

the mind; the moral powers of perception become blunted, the heart becomes hardened, the conscience seared, the interests of eternity are neglected, the house of God forsaken, and the closet no longer listens to the silent whispers of prayer.

I have no doubt that many a parent, without any deep religious convictions, has earnestly wished that many of the forms of amusements were banished from the land. The extravagance in dress and the questionable society into which their sons and daughters are led, are to them sources of annoyance and anxiety.

Whatever invigorates the body, whatever improves the mind, whatever elevates the tone of morality, whatever benefits the social life, whatever advances your spiritual good, whatever widens and strengthens your influence for good, cannot be wrong. On the other hand, whatever is injurious to the body, whatever enervates the mind, whatever is detrimental to morality, whatever is dangerous to the social life, whatever endangers your spiritual interest, whatever weakens your influence, must be absolutely wrong.

You are bound to exercise your influence for good; it is a talent with which you are entrusted, whatever your sphere in life may be; and in order to have that influence vigorous and powerful, you must maintain no uncertain attitude towards the popular amusements of the day. Be decided and fully persuaded in your mind. And if you are an instructor of the young, your example will, it may be, tell on the youthful mind, when the solemn lessons you impart may fail to impress.

Brethren, and fellow-workers for Christ, let me entreat you as a brother, to carry with you a sense of your responsibilities to God, of the verities of God's Word, of the solemn charge committed to your trust, and let the weight of those thoughts bow you to the ground and lead you to cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Brethren and sisters, let your hearts be filled with the spirit of Christ, sit under the droppings of His love, and seek your delights in His fellowship and in close communion with God, and your highest enjoyment in His favour. "In Thy favour is life, and Thy loving kindness is better than life." I leave you with these reflections on amusements, and may the Lord lead us to the joys and pleasures at His right hand. At His right hand are pleasures for evermore.

### OUTLINE OF SERMON

PREACHED BY REV. A. BEANER, IN WARDSVILLE, ONT., AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Text—Psalm xxxix. 3: While I was musing the fire burned. Luke xxiv. 32: Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?

The psalmist was thinking. According to the law of its being, the mind must think; we may not be able to prevent its thoughts, but we may control and direct them.

Thoughts that are burdened with sorrow or that thrill with delight, keep busy even after we would dismiss them. Even when we sleep, sometimes our thoughts are not at rest.

As our characters and our lives are affected by what we think, it is a matter of considerable importance whether the subject of our thoughts be cheerful, or melancholy, pure or corrupt, forgiving or revengeful, light or solid.

Subjects for meditation are furnished by what we see, and hear, and read.

We place in the hands of our pupils, studies that are intellectual levers. No school board would think of introducing novels for text-books into our schools. The low-class novel is neither strengthening nor restful; it gives no food for meditation. Hence, unless the mind be trained to regular, cheerful and pure habits, it will fall into dissipating and ruinous tendencies.

Whatever be our vocation, there is one central subject about whose cheerfulness and purity there can be but one opinion, at least by Christian people, upon which every mind should dwell. It is a perfect regulator for all our mental and moral habits. This subject is

#### GOD.

I. You may think of His *sacrificing love*—"God so loved the world," etc.—as made known to men on the cross. His *justice, mercy and goodness*. How far reaching are His mercies, reaching even unto His enemies. His wisdom—everything in nature perfectly regulated—day and night, seed time and harvest. His omniscience—from this one mind come the stores

of thought that furnish food for all human and angel minds, and in all this infinite fund of knowledge, nothing but what may stimulate every mind to study, to admire, to love, to worship. How apparent is our own mental weakness and poverty in the presence of Him who "knoweth all things." We may meditate upon His holiness, purity and faithfulness, and find an eternity of profit in every phase of His moral character, His attributes and His works.

II. We may meditate upon His care for His creatures. Although the mighty God who inhabiteth eternity, He exercises the most tender care over the works of His hands. His tenderness extends to the least and the most unworthy; not only over the angels that excel in strength, but over the insect whose organization is so delicate, that it can be traced only by the aid of the microscope; the great seas and the dewdrop, the sturdy forests and the blade of grass. He watches over the life that flows in the vein of the leaf, as well as over the pathway of the planets. He gives the blush to the delicate flower, as well as the glory on His own throne. The wants of all His creatures are plentifully remembered. He heareth the young ravens when they cry. Necessaries and luxuries abound for both man and beast. Furs, fins and feathers are furnished according to the climate or the element. From the arctic to the tropic regions the great merchandise is going on, to scatter over the world food and raiment and luxuries that God has stored up for the need and pleasure of the race.

These are wholesome, generous, cheering thoughts. How tenderly the heart must feel towards its God as it meditates upon these things.

III. Then you have the *atonement*—than which there is no such remedy for evil.

"'Twas great to 'peak a world from naught,  
'Twas greater to redeem."

What mystery here. God can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth. Well may the angels desire to look into this plan. What a wonderful revelation of Himself, what a theme for our meditation.

We study the Father in Christ. Through Christ we learn more of God than through any other medium. Through the atonement we can study all that God is to us now, and get the promise of what He is to be to us hereafter.

