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SERMONIC.

SONGS OF THE BIBLE.

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Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.—
Psalm 1: 23.

I wish to talk with you for a few moments this evening on the songs of the Bible. For this precious book is not only a theological volume, it is not only a divine storehouse of moral truth, it is not only a story of redemption, it is not only a record of God's dealings with his people, it is not only the richest volume of biography, poetry and history—but it is also a *music-box*. It plays many airs, but in the brief hour of our communion we can only hear a few of them.

1. And, first, notice the Song of the New Birth. Every believer has learned some of the notes in this song, for we enter the Kingdom singing this song. When we were dead in trespasses and sin, we sang only the world's songs—songs of merriment and glee, songs of mirth and love. We thought they were the richest and best. We had paid large sums of money to great vocalists, who thrilled us so that the tears moist-

ened the eye. But when our eyes were opened to see the face of Jesus, and our deaf ears were unstopped to hear the music of His grace, then our joy could no longer be expressed by the songs of the world; then we began to sing a new song, the song of redeeming grace, and the old songs have since seemed very tame and superficial.

If you study the miracles of Christ, you find in every instance the first act of the healed one was to begin to praise. The leper, cleansed of his loathsome disease; the paralytic, enabled to carry his bed on the joyful return to his home; Bartimeus following his physician—each one had a song of praise for the healing Christ. And every redeemed soul, with the first birth of the new life, has a new song of praise and prayer mingled in response to forgiving love. David's experience, I think, has been the experience of every new-born child of God: "He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my foot upon a rock and established my goings; and He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

2. Then, second, another song of the

[The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.]

Bible is the Song of Thanksgiving. The harp of the king of Israel was strung in tune to thanksgiving, and its notes have been echoing in the heart of the Church for three thousand years. And what had David to thank God for? Let us listen for a moment to the royal singer: "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"—creation, physical and mental power. How seldom, friends, do we realize, until we are deprived of some faculty, how much we are indebted to God's goodness for sight, and hearing, and speech, for the healthy action of our limbs and bodily powers! There are some men who are never contented, and are always grumbling at the sight of a pebble in their pathway or a little cloud in their sky; and I have sometimes thought that a good remedy for their complaint would be to shut them up for an hour every day in an asylum for the deaf and dumb, or blind, or in an insane asylum, and that after a few applications of this remedy they would say, "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Then there is another song of David: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." Then David goes on to enumerate some of the mercies of the Lord: "He satisfieth my mouth with good things; He crowneth me with loving kindness." He praises Him for summer and winter, for food and raiment, for health and strength, for deliverance and protection, for sunlight and shower. And you remember that his gratitude increases to such a mighty torrent of praise that he wants the whole universe to join him in singing praise: "Praise ye Him, all His angels, all His hosts; praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light; praise Him, ye Heaven of Leavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."

Now, some of God's children live on His mercies day by day, and forget that they are all God's creatures, from the air we breathe to every blade of grass, and every atom of food, and every dollar of wealth, and every link of hu-

man life; and it is only when some deliverance flashes like a meteor before their eyes that they recognize the name of God as the Giver, and begin to praise His love for giving.

We talk sometimes of our "common" mercies and our "ordinary" mercies. The words are a falsity always. All our mercies are so rich, and are so permeated with divine love, that if we would only appreciate them, our hearts, like David's, would be burdened with grateful praise. And may I impress this truth upon you, dear friends? There is no life which has not in its daily experience causes for thankfulness. There are some who never see these causes, because they keep their eyes fastened on the dark specks of disappointment and trial; seeing only these, they fancy these specks cover the whole sky. And now, my disappointed friend (and I suppose it would be strange if even in this congregation there were not some), suppose you pick out a few of the mercies and be not so eager to find the dark specks. Has God taken your property from you? You have health left, and that is richer than gold and silver. You have dear ones to love you, and all the wealth in the world would not buy one of those true hearts. Has death entered your home, and do you cry out in vain for the heart that is cold? Even then, the dear one has not been taken away forever, for heaven is the goal of the Christian spirit. And if you were to sit down to-night and tell of all the losses that you are suffering, if I knew anything about your history, I could tell you of the mercies you enjoy, and there would be a thousand mercies for every single loss.

Oh, for more praising children of the Heavenly Father, who have eyes for the silver lining of the clouds, who have constant gratitude to God for His mercies! It is true in every day in every life, that if we were to add up carefully the two columns, the column of blessings and the column of what we would call disasters, the former always outruns the latter.

Oliver Wendell Holmes has beautifully said: "If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me that there were particles of iron in it, I might search for them with my clumsy fingers and be unable to detect them; but take a magnet and swing through it, and the magnet will draw to it the particles of iron immediately. So let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and, as the magnet finds the iron, it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is always gold."

But David did not strike his harp only for temporal mercies. "I will praise Thee, for Thou hast heard me"—praise for answers to prayer; he has a song for these. "I will praise Thee, because Thy loving kindness is better than life"—loving kindness in giving strength perfected in weakness. Every step of our pilgrimage should have a song for this loving kindness. And then what believer has not a song for these mighty works which in all the earth are glorifying the Architect? You remember the account of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem: the garments of the people carpeted the way, and their shouts of praise filled the air, and then it says the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen.

Christian, stop gazing on self. Stop brooding over your petty trials, and look up and look out on the world, and see what mighty works the Lord is doing. They are spreading their garments on the highway for the coming of the King. The shout of "Glory to the Son of David!" is sounding over all lands to-day and is gathering volume every hour. And have you and I no song of praise, as prophecy is being every day garlanded with millennial radiance, and as all the ends of the earth are seeing the salvation of our God?

