

Pastor and People.

GONE TO THY RICH REWARD.

In affectionate remembrance of the Rev. Thomas MacPherson, Stratford, Ontario, Canada. Died April 12th, 1891.

Gone to thy rich reward, who here long-while
Preached, and when still 'twas forest wilderness,
Here built a church when wealth came not to bless,
Where now fair fields and peace and plenty smile.
Thou wert a brave and tireless pioneer,
Ne'er didst from principle or duty swerve,
Thy glory was the Master thou didst serve,
And in thy work wert thorough and sincere.
Beloved pastor, and ne'er failing friend,
When years ago dire fever laid me low;
No kin were near, but o'er me thou didst bend,
And nursed, and prayed till back came health's true glow.
Now with thy loved ones Heaven's joys thou sharest,
And in thy crown Heaven's garnered jewels wearest.

DUNCAN MACGREGOR CRERAR.

April 20, 1891.

UNACKNOWLEDGED OBLIGATIONS OF THE WORLD TO THE BIBLE.

BY REV. FERGUS FERGUSON, D.D., MINISTER OF QUEEN'S PARK CHURCH, GLASGOW.

Since the beginning of the present century, and especially during the last fifty years, a new phase of thought and a new form of enquiry has arisen, the object of which is to investigate all the actually existing religions of the world in a thoroughly scientific way. Mere histories of the religious rites, ceremonies and customs of the whole world had existed before that time, but they made no pretence to a scientific treatment of the subject. They did not classify religions according to any scientific principle, nor did they deal with the sacred books, so called, of other nations, as it is now proposed to deal with them. It is now proposed to enquire into the whole matter in a much more searching and critical way. This enquiry is part of the general movement of the time. scientific spirit is abroad, and it is brought to bear upon everything. With the scientific spirit, properly so called, it is not possible to have any just or serious quarrel. The science of religion, we are told, will for the first time assign to Christianity its right place among the religions of the world. But is it only now that Christianity is to be put into its proper place? It is argued that because there are many good things in other religions, hitherto thought to be peculiar to Revelation, the specific claim of Christianity and the Bible to the monopoly they have hitherto enjoyed can no longer be maintained. One can see that the practical result of this whole trend of thought is to rob Christianity of its distinctive and exclusive merit as the one religion of the world. We are obliged therefore to ask, in view of this new form of research, Where do we stand? Have we no such thing as a science of religion already? Is not theology the science of God and of man's relation to God? Can any better definition of religion be found than this: The life of God in the soul of man? The question therefore occurs: Under what conditions is the life possible, and under what forms is it able most fully to manifest itself? We do not beg the question surely by defining the term with which we start. Having got our general conception of the field we have to explore, as we require a general conception of what astronomy or geology is before setting about the study of either, we are in a position to deal with all the so-called religions that claim our attention. If it can be proved that one book, one revelation, one idea of God is absolute and complete; and one basis of acceptance with Him, the only foundation upon which we can be said to have salvation; and one form of life as resulting from all that, the only complete, universal, and true life of man,—that revelation is entitled to be regarded as the one true religion of the world; and it ought not, even tentatively, to be put on a level with other developments which at their best come immeasurably, not to say fatally, short of everything deserving to be called a religion. We have no reason to doubt that the Bible embracing Judaism, Christianity, and Christ, contains a whole of religious truth, undervalued from anything but its own centre and fount of inspiration, which has not been supplemented and cannot be made more perfect by accretions from any other source, being from the very nature of the case an absolute religion; and, on the other hand, that the truth in every other form of religion has been derived directly or indirectly from it. The obligations of other religions to the revealed Word are spoken of as unacknowledged obligations, because while it has long been held by many that the best things in other religions have had their source in the will of God as directly revealed to man from the beginning, such obligations are still to a large extent unacknowledged. Our hope is that the researches now made into the books and other records of ancient systems will ultimately bring this more fully out, so that, if some of our modern seers, like Balaam, would not be sorry to detract from the exclusive glory of the divine Word in the Scriptures of truth, they shall be obliged to bless and not to ban. We cannot divide religions into natural and supernatural, for the very sufficient reason that no religion ever has existed, or ever can exist, that is not at once natural and supernatural. A religion that does not take hold of the infinite and the unseen is simply a misnomer. Man is never found in a condition where he has nothing but the light of nature to guide him. There is an intermingling of the earliest traditions of the world, every one of which dates from the point of an actual revelation—traditions of a golden age, of a

