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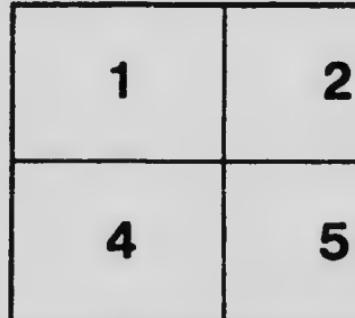
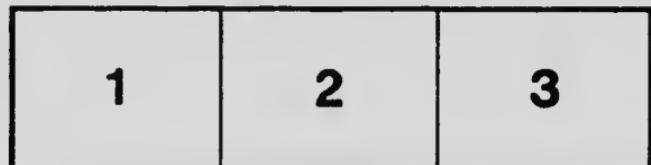
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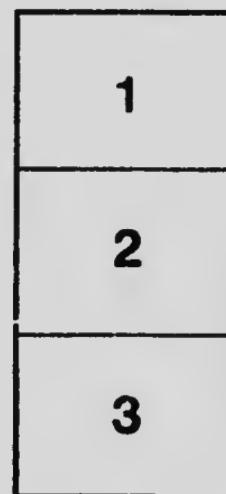
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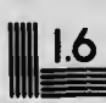
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# 4/2 Providence and Calamity

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BY  
REV. JAMES L. GORDON, D.D.  
Pastor Central Congregational Church  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Published through the kindness of  
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# Whirlwind Campaign

June 1, 2, 3

## To Raise \$5000

**OBJECT—To build a new home for our Redwood Avenue Mission.**

Here is a busy hub of Christian service, with mothers' meetings representing much helpful influence; a vigorous Sunday school crowded into a small house with most inadequate accommodation; absolutely held up in its development for want of more room. A new site is secured.

The plans for a splendid building are ready. Here is our opportunity of making a very definite contribution to the most important task the city has before it—the caring for "the stranger within our gates." Only one thing more is needed and a great band of consecrated workers are ready to plunge in with the extension of this good work—and that is YOUR MONEY!

Young man, you are one of 500 who by sending in \$5.00 apiece would do the splendid thing by raising half the required amount right away.

**DO IT NOW!** and mail to the church office marked "North End Building Fund."

This applies to others also to whom the collectors will not be able to get. Don't wait to be asked but mail your contribution right away.

All together, and in three days the thing is done, and you can't estimate results. They will be great and you the wise investor.

# Providence and Calamity

Why Does God Permit Earthquakes,  
Cyclones and Disasters?

Text: II. Corinthians, IV., 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If there is any question in these days, asked with more persistence than another, it is the one which we have announced for our consideration this morning, namely: "Why does God permit calamities and disasters?" Startling incidents, found recorded in the pages of our daily newspaper bring the question to our lips again and again. Every day furnishes disaster and every month a calamity, and the heart answers "Why?" Why pain? Why disease? Why sorrow? Why trouble? Why could not the universe have been created perfect?

We begin our discourse this morning with a few general considerations. First, there is the foundation of all truth and logic, namely, God must be right and just and true. The universe is founded on law, law is an expression for order, order is founded on justice and righteousness. If God were not just, this world would not hold together for an hour. There is a profound truth expressed in the words of Paul:—"Let God be true and every man a liar." A second consideration leads us to remark that in such a universe as the one in which we live, it would be impossible for us to have love without anxiety, light without darkness, pleasure without pain, heights without depths, mountain without valley and good without evil. A material and physical universe such as ours must be marked by certain natural limitations.

## Disasters Democratic

A third reflection leads us to remark that while disasters do occur nature is absolutely democratic in its mode of evolution. Floods do not skip the rich man's house, the lightning flash does not avoid the church, cyclones do not turn out in order to avoid the theological seminary, and last of all, man never loses faith in God notwithstanding all the strange incidents of this life. When the flood sweeps over the city we build a sea wall, when an earthquake shakes the neighborhood, we build an edifice which is earthquake proof. Men still build their homes at the base of Etna and Vesuvius.

vius. If every church in the city of Winnipeg were struck with lightning tomorrow morning, the good people of Manitoba would be found going to church next Sunday as usual.

We have introduced our theme with these few brief generalizations in order to open the way for that which we regard to be the strongest statement to be presented in this discourse, namely that 99 per cent. of the evil in the world is due to the carelessness and indifference of man, the responsibility for which can in no way be laid at the feet of the Creator. If you could wipe out all the evil for which man is responsible the world would be a paradise.

Natural calamities are few and far between. There are scores of people in this building this morning who were never struck by lightning, damaged by a flood, swept by a cyclone, or disturbed by an earthquake.

#### God Not Responsible

There are a thousand accidents for which no sane person would hold the Almighty responsible. We read of a railroad accident, but God never built a railroad. We hear of a mine accident, but God never dug a mine. We are told of the elevator accident, but God never constructed an elevator. We have witnessed an automobile accident but God never invented an automobile. Our evening paper records an accident by way of an exploding boiler, but a boiler is not a divine institution. If men build a railroad track beneath an overhanging rock—which rolls down by reason of the vibration caused by the passing train—is God responsible? Did God order the construction of the track in that particular neighborhood?