3. Then there is a third kind of song in the Bible, and that is the Song of Victory. In the early morning twilight an immense host stood on the bank of the Red Sea, and from all of this grand

company of two millions there rose to Heaven a song of triumph and praise. The day before, you remember, there had been no singing. Hemmed in by the waters and by Pharaoh's pursuing army, Israel had no heart for anything but fears and murmurings. But God had commanded them to go forward; even those deep-rolling waves seemed to oppose any escape from the enemy; and when they obeyed God in the face of the seeming impossibility, there was opened a dry path for them through the sea, and with the pursuing chariots behind them they pressed quickly on, until with the morning's light they stood on the opposite shore, and looking back they saw no enemies, but only the waves which had overwhelmed the chariots and had covered Pharaoh and his host.

No wonder that they felt like singing, for all the fears of yesterday had been buried in that sea. No wonder that we read that they sang unto the Lord, for the victory was wholly His. Their only part had been going forward. No wonder that they sang with full hearts, "He hath triumphed gloriously;" for of all that mighty army of Pharaoh not one was left alive, and Israel had nothing to fear from Egypt any longer. What grand congregational music, beloved, that must have been, with only God and the angels for listeners! Old and young, parents and children, men and women, all joined in the song, with one heart, for all had been delivered, and with one passion of gratitude, for all recognized God's mighty hand.

We do not read of any such singing down in Egypt, for they were slaves there, and slaves never sing of victory, whether they are Pharaoh's slaves or Satan's slaves. There was a time afterward, you remember, when God's chosen ones were in captivity, and their enemies urged them to sing some of the old home songs. But they had no heart and no voice for praise; and so we read that they hung their harps on the willows, saying, "We cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land."

And this explains the fact, which I am sure has surprised many of you, that there are very few recorded instances of victorious singing; for Israel was so constantly forgetting God and turning back to the old idols, that the victories were few and the shout of triumph was seldom heard. I think there was singing when the uplifted arms of Moses brought the victory over Amalek. I think there was singing when faith shouted beside the walls of Jericho, and the shouting brought them to the ground. I think there was singing when Deborah and Barak stood over the dead body of Sisera.

There are many Psalms of David which are like a full orchestra of praise; but the majority of them, you remember, are penitential cries, a singing by the road, as by the waters of Marah. And so it is, in truth, brethren, that in the Church to-day the lamentations outnumber the praises; that the defeats are more numerous than the triumphs; that there is more singing by slaves, and on Sundays, too, than there is grand singing by conquerors. Open any of our church hymn-books—take this one, it is a good sample—and look through it in your homes to-night, and see how many songs of triumph you can find between these two covers. Why, the majority of the hymns in this book are of a clinging faith, hymns of trust in the midst of the battle, hymns of hope which anticipate victory, hymns of comfort for the dying, and hymns of aspiration after a closer walk with God. There are few shouts of triumph actually experienced. And so I fear that the average Christian partakes but little of victory, and so has not learned to sing its song. It is often said by preachers—and it is a good sample of the preaching by most of us ministers—that we are like warriors fighting for the victory, that share not yet in the shout of them that triumph.

Well, now, friends, what a gloomy prospect this is to any believer—fighting, and never conquering; going into the field and into the conflict with no songs, because there is nothing to sing

about. Thank God, that while we must put Satan under our feet until death brings the battle to an end, we may carry this host and that host that he sends against us; we may perfume each day's experience with our songs of victory as we leave one and another easily besetting sin dead forever on the battle-field. Israel was a long way from Canaan when this song of triumph rose to heaven. Between that shore, strewn with the dead bodies of the Egyptians, and the Jordan, there lay forty years of sinning and repentance, of murmurings and fightings and tears. But the victory, in the very beginning of those forty years, was a glorious reality. It disposed of Pharaoh, who never troubled them again, and the long pilgrimage which followed that hour never, I think, lost wholly the inspiration of that opening song, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

How about *your* songs of victory, believer? Have you ever had occasion to stop in your march of life, perhaps right on Broadway or in your counting-room, and over some conquered sin set up a pillar on which you inscribed these words: "He hath triumphed gloriously"? You and I sing, and we sing wisely, too—

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down;
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou obtain thy crown:—

but we can win the final crown of victory only by successive triumphs every day, and hence songs of victory should rise from the smoke of every day's conflict.

When Pompey, in the year 61 B. C., returned to Rome the conqueror of the known world, the brilliant procession of trophies only, from every land, occupied two days in moving along the *Via Sacra*, and at the head of the procession were carried brazen tables on which were enumerated the long list of the nations he had conquered. But it was by a long succession of victories that he reached the height of glory—victories in Africa, in Europe, in Asia,

until at last he held as captives nine hundred cities and a thousand fortresses.

And so the Christian can attain the final and complete triumph, whose mighty wave of glory will lift him up to the throne of God, only by successive victories, to-day over Pharaoh, to-morrow over Amalek; and though the crown is given only when the last foe lies dead on the Jordan's bank, the songs of triumph, bursting forth in the wilderness, will be an inspiration for to-morrow's battle and the prophecy of final triumph.

4. Then there is one more song I want to call your attention to, and that is the *song in the night-time*. Two men, with backs bleeding from every mangled vein, lay in a dungeon, with their feet fast in the torturing stocks, and with only a prospect of violent death before them on the morrow. And yet we read that these two men were *singing at midnight*. Now just look through that dungeon, and see if in its gloomy silence you can find any inspiration for singing; uncover those backs, and see if in that mangled flesh you can see any occasion for praise; lift up those heavy chains, examine those torturing stocks, put your hand gently on those swollen feet, and see if you find anything that would lead a man to sing praises. And yet at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God.

