

WESLEYAN ALMANAC, JANUARY, 1876.

First Quarter, 4th day, 11h. 9m. morning. Full Moon, 11th day, 2h. 9m. morning. Last Quarter, 18th day, 4h. 56m. morning. New Moon, 26th day, 9h. 27m. afternoon.

Table with columns for Day of Week, SUN, MOON, and other astronomical data for the month of January 1876.

THE TIDES.—The column of the Moon's Southern gives the time of high water at Falmouth, Cornwall, Horton, Hantsport, Windsor, Newport and Truro.

High water at Pletou and Cape Tormentine, 2 hrs and 11 minutes LATER than at Halifax. At Annapolis, St. John, N.B., and Portland, Maine, 4 hours and 23 minutes LATER, and at St. John's, Newfoundland, 20 minutes EARLIER than at Halifax. At Charlottetown, 2 hours 34 minutes LATER. At Westport, 2 hours 54 minutes LATER. At Yarmouth, 2 hours 30 minutes LATER.

FOR THE LENGTH OF THE DAY.—Add 12 hours to the time of the sun's setting, and from the sum subtract the time of rising.

FOR THE LENGTH OF THE NIGHT.—Subtract the time of the sun's setting from 12 hours, and to the remainder add the time of rising next morning.

WHO ARE THE WISE?

A Sermon preached in Music Hall, Boston, Wednesday Evening, Nov. 24th, 1875, by Rev. George Douglas, LL.D., in aid of the Boston Missionary Society.

"But he said, I am not mad most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."—Acts xxvi, 25.

For the right understanding of the historic Scriptures, it is always helpful to be familiar with those places where the recorded events transpired. Our text points to the ancient city of Caesarea, so called after the imperial Caesar. This city was one of rare magnificence. The lightness, grace and beauty of the Grecian architecture was combined with the massive strength of the Roman, and everywhere, in finest marble, porticos, temples, and theatres adorned its thronged avenues of wealth and refinement. High over all stood the vice-regal palace. Out of this palace a corrupt Felix and abandoned Drusilla had but lately and forever gone, while cold, frivolous, sceptical—yet withal, just and generous—Festus, reigned in his stead. Finding a distinguished Jewish prisoner left in bonds, and availing himself of the diplomatic ability of Agrippa, then on a friendly visit, he summoned the impeached and imprisoned Paul to appear and vindicate his character. How grandly historic is the scene which opens before us! Picture to your mind the presence chamber of Oriental royalty, with tessellated floor and pillared magnificence—its walls hung with the purple of Tyre and the damask of Damascus, while symbols of Roman power meet the eye in frescoed splendor. There enthroned, sit Festus and Agrippa, surrounded with a brilliant array of courtiers; while,—be astonished, O ye heavens, and give ear O earth!—the grandest type of moral manhood on which the world ever gazed, with famine in his look and beggary on his back, manacled and in chains, is before them. Responsive to the invitation of Agrippa, he rises in his defence and opens with graceful elegance. As he advances he kindles into power. Like the morning dew that hangs the pendant diamond-drops of flashing beauty on loftiest branch and lowliest leaflet, so the splendor of his eloquence rests on the entire of his great appeal, till at length, rising to a climax, he proclaims his faith to the resurrection of the dead; when Festus, aroused and defiant, with courtly insolence, arrested him with the cry, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad!" In the strength of that sublime fortitude which never forsook him, the Apostle responds, "I am not mad most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." And here it may be justly asked why we come from our land of the north star to this the modern Athens of the American continent, simply to recall this fragment of history enacted two thousand years ago! Why? Because it embodies mighty and ever-active principles, undying as the race. Who is Festus, but the cold, frivolous, and

sceptic spirit of the world, assailing our spiritual Christianity in its disciples, with a cry, "Thou art beside thyself?" And who is Paul, but the spirit of Christianity with its declaimer, "I am not mad, most noble Festus?"

To justify the Apostolic disclaimer by some three or four illustrations, is the subject to which we invite your prayerful attention.

I. The disciples of Christianity are not beside themselves when they assert their sense of obligation and supreme love to God.