This plan is perfect. Just what the world needs. We ask for nothing better. We cannot explain its mystery, but we know it meets the case. It is perfectly adapted to our spiritual wants.

You may think of its marvellous influence, of the changes it has wrought, its power to affect the inner and outer life of the believer. In vain we appeal to civil legislation to remove crime; at best, it can suppress in some degree the crime, and punish the criminal; but in this divine scheme for moral reform, we discover a power that will make peaceable and peace-loving neighbours and citizens of cannibals. The violent soul is arrested by it, and becomes a glorious champion for the truth. This is the element that changes the whole social system that it touches, by changing men's hearts.

Think also of its marvellous success, how it has outlived the opposition of the centuries, and is still the beloved angel of mercy for afflicted humanity.

IV. Think also of your attitude before God.

1. He hath made us, and not we ourselves. What a wonderful origin. Made in the image of God, immortal, capable of knowing and worshipping God.

2. By nature, aliens, outcasts, rebels, we have sinned, insulted His goodness, trampled on His law, defied His authority, until from the crown of the head unto the sole of the foot there is no soundness in us. To muse, however, on this wretched condition, is not calculated to make the fire burn. Yet, if men would think more of this they might be the sooner shamed from this evil way, to walk in the light of God.

3. It is the privilege of some of you to think of a better condition of things. Your high calling of God—the honour to which He has lifted you—"sons of God." He has taken you near to Himself, has taken your feet out of the mire, put a new song into your mouth, He has given you many great and precious promises.

V. Such meditation is highly needful.

1. The soul needs to rise into these higher regions of holy exercise, for greater purposes than simply to be happy. But as the mind is strengthened by study, and the eye becomes more accurate by practice, and the muscle stronger, so the soul by religious contem-

plation grows in moral power. Your soul-power changes from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, as it dwells upon the perfections of God and His ways. If knowledge is power, you gain the highest knowledge, and acquire the greatest power, as you meditate on holy things. Your love for God grows stronger, your holiness more intensified, your joy more abundant, your influence more prevailing. By this you are better prepared to stand fast in your liberty, to overcome sin, and recommend the religion of the cross to your fellow-men.

2. In such exercise you have *real happiness*. There is some satisfaction in meditating on God and His ways, there is real pleasure in thinking of your security. "I know in whom I have believed, and He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. There is something *real* in this. The fire burns in the heart of God's child when he reminds himself that he is saved by the grace of God.

3. Your hopes grow up into something definite. The Bible is real, Christ is real, He is not a myth to the believer, Christ lives in you the hope of glory. The light in which you walk is not false, you walk with holy meditations as with real companions, and your heart burns within you. There alone you find substantial joys.

4. It makes the future seem all the more real. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Our Lord hath prepared a place for you. It is the temple above, where the inhabitants no more say they are sick, they have no storms, no night, no famine, no wars. The angels are there, the glorified are there, many of your friends are there, Christ, the fountain of all blessedness, is there, there the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. And how true, how real all this is to the believer. These are the meditations that kindle the holy burning in your heart.

Let me invite you to exercise your glorious privilege. Tarry long in this mountain apart, and Christ will open to you the Scripture, wherein is the life of your power and the power of your life.

### REMINISCENCES.—II.

BY WM. HAMILTON, D.D.

#### IRISH SCHOOLS AND TEMPERANCE FIFTY YEARS SINCE.

In the early days there were no national schools in Ireland, yet it was easy in most places to obtain a classical education. Students, who had gone through their preparatory course and had attended one or two sessions at college, commenced teaching at their own homes, and many of them ultimately settled down as very efficient teachers. Sometimes letters came from out-of-the-way places to the professors at Belfast, requesting them to send on students as teachers.

About 1820 a school was commenced in this way at a miserable village in County Leitrim. It was very successful, and came under the care of several students in succession. In 1830 the occupant of the school sold his goodwill of it for £100 to two young men, who were assistants in the Royal Belfast Institution. I was one of the purchasers. My department was the classics, in which I had full employment, for there were forty classical pupils, about one half of them intended for the Romish priesthood. After remaining two years I sold out my share of the concern to my partner for £100, the same sum we had paid for the whole of it, and yet the village had not more than a dozen substantial stone houses, the rest of the dwellings being "mud-walled edifices." The school-house itself, though sufficiently large to accommodate a hundred pupils, was built of earth dug out of a hill side.

The well-to-do farmers of the neighbourhood and the few shopkeepers of the village were a jolly, social class of people. There were frequent little parties, and whiskey punch was a universal beverage. It was difficult, therefore, to resist the contagion of intemperance. I soon felt myself to be in danger, and resolved that I would abstain from whiskey altogether. I had not heard of the temperance reformation, but I happened to stumble on its original principle—ABSTINENCE FROM DISTILLED SPIRITS.

Just at that time the Synod of Ulster was awaking from her long and deathlike lethargy, and began to consider her duty to the benighted parts of Ireland. A deputation was sent to Connaught, consisting of Dr. John Edgar and Dr. Robert Wilson, two noble