Well, naturally you may ask, "Were they mad, and was this singing the delirium which sometimes follows intense sorrow and pain?" No; it was intelligent singing, as intelligent as if the surroundings had been peaceful and propitious. Well, you may ask, "How can any one sing praises when there is nothing to praise God for?" The world says, be rich and sing; the world says, be successful and sing; enjoy physical health and sing; drink deep of the fountain of human friendship and love, and then you will feel like singing. But when it comes to be midnight, all the world can do is just to stand near you and give you its

poor solace of pity as the one thing it has to offer.

We draw the curtain, because the very sunlight seems to be an intrusion; we close the musical instrument because its sweetest tunes seem out of place; we clothe ourselves in sable robes, so as to let the world know how miserable we are. Why, in a city close to this, custom has made it nearly obligatory that the shutters should be closed a whole year and the crape hung on the door, as an advertisement to the world of the wretchedness of the family inside.

The time is coming some day, friends, when God's children will come under His rule and will be free from bondage to the world, and then Christians will walk and praise and sing as children, not of the darkness, but of the light. "At midnight Paul and Silas praised and sang praises to God." Who does not love music? And the richest music in this world, friends, is the music of the human voice. All the orchestras in this world cannot produce sounds as rich and as persuasive as the song bursting from human lips—lips that have been touched with an inward gladness—whether it be the fisherman of Naples, whose song keeps time with his oars, or the Tyrolese laborer filling the mountain caverns with his sweet echoes of harmony, or the English plow-boy singing as he drives his team, or the Highlander making the glens and moors of Scotland resound with his merry glee.

But the richest vocal music is the music that is perfumed with thoughts of God and thoughts of heaven, and the richest sacred music is the music at midnight. You open the history of the experience of God's children; the moment you have done so, you have touched a string that starts the sweetest music on earth. Why, hear Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I

will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Songs at midnight! Do you not think that Joseph sang in the prison-house of Potiphar? Do you not think that those three young men sang as they walked through those furnace flames, with a fourth like unto the Son of God? Do you not think that Daniel sang, and that his songs went up from the lions' den? Why, the cells of the Inquisition have resounded with songs of joy; songs have mingled with the breaking of bones on the rack; at the stake, songs have been wafted Zionward with the rising flames. And I love to think that all over this sorrowing world to-night there are songs at midnight—songs where wealth has been swept away, because the incorruptible riches are eternally secure; songs on the sick bed, because underneath are the everlasting arms; songs in the valley of the shadow of death, because the rod and the staff comfort and sustain; songs in the chamber where the dear one lies dead, because of the glory unspeakable in which the ransomed spirit is bathed; songs by the new-made grave, because the Resurrection and the Life has lain there too; and songs in the home where there is the vacant seat, because the eternal weight of glory is being fashioned by these afflictions; songs at midnight, believer, because the morning is glorious dawn, and because the stars shine the brightest in the darkness.

Now, some one of you may say here to-night: "Oh, if you were to know about me!—my cross is so heavy that I cannot sing." I tell you, believer, there is no heaviness of spirit in the secret place; I tell you there is no darkness when you are walking with one like unto the Son of God. If there were more singing Christians, I tell you there would be more seeking sinners. It was when Paul and Silas sang at midnight that the prisoners heard them, and I think the jailer heard the singing before he felt the earthquake, and I doubt very much if the earthquake would have brought him to

penitence if he had not heard the singing first.

And so I urge you to-night to sing, so that Satan's prisoners may hear you, and bear witness every day to the joy of the Lord that is in you. And if sometimes—for I know how it is myself—if sometimes you feel as if you could not sing—feel like a bird with its wings clipped—just try Paul's method at midnight: *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and then they sang praises to God.* Just begin to pray; you will find the joy of the Lord rising to your lips, and the song at midnight will be the wings to waft your spirit up to God's throne.

I heard a soldier say once on the battlefield, when he was dying: "I can't help singing." Although the bones had been crushed by the terrible, deadly balls, he said he couldn't help singing. And what do you suppose he sang, as ball after ball played over him? He said: "I can't help singing

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies."

And as he was singing, he heard a multitude of voices; he had started a whole company in singing that hymn:

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies."

And pretty soon, all over that battlefield, they were joining with him in singing that hymn. *He couldn't help singing*; and it was only a few minutes after that that he joined the choir in heaven.

Thank God! we can sing at midnight; and when you and I stop singing because it is midnight, we deny the Master; but when we keep singing, the world looks at us and says, "There is a believer that can sing at midnight."

5. I do not stop, dear friends, except to call your thought (and then leave it there) to the simple fact that there is one more song—and you and I will know more about it by-and-by, and little can I tell you of it now; one more song mentioned in the Bible, and that is, the song before the throne. And only one person ever lived on this earth that heard that song, and that was the apostle John, at Patmos. Have you

never strained your ear to hear that song, because, in its glory-swelling hallelujah, there is a voice that used to join with your voice on earth? There are just these facts about that song that I must bring out to you to-night. In the first place, there is an immense company of singers. I heard once, in the Crystal Palace at London, such music as I never expect to hear again this side of Jordan. There were thirty-five hundred singers and over twelve hundred musicians, and I sat and heard them sing that oratorio of the Messiah; and I hardly knew whether I was here, or in heaven. But it is a grander choir there: ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands form the company that are singing that song. And then there is this other fact about it: it is a new song. I think we can begin to sing it here. I think

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,"
is a part of it. I think

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"
is another line in it. I think

"All hail the power of Jesus' Name"
is two or three lines in the song. But it is a new song: it will be new when we cross the flood. Angels cannot sing it; only the redeemed.

