

The Death of Dr. A. S. Gumbart.

The committee appointed to recommend a pastor for the Fifth Baptist Church, of this city, as a successor to the lamented Dr. W. T. Chase, unanimously decided to recommend Rev. A. S. Gumbart, pastor of the Dudley Street Baptist Church, Boston, Mass., and on Sunday morning Dr. Whitman, who is acting as a supply, announced that there would be a meeting of the congregation on Tuesday evening to hear the report of this committee. On Sunday evening he read a telegram from Boston, conveying the sad intelligence that Dr. Gumbart was dead. It is needless to say that the news fell like a thunderbolt on the congregation. He was in the very prime of life—in the 46th year of his age. It is understood that the committee had assurances that Dr. Gumbart would favorably consider the call if unanimously extended to him. It is learned that the cause of his death was angina pectoris. He was taken ill on Sunday morning at five o'clock and died at a quarter of eight A. M. Dr. Gumbart was born in Boston, November 25th, 1853. He was left motherless at the age of five years, and not long after his father took the family to New York. He received his early education in the public schools of New York City, and at Cooper Union. He served an apprenticeship as an engraver, and when deciding to enter the ministry a bright business career was before him. He studied theology, and was ordained in 1878. His first settlement was at Port Richmond, Staten Island. His later pastorates were at Jersey City, South Norwalk, Conn., and Brooklyn. By an unanimous call of the Dudley Street Baptist Church, Boston, he entered upon the pastorage in 1890. In these nine years 740 have been received to the membership, and unity and prosperity have been continuous.

Dr. Gumbart was possessed of an easy and effective delivery, and preached without notes. Besides his pulpit and pastoral work he found time to be a frequent contributor to the denominational paper, and only a few days ago we received a short article for *The Commonwealth*. It is needless to say that the death has cast a gloom not only upon his great congregation in Easton, the Fifth Baptist Church of this city, but upon the denomination at large who mourn his untimely death. We have been fortunate enough to secure a most excellent portrait through the courtesy of Mr. W. K. Krips, a deacon of the Fifth church, who recently made Dr. Gumbart a visit, and it will be found upon the cover page. —*The Commonwealth*.

To Know God in Christ—This is Life Eternal.

C. C. BROWN.

It is said that when Bishop Fisher came from the Tower of London, and saw the scaffold on which he was to be beheaded, he took from his bosom a copy of the Greek Testament, and raising his eyes aloft, said, "O Lord, direct me to some passage in Thy Word which will support me through this awful scene." Upon opening the book, his eyes fell upon these words, "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." He closed the book and walked on to death saying, "This is sufficient for me and for eternity."

Life eternal is the highest manner of life possible to man. The wicked are immortal, but nowhere are they said to possess eternal life. Because of this, and because the idea of unending punishment is so revolting, the effort has been made to make the Bible teach the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked.

In the Bible life eternal means more than life enduring. "He that hath the Son hath life," and this means that within the believer there is a power and a principle which rules and controls his being, and brings him at last to a condition fixed and eternal in joy and peace. Jesus declares that to know God in Christ is life eternal. To know means to recognize, to submit to, to be guided and controlled by. He who knows God acknowledges Him. He who knows God's revelation accepts it, yields to it, submits to it. Knowledge which does not influence one is not worth much to him. To know Christ is to sub-

mit to His law, to accept His mediation and atonement, to flee to Him for refuge from sin.

When everything else decays, this one thing is imperishable—the knowledge of God and Christ. It is the one permanent thing connected with our little life here below. These fleshly houses must decay. Nothing in them is to last, except that which had to do with God. Our institutions must all perish—even our churches; but that in them which had to do with God, no tooth of time can touch. Our friendships and personal intimacies are eternal only as they are knit together in God. To know God is life eternal—nothing else is.

Why, then, do not men know God? Because some have not heard of Him, and because others have no desire to know Him. To learn of God compels a man to learn too many things against himself. To the man that is having what is called "a good time" in this world—a good time in sin—ignorance of God is bliss. No narrow, hide-bound rule constricts his ways. He does not feel called upon to observe the Sabbath nor any of the laws of the decalogue. He can pursue any course of pleasurable sin, and no thought of God worries him. He ignores God, and in a way, is happy. This is the man who does not know God because he does not want to know Him. On a dark, rainy night, I was walking the streets with a bull's eye lantern—a lantern that could be made dark or bright by moving a slide. On my way I met a poor drunken fellow, staggering homeward. In order to see who he was, I turned the light quickly upon him. He staggered back and exclaimed, "Don't shine that thing at me!" He was drunk; he did not want any light. A light in revealing the way to him would also reveal him to others, and hence he wished no light. Everywhere we can hear the cry, "Don't shine that thing at me!" Men don't want the light. In the councils of the wise, the question is often discussed as to the best plan of reaching the masses. The truth is the masses do not want to be reached. The cry is on the air, "Don't shine that thing at me!" and hence it is that so many have not eternal life. Meanwhile the decree remains unalterable—"And this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

Sumner, S. C.