degeneration from a higher and purer time, of the need of sacrifice to expiate the guilt of sin, of the giants that lived in the first age of the world, of Noah and the Ark, and the flood—such traditions are to be found in all lands intermingling with the light of nature and the imaginations of men. The Greek and Latin classics are full of them. We take our stand upon the Biblical history from the beginning of the world to the separation of the nations in the time of Noah. There was here a great deposit of divine revelation, such as the light of nature could never have supplied, in the possession of Noah and his family at the time when the nations were divided. The great classification of languages and religions into Semitic, Aryan, and African corresponds with the division of the human family under the heads Shem, Japheth, and Ham. All the deepest and truest instincts of the human race in the matter of religion are to be traced to this source. As another has said: "If we believe in the substantial soundness of the Sacred Word, and in the substantial truth of its history, we must then also believe that the Hamitic and Japhetic races, as they in their successive branches set out upon their long migrations, brought with them from the early home which they had shared with the sons of Shem the common religious traditions. How was it even possible that they could leave behind them their religious traditions upon the occasion of their first local separation from the parent stock? They did not surely, like the souls in transmigration, drink of the river of forgetfulness, and raze out from the tablets of the brain, as a preparation for their journey, all they had ever known or heard or felt." When we claim for the revelation given to us in the Bible that it is the source of all that is good and true in the other faiths of the world, we do not mean to say that men who had still little more than the light of nature to guide them derived no quickening or expansion of thought therefrom, nor do we mean to assert that the spirit of the living, omnipresent God was not, to some extent, in touch with the minds of all men. The Scriptures themselves give abundant testimony to the fact that God has never left Himself without a witness in any land. But while broadly and fully recognizing this fact, the Bible none the less clearly indicates a certain exclusive claim in behalf of Divine revelation, and we have only to consider for a moment the chief characteristics of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, and Mohammedanism in order to see how immensely and fatally they come short of Christianity, and, indeed, of everything deserving to be called a religion. Well, it is in view of all these things that we are told to-day by an eminent authority that these religions contain all that is necessary for salvation, and that in all the fundamentals of religion we are neither better nor worse than our heathen neighbours; that the idea of God arises by necessity in the human mind, and is not, as so many theologians will have it, the result of one special disclosure granted only to Jews and Christians. There we see the practical result of the whole matter. It means not perhaps intentionally, but none the less really, a blow at Christianity and the Bible, and the logical effect of it is unquestionably to cut the ground away from Christian missions. These things constitute a call to every thoughtful Christian to consider what the history of the world has already made out in the matter of religion, what it has proved in behalf of Christianity, and what it has shown with sufficient clearness in regard to the religions of the world. Those who know what Christianity, as a practical, enlightening, saving power, is in their own lives, do not require to be disturbed in regard to speculations that fatally detract from Christianity while apparently respecting it as the highest religion that has yet appeared; but there are many who are not so fully established, in the truth, and a new generation is always rising up. There are always waverers and there are unbelievers. It is for those who know the truth to maintain their ground, and to claim for the Bible that it is the one all-comprehending and therefore exclusive revelation of the will of God to man, in so far as our salvation is concerned; to claim for Christ that His name is not to be put in a line between Buddha and Mahomet, as if He were not infinitely and eternally to be distinguished from every other prophet, priest, and king, not to speak of every false prophet, and to claim for Christianity that it is the one true and universal religion.—*Christian Leader*.

THE AMERICAN REVISION OF THE BIBLE.

It will be remembered that when the revision of the Bible was in progress in the hands of the joint English and American committee, there were some differences of judgment as to the rendering of certain words and passages, and where this occurred the suggestions of the English committee were incorporated in the text and those of the American committee were given in the appendix. This method was not entirely satisfactory to the American revisers, but it was accepted by them. One of the conditions of the publication of the revised version was that no revised American edition under the auspices of the American committee should be issued for fourteen years. This period is now drawing to a close, and Dr. Philip Schaff, President of the American committee, now states that the committee has been at work during the interval preparing an American revision that will be ready for publication when the time-limit has been reached. This edition will differ from the authorized Oxford and Cambridge editions as follows: (1) The American appendix is to be incorporated in the text, and a corresponding appendix to be substituted, in which the preferences of the British edition are indicated. (2) Chapter headings to be taken from the words of the text. (3) The references to the quotations from