And, then, it is a tearless song. Did you never sing the old songs of thanksgiving at Christmas in the early home, when, as you sang, just before the children were going away and the family circle was to be separated, you sang some old, familiar hymn, and you saw in mother's eyes the tears beginning to well up? And I can remember a time, in my old home that is sadly broken up now, when we all broke down; for we were to separate, perhaps never to meet again. And that is the way, dear friends, with most of our singing. We hardly welcome dear ones before we say good-bye; and our richest memories today are the songs that were interrupted by the going out. They are tearless songs there, and they are eternal songs. Not a tear ever glistens in the eye, and no one ever goes out.

Would you not like to join that choir?

Would you not like to stand there and sing those songs before the throne? Thank God for the songs here! Thank God for the memories that, with you and me to-night, reach back and build up again the walls of our early homes! Thank God, that we can sit down and recall to mind the voices that once joined with ours! But, thank God, above all, for that song before the throne! You and I are going to be there, where the congregations never break up.

"Ten thousand times ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light.
'Tis finished! all is finished—
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in.

"What rush of hallelujahs
Fills all the earth and sky!
What ringing of a thousand harps
Bespeaks the triumph high!
Oh, day for which creation
And all its tribes were made!
Oh, joy for all its former woes,
A thousand times repaid!"

THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF NATIONAL FESTIVITY.

THANKSGIVING SERMON BY HUGH S. CARPENTER, D.D., IN BEDFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord. Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.—Neh. viii: 10.

THE fair way to expound the meaning of a Scripture text to its fullest bearing, is to expound it, first of all, in its immediate and contextual reference. There is set out here the privilege and duty of hilarity and material festivity. A hearty meal, a happy treat of entertainment, is a fitting emblem of sound enjoyment. If one intends to thank God in the body, it is with the body that he must thank God. If he is to thank God for his physical existence, he must keep his physical subsistence in condi-

tion to thank God. There is far more than many see in the injunction of the grace that leads to glory. "Glorify God in your bodies." That is a psalmody of the material make and a logic set in worship. "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

The genuine superiority of soul or spirit over flesh is to be disclosed in the ability of the former to handle and to hold the latter, not in the disposition to disuse it, to discard it, to despise it or to dread it. The supremacy of man over the lower animals is shown, not by his driving them away, or extirpating them with huntsmen, hounds and horns, still less by his fleeing from them in dismay; but by his taming them and training them. He is the good driver who is skilled to manage horses that are mettlesome, horses that are free and fast, full-blooded steeds and fiery chargers, and to bid them go, or to hold them in. Let him have the reins. Whereas many persons manage their material forces by feeble meddling with them, now flapping and fluttering the lines, now jerking and sawing at the bit, now chirping with incessant and monotonous cluck-cluck, "Get up there!" feverishly plying the lash, and in the same breath, frightened at the starting speed, shouting at them, "Whoa! whoa!" Drive horses so that you can hold them. Hold horses so that you can let them go. And so sway the forces of your earthen nature. The engineer in the caboose, who knows the value of the train he leads, will lay a firm but limber hand upon the throttle. It is as important now for us to understand the philosophy of material heartiness as the piety of material holiness. Physical exuberance is not the exclusive right of those who are in "rude and bovine health," or animal spirits in their zest of ebullition. It can be a practice of refinement and of principle. You cannot fail to have observed, ere now, an invalid upon the couch, a valetudinarian within his chamber, who manifested more self-command and shed more magnetic sunshine than those who passed by in their

strident way, or stalked in their conceit of vigor. The grapple with pain and conquest of it, the grip of patience and power in it, the patience of peace, the pleasure of self-oblivion in considerate thoughts for others, the sensitive submission and the mantling gratitude—all show how far one that cannot have what he would enjoy can enjoy the rather what he has.

It is surprising how delicious is the frugal meal in the kindly cabin where household love lingers like the light of day; how the poor man munches his bit with savory relish; how blithe the blind can make themselves, and how spry the lame, and how sprightly the infirm, and young the old, when the heart is filled with tenderness to mankind and with trust in God! The elder of two little brothers just now exclaimed in exultant tones, "I am allowed bread with butter on it." The younger, trustful and content in the same maternal care, responded, "My mamma allows me bread without butter"; and was no less pleased and happy over it.

The actual deprivation of material enjoyment takes place in the perversion of excess, the distortion of disordered functions. He who, unable to maintain the balance of power among his appetites and passions, solicits foreign forces to invade his nature by way of their aid and comfort, and suffers them to establish a protectorate which is a domination and dominion, as the decayed, declining Roman Empire welcomed the invading Goths and Vandals, or the Russian Slavs the Variags, or the poor Khedive the Porte, he has so much force as to become forceless, and so much human nature as to have no natural humanity.

It is the young man whose nerves are twinged and tweaked and twittered with tobacco, whose very pores are plugged until his vitality flounders between expectation and suppression; it is the tippler or the toper, who, to sink his sorrows and to drown his struggles, seattles his soul; it is the libidinous, who to slake his passions sates his powers, spills his strength, and sells his being for a slave; it is the sloth, who by

muffling his agency, overlays and smothers it—it is such as these, who go sighing on their way, and tottering through time to tumble into their eternity.