We repeat that for 99 per cent. of the evil in this world, man is responsible and not God, man and not the devil, man and not blind fate, man and not providence. All the earthquakes, floods and cyclones of history would not equal the shame, pain, and agony—the sorrow and confusion of one hundred years of bloodshed and crucifixions in the arenas of the Coliseum of Rome.

#### The Three Great Curses

The three great curses of the world have been war, famine and pestilence, and man is responsible for all three. The earth is full of food, war is the incarnation of human hate, and pestilence simply marks man's ignorance of natural law.

Why does man permit hunger, ignorance, disease, poverty, drunkenness, war and the white slave traffic? Here you have 99 per cent. of your questions answered.

Hunger, unnecessary hunger, has been the great curse of history. Hunger opens the door for war, famine and pestilence. War was born when men began to fight for food, and pestilence feeds on bodies which have been deprived of their proper nutriment.

### Famine and Food

Famine? Why there is food enough in the marriage of the sun and soil to feed twenty billion people. Famine means ignorance. The manhood of our Christian civilization knows enough today to make a famine in the future absolutely impossible. Children go to school without breakfast, and our cold storage vaults are packed with food a year old. Why does God permit famine, hunger and nakedness? God permits man, and man permits evil. This is our answer.

But still you ask: "Did not God have created a world without pain?"— "Why does God permit such natural woes as cyclones, earthquakes, lightnings and floods?" Why? Just to create that "Why?" All knowledge begins with a question. Hunger—Why? Thirst—Why? Desire—Why? Loneliness—Why? Trouble—Why? Pain—Why? Death—Why? The most startling thing in the universe is death—but for death man would never have tried to think out the great thought of immortality.

So our first answer is this—God permits evil and trouble in order to compel men to think. The race of man is intellectually lazy. Man has never been guilty of thought, serious thought, until circumstances have compelled him to think.

### Here to Learn

In the second place God has placed us in this world in order to learn the lessons of universal life. We are not here for pleasure but for instruction. Men must learn. Nations must learn. Civilizations must learn. The race must be educated. We must ask our own questions and answer them, too. God is not going to tell us a thing which we can find out for ourselves. God robes himself in silence. We must learn the lesson of life. God will wait ten million years but humanity will come, by its own will and volition, up to the divine standard. Perhaps it is worth one hundred human lives that men should learn and understand that a rotten beam in a splendid building will cause disaster. God waits for humanity to learn. Neither angel or spirit can speed the progress. There has never been one step taken for the advancement of humanity that humanity did not take that step. The race must work out its own salvation with fear and trembling.

## Governed by Law

The main lesson of life is wrapped up in one sentence, namely:

The universe is governed by law.

Why does God permit your child to fall down stairs? Why does he not interfere? The answer is clear, your child has been born into the universe of law. If God reversed the law of gravitation in order to save your child the whole universe would go to pieces. The law that hurts you, is the law which will help you if you will simply obey it.

The fire which burns your building, cooks your food, warms your house, melts your iron, molds your steel, lights your buildings, speeds your train, and illuminates your city

Would you vote to give up electricity, because the lightning strikes the earth occasionally? Would man ever have discovered electricity if it had not been for the lightning flash?

## To Subdue and Conquer

Another thought—The vital thing in the mind of God, is evidently not the protection of the individual but the projection of the race. God has placed the human race in this world to subdue and conquer. The victory of the race is of vastly more importance than the life and pleasure of the individual. The universe exists for humanity and not for any individual unit.

The mother passes into the child, the child into the individual, the individual into the clan, the clan into the tribe, the tribe into the nation, the nation into the civilization and civilization into history. The civilizations of the past have lived for us.

You live and suffer for the race. Your present loss will mean a future gain. Your reward will be an eternal character. This is the meaning of martyrdom. Ingersoll affirmed that the martyrs were fools. From which we infer that even though he was the incarnation of good nature, he did not possess one ounce of the heroism which produces a martyr. The individual must live for the race. The present must be sacrificed to the future. The lower must bend to the higher. For your present loss there is an eternal gain. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

## Conflict and Character

And then again—character must be developed by struggle and conflict. Congenial circumstances never develop a strong character. Guarantee a man a long life and no pain, with every pleasure and satisfaction of life as sure as the law of gravitation, and

his soul would cease to grow. Give your preacher a life-call and a good salary; and nine times out of ten he will give you a poor sermon. Churches which are endowed are said to be the churches which are in doubt. It is the men who are sure of winning the victory who lose the battle. Conflict produces character, and character is more than pain, disease, trouble or death.