The knowledge of God comes to us from two sources: The revealings of nature and the higher revelations of the Divine Word. In all nature there is evidence of intelligent design,—of wisdom in the mighty plan,—of power and executive and aesthetic skill in the development of the universe. When the searching and subtle intellect, trained by scientific methods, looks into the secrets of nature, what revealings greet the eye? It sees the inert molecules of matter, by some hidden affinity, rushing to each other's embrace, and building themselves up into forms of crystalline beauty. It sees the germ principles of life blossoming into the flower,—blossoming into the myriad forms of being, up and up to the crowded and kingly dignity of man. It sees the universal reign of law that, with grasp soft as silk but strong as treble brass, holds the universe of matter and of mind in its integrity. In all this we have the great literature of nature out of which intelligence deciphers something of the name and nature of God. Now thus far the worldly Festuses applaud and approve. But say, how crude are the conceptions of God which nature supplies! The God of nature, as nature tells its own story, is without mercy, and as far as we can see, without justice either, as the wrongs of the weak throughout the universe seem to declare. And here the Pauls of Christianity part company with the Festuses of the world, and turn to those higher revelations of Scripture for adequate conceptions of God. And how do the Scriptures make known God? Behold and see. Long ere Leonardo de Vinci had groped after, or Bacon had given to the world his Philosophy of Induction,—which by the plan of inductive thought rises from simple and known facts into broad generalities and possibilities,—long before this, David, Isaiah and our Divine Lord had applied this very principle to the knowledge of God. Observe the process, how natural and simple. In every man there is planted an image of the Divine,—tarnished, defaced, defiled, it may be, but an image still. And now from the known, the finite and perfect. Where shall I find out some of the finest properties of the Fatherhood of God? Why, see the noble father! How his children run to meet him; and there is responsive joy. Ah, but yonder in the silent room is the stricken lamb of his flock,—his dying girl. It is there he hastens. It is there he longest lingers, and with smiles twice born with tears, pour on her sweet, saddened heart the choicest treasures of his love. And what then? Why, "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for he knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust."

And where, again, shall we catch a conception of the wonderful sympathy and tenderness of God? Oh, see you the gentle mother, gentle to all! See her (as one has put it): She has a silent boy, the name of whose voice she never heard, for he was born dumb. Say, is he forgotten? Hear that mother as she sings her song of sorrow and of love:

"My silent boy, I hold thee to my breast Just as I did when thou wert newly born! It may be sinful, but I love thee best, And kiss thy lips the longest night and morn. Oh, thou art dear to me beyond all others, And when I breathe my trust and bend my knee For blessings on thy sisters and thy brothers, God seems the highest when I pray for thee."

And what then? why, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee. Can a mother forget? Yea, she may; yet will I not forget thee." And now from these premises how grand the induction! If you take all the sympathy that has trickled and dropped from the myriad human hearts that have throbbled through the ages,

and then put infinite to the mighty sum, still, it must forever fail to set forth the oceanic sympathy of God, who not only gave His love, but by incarnation, and atonement, and blood, and intercession, gave Himself for us. Now I would turn round and ask the most cold and sceptic man in the house, Is it insanity to recognize the authority of such a God? Is it madness to shed on Him the full summer bloom of the heart's intensest love? Never! Let, then, the sceptic Festus cry out, "Thou art beside thyself!" The disclaimer must be, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;" for, "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small: Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Again, the disciples of Christianity are not beside themselves when they found their confidence for time and eternity on this divine Word.

From the aspect in which we have just contemplated the character of God, it is to be believed that this great Father, full of sympathy, would leave His children in the darkness of this world, crying for the light, and refuse that light with words of cheer and consolation? If insanity there be, to believe this would be the greatest. It is the faith of all ages that God hath spoken to man,—spoken in all nature, spoken in the deep intuitions of the soul. It is the faith of all Christianity that God hath spoken to man,—supremely and finally in this Book divine. And what a foundation for confidence does this Book supply!

Look, for example, at its claims on the intellectual homage of the race. You are familiar with the gradations of mind-power amongst men. Beginning with average ability, above this we have talent, above talent we have capacity and power of reason, above capacity we have that indefinable, creative, transcendent force which we call genius. This stands as the culminating point where the intellect of man flowers into its highest ability and beauty. Now, by common consent, it is conceded that whatever the world's genius looks up to and holds in highest honor, must be higher than man. Go walk the ages! Go interrogate the masters of deep philosophy, of music, and of art,—those who have held empire over the intellects and hearts of millions, and what is the testimony? What gave inspiration to reverent and mighty Milton? What gave power to many-minded Shakspeare and LaPlace, and the long succession of geniuses, down and down to corrupt and brilliant: Byron, and that blatant atheist, Shelley, who enriched his poetry with the very beauties which he filched from that Book he affected to despise? It required a Creation and a Messiah to wake the lyre of a Handel, and the vision of angels to kindle the dying Mozart into the melody of his last requiem. Nowhere but here has highest art found its ideals to incarnate in fresco and monumental stone. Now, when the Festus of modern society would fling insult in the face of those who pay homage to this blessed Book, observe, it is not against the lowly Christian alone, but it is the loftiest master-builders of science, song, and thought sublime, who are thus impeached! And who is not ready to exclaim, "Hide that man his diminished head who would thus insult the intelligence of the ages by an effrontery which ignorance itself must blush to own?"