Just as some persons can at no time properly be said to eat, so many spirits can never really be said to enjoy. I say that some never truly eat—not in the right sense of eating—never know, that is to say, from year to year, what it is to feast. As the Scripture says: "And never eateth with pleasure." Nowhere a square meal, really? Do you gulp? Then you miss it altogether. You did not realize how much there could be in that mouthful, or that morsel; how much taste, how much nutrition, how much satisfaction. Do you say, "I ought to know; I tasted it, I certainly had it"? No, indeed, you did not have it; you just missed it. To gloat, to gulp, to glut, to guzzle, is no more to eat than to choke is to breathe; to swill and swig is not to drink. On the other hand, to drink is not to sip, and to eat is not to peck and pick and prink and pine.

Even so, the illustration holds. It is not to have a happy life to have a giddy one. Frivolity snatches something, and hastily swallows something which it cannot relish after all. Dissipation musses with its food, and miserably musses uncongential fragments. Hollow mirth has nothing that is sustenance or substance. Vain glory feeds on froth. Flattery essays to feed on sugar-plums, and vanity goes famished amid the glittering of fancy dishes and of changing courses. True enjoyment must include the heart's leisure, liberty and plenty, the fullness of the nature in the fitness of the life. Beyond any question, in the development of man under the hygienic laws, the sanitary system, the regimen of righteousness, there is yet to be discovered and displayed a material existence, truer, higher, happier, when mankind shall have better learned to take care of themselves, because God takes care for them; when the laws of breath shall be so understood, that the human frame from infancy to age shall breathe God's air and not manufactured gases; when child-

hood shall not be cramped or crammed, but fed and comforted; when infants shall not be wantonly and recklessly and cruelly hurled into the world, but gently and wisely brought forth and sensibly reared; when educational schools shall not be hot-houses and forcing beds, but gardens, meadows, groves; when a full grown man shall have time to think; when business shall not be a grinding wheel, nor trade a tread-mill; when dress shall not be a straight-jacket, but a flowing robe, and the tyranny of arbitrary fashion shall be superseded by the candor of philosophy, until the forces of the body shall get the benign rays of the sunshine and the balm of the atmosphere; when the advice of wisdom shall be understood in the fear of the Lord, and the thought upon His name. Men will be brought into judgment for all these things, not as erroneously now we receive it; but *in* all these things. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and the light of thine eyes; but know thou that *in* all these things God will bring thee unto judgment;" and when it will no longer seem an impracticable course to follow—"live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy life;" nor a description incomprehensible of the early Christians who were to be the early martyrs—"they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart;" but in the goodness of the living God, who hath given us all things richly to enjoy, and in the charm of that company, of the Christ, that tenderness of humanity, who took it and did eat before them. Material nature shall be resuscitated, regenerated and reclaimed, fulfilling in its heartiness that happiness which is permitted and prescribed to you this day as an expression of it all. "Go thy way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

I am aware that we are lingering too long upon the threshold of our thanksgiving, and that it is time to open ser-

vice within the temple of the truth. But natural religion has its charms when it leads up to the stoop-steps of Gospel glory, just as in some rural village the neighbors coming up to the sanctuary from the lanes, and beneath the trees, linger to shake hands outside the church doors, and, as I have often thought, musing upon the spectacle on some lovely day of lambent atmosphere, find their minds softened for their song of praise by the whisper of the leafage rustle, and the mantling of the solemn skies.

Heartiness of sense has its power to serve the joy of spiritual strength, the strength of spiritual joy. If a true thanksgiving can translate itself in feasting, so can a real feast express a genuine thanksgiving.

Take up now this whole verse in its contextual connection. The occasion was the outbreaking and outburst of a delivering Gospel upon an overbearing and overwhelming promulgation of the law. Read from verse 9 to verse 12, inclusive, and you will get the view; a picture, such as when an April sky smiles out upon an April shower, or as when a child laughs and plays with tears still sparkling in enameled eyes; and the consideration and the conclusion of it come to this, that we have a reason and a right of heartiness, cheeriness, and charity in the world redeemed.

Now, recent skepticism denies this right point-blank, in theory. In practice, it foregoes this privilege. The doubter and the scouter, in their new agnosticism, complain that they do not know what there is to be glad about. In the nature of the case they cannot know that there is such a thing as gladness. They may know, indeed, the sentiment or the sensation of one moment, but what can they know of the next? They cannot say that I know nothing, for they cannot be sure that there is any such real entity as I, and certainly they cannot tell by what evolution I may yet be evolved. They certainly will not permit me to insist that they know anything at all, or that they are anybody

or anything. They will not even let me esteem them to be agnostic, for how can I know that they exist? To know or not to know, that is the same as to be, or not to be. The universe, to such an one, divides itself between the unknowable and the unknown. But as to futures, there is nothing to be said. One can conceive of a positive unbelief or skepticism that sets out to reorganize uncertainty and to frame itself a possible hereafter, different from that depicted in any creed. Such a theory might have its enticements, its allurements, its hilarities and glees of expectation. But that which now passes for disbelief, is sheer negation of all things. It is a wail in space, a whine on earth. It crouches over the grave, and it has reason so to crouch. Now, a long-faced Christian is an anomaly; but a long-faced scouter is consistent.

What is there, O friend, to be glad about? What is there, or what *can* there be, to be merry over? True, one can bound or browse, as the cattle by the roadside; true, one can flit and flutter, as the minnow in the ripple. That is all so; but, then, *be* a bullock, *be* a minnow, and have done with it!

