards my brethren? Do I love them, feel interested in them, and help them? If in my power, do I visit them when sick and comfort them? When wandering, do I endeavor to reclaim them?
6. Do I love my pastor as I ought? Do I help him or am I a burden to him? Do I wound, afflict, and grieve where I might comfort?
7. Do I pray for my minister as I ought?
8. Do I bear my share towards the cost of God's house cheerfully, punctually, conscientiously?
9. Am I a laborer in God's vineyard or a loiterer? Is my talent laid up in a napkin, or laid out to the best advantage for Christ?
10. Am I growing in grace? My privileges are great. Is my faith stronger, hope brighter, humility deeper, charity broader, and principles more fixed? Do my hatred of sin and love of holiness increase?
11. Do I live under the impression that I am responsible to God for time, talent, property, and the improvement of opportunities of usefulness?
12. Am I prepared to die? Are my accounts straight? Is my work done? Would I receive the applauding welcome, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"—*Christian Era.*

REMEMBER, that if trouble is near, the throne of grace also is near, God's word of promise is near.

THE doctrines of the gospel, as interpreted by the evangelical branches are always potent in saving men from sin. Wherever preached in love, in fulness and in the fear of God, there will be conversions. The well-established principles of that "faith once delivered to the saints," are rock like in weight, in security, and immovable in grandeur. They are as old as the beginnings, and as new as every new day's need. Science, as its secrets open, only proves the "old, old story" to be true. Preach this blessed power of salvation to all.—*Methodist Recorder.*