But then the claims of this Book rest on higher grounds than the homage of genius: Look at the magnificence of its revealings! I see the man of science standing on this rolling earth, looking out into the infinities,—as Pascal puts it:—by the aid of his glass his vision sweeps away and away, to that outlying world whose light has been traveling ten thousand ages before it fell on his eye. Go ask this man of Newtonian intellect, who has made worlds his stepping stones, on which to ascend and graduate the universe,—go ask him what is beyond his farthest vision, and his answer must be, "I cannot tell." And now turn to the child in our Sabbath-school, or the lowliest man of simple faith in the divinity of this Word, and ask him,—yes, ask him, and he will tell you, that beyond the sun and planets, beyond the fixed stars and nebula, beyond those flaming worlds that stand as the lamps

of God, lighting the way to the infinite,—yes, as the old hymn expresses it, "Beyond the bounds of time and space." there is a "heavenly place," a Father's house of many mansions, where eyes weep no more, and sorrow troubles the heart no more, where the orange blossoms of joy are no more blighted by the hand of death, but the tabernacle of God is with men. Who, in the face of this dares to assert that our Christianity cramps and fetters the intellect when it thus flings open the visible and invisible world for our contemplation? It reveals God, it reveals man, it reveals immortality, it reveals the great purposes of the Eternal in the universe itself. And then, still further: it is not only its revealings of grandeur, but the finding power which slumbers in God's Word, that claims our regard. "No book," says that profound thinker, Coleridge, "finds me like the Bible, and whatever thus finds me in the greatest depths of my being, must be of God." And who cannot testify to its finding power? How it handles the entire being! How like the knife of the anatomist it pierces to the dividing asunder, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart! How it walks with lowly steps the inner sanctuary of the soul, and drags out our secret sins to the light of God's countenance!—How it gives authority to conscience, and thunders and lightnings, and uncovers hell itself! And then, how it softens into tenderness, and like the soft whispers of the Eolian harp in sunny lands, soothes the spirit with a charm divine. Oh, this divine truth! In fair, angelic form, like her Master, she came down from heaven: like her Master she walked the earth; like Him is despised and rejected of men! This truth of God,—men have cast her into the fires, but she rose from the ashes more royal than ever. They have drawn the poniard, and by the cold steel of a merciless criticism, have sought to strike her to the heart; but there is a divinity in truth which murder cannot kill. Traumped in the dust like the flowers, like them she only exhales a sweeter fragrance. Radiant with the light of heaven on her brow, see her stooping to sweet childhood, and saying, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord." See her with elastic step hastening to assure the young that she will be the guide of youth. See her whispering promises in the ears of the disconsolate, and binding up the broken-hearted. See her putting her everlasting arms beneath the head of the dying. And then, when the world has done its worst, and age has done its worst, and disease has done its worst, and the ruined tabernacle is crumbling into the sepulchre, see her put the crown of an immortal hope on the brow of the perishing, and then, grandly lifting herself up, and pointing to another world, exclaim, "Fear no evil, for thou shalt dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." And now, most noble Festus, is Paul beside himself, and are Christians mad when they cling to this book, with its grand traditions, with its mighty revealings and imperial power to reach the heart? With undaunted front we can look the world in the face and cry, "I am not mad! not mad!"

Let all the forms that men devise, Assault my faith with treacherous art, I'd call them vanity and lies, And bind this gospel to my heart."

To be concluded in our next.

There is in China a remarkable people known as "the nameless sect." They profess "an old religion," which prevails more or less all over China, but especially in the province of Shantung. Disliked and persecuted by the civil authorities, they have for a long time endeavored to keep their beliefs and practices secret. Their religion is said to have come from the West, whence also they expect a deliverer. They do not worship idols. At the close of their religious services they have a meal of which bread and wine form a great part. It is thought that they may be the remnant of the native churches planted centuries ago in China, by Nestorian missionaries, who are said to have preached the gospel for nearly a thousand years through Southern and Middle Asia with marvellous energy and success, and to have exerted a powerful influence in China for upward of six hundred years, from the seventh to thirteenth century.