But, it is terribly hard to be a loving woman, or a working man, upon such terms as these. True, one can stand apart in doubt, dismay, defiance, of this unfinished and disordered creaturehood. Well, then, go out of it—go altogether out of it. Step aside and go out of it, at once. Leave—not just the terraqueous orb and the scenery which you call the “world,” “earth,” “time,” and such like, with dialect of all familiar ignorance and ignorant familiarity, because other worlds, and earths, and times, and what-nots, elsewhere and otherwise, might be as bad, or worse; but go *out*—altogether *out*, if it may be; and, finding a realm to suit thyself, leave this perplexed, defeated God’s creation to take its chances, or to meet its fate.

Well I know that the epicurean reasoning said its say, of old, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Sad “funereal baked meats.” They say it

still, to a wretch whom they are about to hang by the neck till he be dead. The very jailer supplies him with dainty dishes from his table. The pitying women sigh, "Poor man!" and proceed to deck his cell with flowers. His food, at the last day or two, is of the richest, and at his own ordering. The bill of fare, it is likely enough, will be published in the papers, as tinted menus are printed at a banquet. "He called for 'this,'" say they; "his dinner consisted of 'such and such.'" In the morning, while the crowd was gathering in the street outside, and the deputy sheriffs, filing in, were waiting, "he took a hearty breakfast." It is usually reported that he made a substantial meal, and his deglutition is described in the very journal that depicts the throttling of the throat that swallowed once, to swallow now no more forever.

One does not see much pleasure in it. But there it is. Now you have it, make the most of it. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And such is the morose philosophy. There is no heartiness nor cheeriness, no charity, in all the whimpering of unbelief or all the levity and ease of man's mortality.

But, within the covenant of life to come, beneath the canopy of a providing grace and preparing glory, how can there be less than an abiding satisfaction and an enduring rest? "Oh, satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" "In whom believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

To us, this world is not a bad world, after all, nor a sad one. In the lustre of God's countenance, it shines like a planet in the firmament. So the moon shining in the midnight is an object of delight; so is the evening and the morning star steeped in the lustre of the skies. But, if you had to toil through one of its cañons or crevasses, or if you were peering down into one of its volcanoes, it is to be doubted whether you

would much enjoy the view. Study it as it is in heaven. And so survey this orb in its orbit, in its track of light, as they see it from surrounding stars. All is well. The world is by no means finished hitherto. Human history, so far as we can judge, is not complete. Man's story is not told. It is in progress and serial publication. The testimony is not all in. Wait until the other side opens; wait until God sums up. To us, who see not yet all things put under Him, but even now see Jesus, this is a spectacle large with promise, lustrous with its rapture and its peace.

What would you think of that household, in which an invalid, who had been dying—given up—suddenly rallies and revives, who should brood in melancholy and bitterness because the invalid might be still unable to go down-stairs, or walk out-doors? It is gladness enough, thereupon, to know that he can take his nourishment and sit up or lie on his couch. Thanks be to God for *such* relief as this, and hope to come!

The skeptic spirit that murmurs and that mourns in its discontent is like a person straying on the Alps, who falters at length, lost among the passes, and, lying down beneath an avalanche or precipice above a chasm, shudders that the way is lost. But if a traveler or tourist, who had lost his way, and wandering long had sunken, all exhausted, on the spot, should spy a little chalet in the dimness of the distance, and make his faltering track towards the herdsman's cottage, and have his fainting frame refreshed by the coarse bread and scanty fare, and feel the fire crackling on the chimney-hearth of the simple low-roofed room, while the blast roared outside—he would never criticise ungratefully the frugal morsel because he lacked the dainties, or missed the silver service or the damask napkins or other elegancies of refined society.

After all, then, taking things as we find them, we have come upon a possible and a tolerable life in a formative and comfortable world; a fair, decent-enough sphere. It requires a good deal

in the way of improvement, it is true. The Lord knows that, as well as you or I, and He is busy with it still. It requires renovation and replenishment, expansion and invigoration. It requires to be sifted and set in order: "And His fan is in His hand." It demands repairs, and there is adjusted, and there is advancing, a time of "the restitution of all things." It is still to be enlarged, and you may discern of the Creator, as of any builder, that He strews and sorts His materials upon the ground of time. There is a reconstruction under the constitution. There is a correlation of forces, that can remodel all in all. The world is, here and there, a disordered world, distempered and distraught, but it is in process of redemption, recovery, regeneration. The earth is not a ruin, after all; nor are the ages vain; nor are the centuries idle; nor are the periods barren. These times are not lost times, nor are these days evil days. Matters mercantile, commercial, political and social have their own confusions. In themselves they show prognostics as precarious as the weather in the clouds. Sages and seers, in their signal service, may issue bulletins of their forebodings. There are such periods as oppressing anarchies, and crank communisms. It is true that the social pressures are unequal, and may come to their upheavals—lateral or perpendicular. Things are in such disordered heaps, after all, because they are so redundant; as apples lie loosely in their heaps upon an orchard ground before they can be packed and shipped. Wealth and land-holdings lie in piles that should be dispensed and distributed more wisely and widely. Prices climb up too high, and values mount until they take a fall that hurts them, but does them good, at last; as tumblers teach rash, reckless urchins how to climb with caution. Times may be somewhat hard upon the speculators, the fanciers, the millionaires, the misers, the paupers, and the ministers; but the mechanics and the farmers keep the country comfortable and the land at rest, and this renders society too social to leave

any room for socialism. Government abides. Law and order settle it with liberty. Production is the safe protection. The nation stands. The school-houses ring with the children's eager, glad notes, and ring out the old rings of bigotry and ignorance that had usurped them.