the Old Testament in the New. The work on the New Testament is about half done, and will be ready for publication by 1895. There are two embarrassments in the work. One is that the ranks of the revisers are being thinned by death; the other that they have no funds to draw upon for their expenses. To meet the latter difficulty Dr. Schaff urges that the American Bible Society be authorized to publish and sell the revised version along with the old, according to the option of the purchaser. He adds: "That is all the revisers ever contemplated or desired. They ask that the work which has cost them fourteen years of earnest and disinterested labour, and in which the scholarship of all the leading denominations is represented, should have a fair chance. It is not for them, but for the Christian public or the Churches, to decide the question whether the revision shall be authorized for optional use or for exclusive use in the place of King James' version."

SUGGESTIVE.

The weakness of the Church in this land is strong enough to compel outward respect for God and His laws. No political party, no liquor interests, no combination of clubs, no association of money kings could put the Church down if she would only be true to her Lord, and present a solid front against the world. I have said this many times, and been as often challenged for it. But I have never uttered words with more consideration. I am absolutely sure that I speak the truth. And the Church ought to be ashamed of herself for doubting it. At the present time she cannot exert her legitimate power over the kingdom of Satan, because she is herself worldly. She ought to feel that she is enlisted under Christ, to follow His orders and fight the battles of her Lord. Too long and too much the world has shaped the life and ways of the professing Church, and too long the Church has consulted the world's ideas. It is her worldliness that gives the kingdom of Satan its strongest hold on earth to-day. And its prince laughs at professors in thousands of cases when he hears them pray Thy kingdom come. There is no doubt of this and we ought to think of it in connection with this prayer. It is worse than a worthless form of words, it is an insult to God to offer it unless our hearts are with it, and we are living in sympathy with it in direct opposition to what is known in the Scriptures as the course of this world.—*Rev. David Cole, D.D.*

THE ÆSTHETICS OF GIVING.

The fact is that all the mathematics of giving are sadly, radically misleading. The tithe system may answer for the minimum but never for the maximum of our gifts. It is obvious that one hundred dollars from a man whose income is a thousand is a very much larger proportion than is one thousand for him who gets ten thousand, or ten thousand for him who has one hundred thousand a year. In one case the man has \$900, in the next \$9,000, and in the last \$90,000 left for his own expenses. The ethics of giving reach higher, but we need some higher plane than either. Shall we call it the æsthetics of giving.

We need to apprehend the beauty of giving. It is the highest of the fine arts. We ought to be enamoured of it as of the most æsthetic productions of the artist, the sculptor, the architect, the musician. Then giving will not need to be urged; there will be rather need of restraining the people from bringing gifts, as Moses did.

The man or woman who learns to give in the right spirit forgets all about the duty in the privilege, and the absence of life's necessities would bring no such distress as to be cut off from this luxury.—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

A WORD OF CHEER.

The pastor was discouraged. His heart was heavy and sore. He had preached the morning sermon on the Sabbath of the communion, and then sat on the door-step alone like Elijah, sorely distressed. Why did he enter the ministry, for which he seemed so poorly and in which headapted, saw such poor results? Then came to him one who seemed a stranger, but whom he slowly recalled as having for a short time lived withing his congregation. After a most cordial greeting the stranger said: "For a long time I have been wishing to see you. Do you remember the visit you made me?" The fact of such a visit was dimly recalled. "Well, I could not forget what you said, and resolved to do my duty. I have been living a Christian life ever since, and I have been so happy. I heard that you were to be here to-day, and I came over to see you and to tell you." How bright the sunlight in the minister's heart! The two sat down at the table and praised God. The Lord sent His angel to the sad heart that day.—*United Presbyterian.*

THE FAMILY.

The family is the true social unit. When God began to unfold the ideal human society, He began with the family, calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. In the family are the rudiments of all social institutions. The Church is the family spiritualized, the State the family enlarged. The family is sacramental, and reveals earthly and heavenly relationships. In marriage there is the union that completes character; in parentage and childhood appear the co-relative responsibilities of government and obedience; in the connection of blood are found the inalienable ties of brotherhood. The family is a school of righteousness, the one place where character is best formed. It represents, in the simplest types, the laws of dependence and trust, of authority and obedience, of obligation and helpfulness, by which all the activities of life are regulated. The Christ of God came into the world through the family, and through the family the supreme blessings must ever come to the race.