Doctrines Tested by Experience.

Intellectual conception of religious truth are often reshaped after we leave our class rooms and studies and go into the world of sin and sorrow. Experience is needed to keep the mind in balance. The theological student who spends three or four years in some secluded seminary, breathing only the atmosphere of the recitation room, will form conclusions which by and by he will find erroneous and worthless when he enters upon practical ministerial life. Truth is not fully revealed to him under the light of his study lamp. Theories which may seem unassailable fall to pieces when he applies them to practical evangelization. This is a big round world and cannot be understood by studying a small section of it with nothing but books to guide us. Human life is an authentic interpreter of revealed doctrine. There has recently passed away one of the ablest and best ministers of England in the prime of his days and ability, Dr. Berry, of Wolverhampton, known in this country at first because Mr. Beecher named him as eminently fitted to succeed him at Plymouth Church. The work and worth of Mr. Berry during the past dozen years fully justified Mr. Beecher's highest estimate of him. In a funeral sermon preached by Mr. Jowett, successor to Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, is told a very suggestive incident of Dr. Berry's life. When he left college he was an ardent iconoclast, ready to destroy most things of evangelical type. Old creeds were worn out. He said nothing of the atonement, and the story of the cross rarely told. But not long after the beginning of his ministry, on a dark, drizzly November night, a poor girl came to his door, asking if the minister would come to see her mother, for she was dying, and "to get her into heaven." It was a house of ill fame. He found the dying woman surrounded by fallen girls. He first told her that God was her Father, and she was His daughter, and how He loved her. There was no response. Then he related the story of the prodigal son and how

the Magdalene was saved. But it brought no comfort to the dying woman. Then there was dragged out of him, bit by bit, the story of the Crucified as his mother used to tell it to him while he was a child at her knee. It was then hope began to dawn to the woman, and as Mr. Berry himself said, "I think we got her in." The saving power of the cross was then learned for the first time by this noble and much loved man recently called to his rest. The atonement was a new truth to him as he dealt with sinful lives.

Flashes of Light From God's Lamp.

A. S. GUMBART, D. D.

Spirituality.

"Be spiritually minded."—Rom. viii. 6.

So far as Christian character is concerned few words furnish more food for helpful thinking than this word "spirituality." It is a word difficult to understand from a philosophical point of view, because it must largely, if not altogether, be interpreted through personal experience. Spirituality is something more than being emptied of worldliness, it is being filled with something. If a clay vessel is filled with perfume the vessel itself will become permeated with perfume. A Christian whose life is characterized by spirituality, is a Christian whose life has been permeated with the sweetness of the Christ-life. Spirituality is not cant, or sentimentality. It is as natural to the man as perfume is to the rose, and as unostentatious as the morning dew. It cannot be imitated. It is not sanctimoniousness. It is not an external adornment of speech or action. It has the genuineness, the modesty, the beauty, the strength of the Christ-character. It comes through an everyday consciousness of companionship with Jesus; through earnest and prayerful Bible study; through blessed communion with God; through kindly deeds and loving words; through a complete renunciation of the things of the flesh and a consciousness of voluntary and joyful surrender to the influences of the Holy Spirit.

For His Sake.

Two men were sin'ing a shaft. It was rather a dangerous business that they had to do—it was to blast piece of rock. Their custom was to cut the fuse with a knife. One man then got into the bucket and made a signal to be hauled up. When the bucket again descended, the other man got into it, and—with one hand on the signal rope and the other holding the fire—he touched the fuse, made the signal, and was rapidly drawn up before the explosion took place. It was a dangerous business. One day they left their knife up above, and rather than ascend to procure it, they cut the fuse with a sharp stone. It took fire. "The fuse is on fire." Both leaped into the bucket, and made the signal; but the windlass would haul up but one man at a time; only one could be saved. One man instantly leaped out, and said, "Up with ye; I'll be in heaven in a minute." With lightning speed the bucket was drawn up and the one man was saved. The explosion took place. Men descended, expecting to find the mangled body of the other miner; but the charge had loosened a mass of rock, and it lay diagonally across him, and with the exception of a few bruises and a little scorching, the man was unhurt. When asked why he urged the other man to escape, he gave a reason that skeptics would laugh at. If there is any being on the face of the earth I pity, it is a skeptic; I would not be what we call a "skeptick" to-day for all this universe. They may call it superstitious and fanatical;—but what did he say? "Why did you insist on this other man's ascending?" In his broad dialect he said, "Because I knowed my soul was safe, for I've gie it in the hands of Him of whom it is said that faithfulness is the girdle of His loins;" and I know that what I gie Him He'd never gie up. But t'other chap was an awful wicked lad, and I wanted to gie him another chance." All the infidelity in the world cannot produce such a single act of heroism as that.