The Church of Christ still lives, Christianity, that has been reported in some quarters wounded, dead, and dying, is too busy now to think of dying, and concludes it best to grow. Upon the whole, take it for all in all, and, as one might say, things being as they are, religion holds its own, and revelation sits there, smiling on its bustling critics. "He that sitteth in the heavens seems to laugh." The Lord appears to have these things in derision. And the memorials of our fathers are allowed to stand; even their gravestones, inscribed with hope, linger still. Look you well; there is not a man, woman, or child in this city, this day, who will not have a pleasant and a satisfying meal; not a boy in our orphan asylum, not a prisoner in that penitentiary, not a wild-eyed captive in that lunatic retreat, not a tramp on the wayside, not a pauper in the poor-house—not a human soul, who shall not have a treat to-day. And we wait the hour to come when there shall not be under God's firmament—there *need* not be—a human being on the breadth of the whole territory, a human heart in all the world, that may not have a life, a liberty, a hope, a joy, a home, a fellowship in the goodness of the Most High God, in the largess and the love of the redeeming and restoring Mediator, Immanuel, God with us. "Go thy way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Even so; the joy of the earth is the joy of the Lord. The charm of good here is that future good is on its way. The joy of the Lord is to be understood as His anticipative triumph, now constituting the beatific vision of His glory, and so manifested to them that trust in Him.

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that, in their faith, they can share it even here. It is this serene expectation that we are called to contemplate: "For we see not yet all things put under Him," but we see Jesus. "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." Yes, yes! But there is death. Death is so ghastly, still, and still so full of gloom! Death, so grim and terrible! "The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The very last. But He rejoices. The events over which He rejoices are some of them still pending. He is sure of His triumph. Wait. *He* waits. There is no despondency and no suspense on high. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. That is one step. The broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. They never ask yonder whether He will succeed; they do sometimes ask, "Lord, how long? How long shall it be to the end of these?"—searching what or what manner of time the Spirit did signify.

Go out of your cares, and your fevers and perils, by going nearer to your Savior. Catch that glance of His gaze, the very rest of God. The sky is blue above the bleak and barren ground; the heavens smile above the storms. All things seem to die; but God is over all, blessed forever. His joy will comfort your sorrows. It will conquer your fears. It will neutralize your bereavements. It will negative your death. You are on a vessel, and it seems to you that the storm is awful; the waves run mountains high; the ship pitches, and shudders, and creaks. "Captain," you say, with pale face and staring eyes, "this is a terrible peril. We shall go down; she never will weather this gale!" "Gale!" says the captain, "I call this a good breeze. If we had a little more of it we should soon make land." Then you turn and look with wonder in the captain's eyes; they are full of smiling satisfaction, and his heroic face is mild and calm. The captain says, "All is well." He is not disturbed. And the captain's calm is your strength. He ought to know. So Jesus knows. He

has tasted death for every man. He goeth before thee.

"Though rocks and quicksands deep
Through all my passage lie,
Yet Thou wilt safely keep
And guide me by Thine eye.
My anchor, hope, shall firm abide,
And I each boisterous storm outride."

Come, cheer up, ye who are sorrow-stricken! Think of the joy of the Lord. The child you cherished, He lifted from your arms, and men tell you that he was snatched away by death. That is a hard, harsh, horrid thought. It is more than you can bear. I don't wish you to bear that; you have no such thing as that to bear. He has the child. The child is with *Him*. Think of that joy of the Lord, and be strong. Sin is too much for your weakness, because you fear it may prevail until you perish. Think of His pleasure, as well as of His power, to save.

Time and tide, chance and change, and fortune and fate, and void and vanity, and failure and fading, and the world and the grave! Ah, how weak we all are! What can we do? Hark! hear the apostle: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." "When I am weak, then am I strong." "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." Sing, sweet bird! Sing, saved soul! Look up, O student of the stars! Look up, heir of heaven! Be glad in the *Lord*. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! It is His investment; it is His endowment: "Christ in you the hope of glory." That my joy might be in you. Salvation is the ministrations of your joy. Joy in the Lord of salvation; salvation in the Lord is joy. My brethren, I know no better definition: Song is speech; the heart-speech is song.

The time will come when the Church of God will be disinclined to talk so much, to discuss so much, to debate so much. It will teach by ever-rippling and out-rushing song, as the angels always do. Prayer and *praise*. There is too much dry prayer without praise. Praise and prayer. I have had no opportunity to attend the sacred services in the Academy of Music, but that is

what I shall hope to see, when every church shall be an academy of music, and every academy of music shall be a church. I think that, sooner or later, every place of public worship will be opened once a day for preaching, and once a day for praise.

Go, and be happy—happy parents and homes, happy Christians in your household and in the house of God. This world is a beautiful place to make others happy in. If there were no such occupation in heaven, it must be confessed it would be rather dull. If the saints on high, and the angels that excel in strength, have nothing to do but to enjoy themselves, I doubt if they would enjoy themselves at all. It is not so. Heaven is the realm to do good from, earth the world to do good in. There the exuberance and rapture are refluent upon other spheres. Here our delight has its mission and its ministry at hand. Hindrance of this world is only found in the despondency of the Church; our voices of praise are so weak and husky. Did you ever lose your voice a little while, and still seem to yourself to be speaking at the top of it, until you saw that in the further corner of the building your tones were inarticulate? But when your voice came back, you spoke with power at the same time that you spoke with ease. It is so with the heartiness, the cheeriness, the charity that would charm the Church and enchant the world. Be glad in the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice." "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart; for the joy of the Lord is your shout." The sad souls are all supine; about you the shrinking hearts are heavy with sleep. The wanderers are yet a great way off, and almost out of hearing. Make them hear.

"Lift up the heart,

Lift up the voice,

Rejoice aloud, ye saints, rejoice."