### Nothing Fixed

Again—We are living in a universe where nothing is fixed. Astronomers talk about fixed stars. There are no fixed stars. Nothing is fixed. There is only one thing certain in the universe and that is the universal uncertainty of all things. The poet's suggestion—"change and decay in all around I see" is in harmony with the experiences of science and history. Childhood passes into youth, youth into maturity, maturity into old age, and ignorance into knowledge; matter is on its way to spirit and the soul is on its way to God. There is nothing fixed or certain beneath the stars. "Here we have no continuing city."

Some poor mechanic may, at this hour, be working in cellar or garret, whose invention will turn your business into bankruptcy inside of the next twelve months. The massive warships of the world, may, inside of two decades, be turned into useless scrap iron by the miracle of an atmospherical warship which will drop damnation and perdition down into fort and galley. This is an uncertain world. God has given us fair warning. To every man He says "move on!" To every generation He utters the same command "move on!" "move on!" Seven thousand years of floods, earthquakes, cyclones and lightnings bid us to take warning.

### Earth Not the Last Station

The eagle stirs up her nest and Providence will not permit humanity to believe that earth is the last station on the road of life. And last of all, let us emphasize the fact that—the great law of the universe is sacrifice—the sacrifice of the present to the future, of the lower to the higher and of the material to the spiritual. It is a law of the universe that every lower realm must be sacrificed to the realm next higher. Every sign post in the universe says "Look Beyond!" I have little respect for the man who tells me that I must preach "a gospel for the present." As well try to paint a mountain without a skyline as to preach a gospel without a future. A religion without a future is no better than a business without a future. Let it be forever remembered that from the divine standpoint death, pain, disease and all the accidents and incidents of time and sense are absolutely insigni-

fificant compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us—"for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The main thing in every plan is not the process but the result GOD HAS A PLAN! The knowledge of that fact is enough.

Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His works in vain,  
God is His own interpreter  
And he will make it plain.

There is a spark of divine life in the heart of each one of us which no cyclone can reach, no tornado can touch, no catastrophe harm, no accident hurt and no incident affect. "He shall cover thee with his feathers and underneath his wings shalt thou trust."

If I have not answered to your satisfaction the question: "Why Does God Permit Calamities and Disasters?" may I ask you a question—"Will the finite ever be able to comprehend the Infinite?" Can a father explain himself to his child?

"I know there are no errors  
In the great eternal plan  
And that all things work together  
For the final good of man."



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# All's Love Yet All's Law

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By JAMES L. GORDON, D.D., Pastor  
Central Congregational Church,  
Winnipeg

This book cannot do other than lead men to a better realization of the chief, the supreme good, and to help them find God. Dr. Gordon, the popular Winnipeg preacher, has prepared a book of fine quality. It is distinctive, epigrammatic, thoughtful, brilliant. Dr. Gordon does not confuse his readers with fine-spun theories. He gives facts, and illustrates them out of the sweet and solemn verities of human life. He strikes deeply and with unerring hand into the heart of things—things that count, that are worth while. Vital incentives, such as spur the soul to high action and daily faithfulness, find premier place in his appeals.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY



Straightforward, manly talk that pulsates and throbs with all the vim and vigor of a man of strong convictions and consuming earnestness.



#### NOTE.

For the information of our subscribers and friends the following list of sermons published since the organization of the publication committee has been prepared:

- Justice to the Jew.
- \*The Romance of Protestantism.
- \*Business Methods which ruin Character.
- Grace, Grit and Greenbacks.
- \*The Cigarette, (by Rev. Mr. Weeks.)
- Lloyd George, or the Secret of a Strong Personality.
- What are the Signs of His Coming?
- Cultivate a Taste for Solid Reading.
- How Can I rid Myself of Fear?
- Nero and the Early Christian Martyrs.
- Is Christian Science a Religion?
- \*The Premier's Reply and a Day when Everything goes Wrong.
- President Wilson and Mexico.
- Night Life in Winnipeg.
- The Traitor in the Home.
- The First Five Minutes After Death.
- An Englishman in Canada.
- Five Great Coming Events.
- The Hand that Rocks the Cradle.
- The Inside of the Cup.
- The Coming Race.
- How and When Shall the World End?
- Sir Rodmond and Mr. Norris.
- The King Shall Be First.
- Your Mother and Mine.
- A Plain Talk to Girls.

Those marked thus \*—are out of print.

Any of the above will be furnished while they last at 10e. each.





## Mid Week Service

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REV. ERNEST R. WEEKS

Our Associate - Pastor, will conduct a Popular Social Service in the Church Parlors on Wednesday Evening, June 3rd, at 8 o'clock. Come and invite your friends. Stay for refreshments and hear results of the Whirlwind Campaign.



UNITED CHURCH  
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## This Evening

May 31, 1914, at 7 o'clock

**REV F. HYATT SMITH**  
OF BUFFALO, N. Y.  
Will Preach

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**JOHN HARRISON**  
OF MONTREAL  
The Great Tenor, will Sing



As Dr. Gorden will be absent on his vacation from June 21st to July 24th, inclusive, no sermons will be published during that period.

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