Dr. Leitch gave to a theological student the following rules for preaching:

- Begin low; Go on slow; Rise higher; And take fire; When most impressed, Be self-possessed; At the end, wax warm; And sit down in a storm."

GROWING OLD. Softly, O softly the years have swept by thee, Touching thee lightly with tenderest care; Sorrow and death they did often bring nigh thee, Yet they have left thee but beauty to wear. Growing old gracefully, Gracefully fair.

Far from the storms that are lashing the ocean, Nearer each day to the pleasant home light; Far from the waves that are big with commotion, Under full sail and the harbor in sight, Growing old cheerfully, Cheerful and bright.

Past all the winds that are adverse and chilling, Past all the islands that lured thee to rest, Past all the currents that wooed the unwilling, Far from the port and the land of the best, Growing old peacefully, Peaceful and blest.

Never a feeling of envy or sorrow, When the bright faces of children are seen; Never a year from their youth wouldst thou borrow; Thou dost remember what lieth between, Growing old willingly, Gladly, I ween.

Rich in experience that angels might covet, Rich in faith that hath grown with thy years, Rich in the love that grew from and above it, Soothing thy sorrow and hushing thy fears, Growing old wealthily, Loving and dear.

Hearts at the sound of thy coming are lightened, Ready and willing thy hand to relieve; Many a face at thy kind word has brightened— "It is more blessed to give than receive," Growing old happily, Blest, we believe.

Eyes that grow dim to the earth and its glory, See but the brighter the heavenly glow! Ears that are dull to the world and its story, Drink in the songs that from paradise flow; All their sweet recompense Youth cannot know.

Fourscore! But softly the years have swept by thee, Touching thee lightly with tenderest care, Sorrow and death they did often bring nigh thee, Yet they have left thee but beauty to wear; Growing old gracefully, Graceful and fair.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. One windy afternoon I went with a friend into a country almshouse. There was sitting before a feeble fire a very aged man, and, the better to keep from his bald head the cold gusts, he wore his hat. He was never likely to need it out of doors. He was very deaf, and so shakey with the palsy that one wooden shoe constantly pattered on the brick floor. But deaf, and sick, and helpless, it turned out that he was happy.

"What are you doing, Wisby?" said my friend. "Waiting sir." "And for what?" "For the appearing of my Lord."

"And what makes you wish for His appearing?" "Because, sir, I expect great things then. He has promised a crown of righteousness to all who love His appearing."

And to see whether it was a right foundation on which he rested that glorious hope, we asked old Wisby what it was. By degrees he got out his spectacles, and opened the great Bible beside him, pointed to that text, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1, 2.) Dear reader, the God of grace puts that blessedness within your offer. Embrace it, and you will be the happy man to whom death is welcome, whilst life is sweet.

In the following lines the word "that" is used to exemplify its various significations:

Now that is a word which often may be joined, For that that may be double is clear to the mind; And that that that is right is as plain to the view, As that that that that we use is rightly used too; And that that that that that line is right, In accordance with grammar, is plain in our sight.

JANUARY... Jan. 9.] LESS... MONDAY... TUESDAY... WEDNESDAY... THURSDAY... FRIDAY... SATURDAY... SUNDAY... TOPIC: Pa... GOLDEN... LORD... DORING... GEN... About fifteen... one of the most... shepherds of... in the mean tim... is never in a hu... plans. Some o... since it was sai... him a man aft... Lord hath com... over his peopl... ten since it wa... rent the kingdo... day, and hath... thine that is bet... allowed to rema... in the divine int... and so unchang... as if already ex... rights were for... chosen, though... fore he receives... might be, 1. Th... quired conditi... selection; 3. Th... Or another, 3. T... Verse 1. Mou... Samuel had no... all these years... his fall, his los... dominion of God... amities of the... it to cease, and... other. Until Sa... anointed; thence... only on a chang... succession, real... former is the pr... rected to fill... with oil, probab... 39, 23-33, and go... grandson of Boaz... ME. God selecte... king, king of Isr... gift of divine fav... 2. TAKE A H... was doneless a... quick, fiery j... endang'ring Sa... he hear of the ju... could be done w... better. So God... namely, to prep... invite to it Jes... the one who sh... who would be... were sinners, I... indeed, out of... piece of a good... right to know... used. God's... keep his own... these things, a... public. The... blood, and... 4. But what... and what... and what... Now and... and what... and what...