Is there not cause this day? Is there One sent of God that taketh away the sin of the world? Is it finished? Oh, is it finished? Is Jesus Christ declared

to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead? Is the Gospel sent, and going into all the world, and unto every creature? Is God over all, blessed forever? It is enough! The world is doing well. King of kings! Lord of lords! Hallelujah! hallelujah! Oh, word of words! Oh, shout of shouts! and song of songs! The pean of the universe—take it up! take it up! Hallelujah! King of kings! Lord of lords! Hallelujah forever and ever! Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Here we see it dimly, and it sheds into our hearts its reflected lustre. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. "That My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." But there, and presently, we share it and bask in its consummation, and its coronal splendence, and inherit its fruition, and find it the element of our existence, the stamina, the substance, the security of our being, the elixir of our undying vigor and eternal life—the glory of the Celestial and the image of the Heavenly borne by us. "Thou wilt show me the path of life. In Thy presence there is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." "Go thy way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

THE GREAT PRIZE.

BY REV. GEORGE F. PENTECOST, IN
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Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark; for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii: 13, 14.

Forty years ago a young mechanic took a bath in the river Clyde. While swimming from shore to shore, he deserted a beautiful bank, uncultivated; and he then and there resolved to be

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the owner of it, and to adorn it, and build upon it the finest mansion in all the borough, and name it in honor of the maiden to whom he was espoused. Last summer, I had the pleasure of dining in that princely mansion, and to receive this fact from the lips of the great shipbuilder of the Clyde. That *one* purpose was made the ruling ambition of his life, and all the energies of his being were put in requisition for its accomplishment.

So with Paul. From the moment of his conversion to the day of his martyrdom he had one supreme purpose, which took full possession of him, mastered his whole mind and soul, and laid under contribution all his mental gifts and spiritual attainments, and power of achievement and suffering, even unto death.

"*This one thing I do.*" That single high aim filled his whole field of vision, and possessed him day and night, in city and country, in journeyings and in prison, and excluded all other ambitions and made all other possible attainments of no worth in his view, even as "dung, that he might win Christ." His past record, brilliant though it was; his high, exalted position and wonderful career as "the great apostle to the Gentiles"; the world and all its glittering prizes, which most men so covet—all these things were nothing to him. They had ceased to have any charms for him since he had seen "the Lord of glory"; since the love of Christ had come into his soul like a river in its fullness and sweetness. "The prize," for which he so nobly ran in the spiritual race, and gave up all things else and counted all things but loss that he might win it, was "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This is the spirit and purpose of the Christian religion when it dominates in the soul of man. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Abraham, furnish illustrations of it. The failures so common in Christian life are caused, to a great extent, by a *divided* purpose. The world comes in to share the kingdom of the heart; self divides the supremacy of

the affections with Christ; the prize is not so coveted and kept in near and constant view as to set the soul on fire with holy ambition, and to consume, by the intensity of its flame, all selfish ends and earthly passions.

I. The purpose of Paul: WHAT IS INVOLVED IN IT? "This one thing I do."

1. Supreme love to Christ, and consecration to His service.

2. Deadness to all human ambitions and to merely earthly and sensual good. So absorbed is the soul in this one idea that it becomes the masterful passion of life; and the world, the flesh, all things else, cease to have any real attraction.

3. Not satisfied with any measure of past attainment, or service, or consecration, but continually "reaching forth" to something higher and better, and "pressing toward the mark of the high calling," with quenchless and ever-growing ardor. There, in full view, is the "goal," and the racer's eye is fixed on it; he flings aside every weight, and quickens his step continually, until he crosses the line and receives the immortal prize from the hands of the ascended Savior.

II. What was the meaning in Paul's mind as to the prize on which his heart was thus set? I think it was this: A PERSONAL RESEMBLANCE TO CHRIST, AND A DESIRE TO BE NEAR HIM. His vision of Christ in the infinite attractiveness of His character, and in the glory and blessedness of His presence and reign in heaven, made him long, with unutterable yearnings, to be like Him, and to have, not only a place in His kingdom, but a place hard by the throne of the Lamb. Multitudes of Christians are content just to be saved—to get inside the heavenly gate. But Paul rebukes this spirit. He had a higher and truer ambition. He coveted the place of honor in the final kingdom; a crown studded with numberless stars, the plaudit of the Master, a final character and attainments in harmony with the heavenly world and with the exalted and glorious purpose of Christ in his redemption.

III. HOW THE GREAT PRIZE IS TO BE WON.

It can be won in no other way than Paul won it.

1. The mind must contemplate it, the heart be fixed upon it, until the power of it shall overmaster all other objects and passions.

2. The purpose to gain it must be *single*, as well as *supreme*. Divided affection, a divided allegiance, half-hearted strivings, will end in bitter disappointment and eternal disaster. The whole soul, the whole heart, the whole purpose and trend of life must be in the effort and in the direct line of daily striving.

3. To insure success, all dead weights must be thrown off, all unnecessary hindrances avoided, all entangling alliances sacrificed, and "the sins which do so easily beset" or hinder us, put away.

CERTAINTIES IN RELIGION.

By P. S. HENSON, D. D., OF CHICAGO, ILL., IN WASHINGTON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateh the air.—
1 Cor. ix: 26.

LIFE is full of uncertainties. Who can tell what a day will bring forth? There is no one who can be certain of the next moment in life, or of the next breath. "Old Probabilities" we style the clerk of the Weather Bureau, and the name is suggestive. With all the resources of science, with the records of past observation, with agents in all points, and with lines of telegraphic communication, the best he can do is to tell what will *probably* be the weather to-morrow. Success is sure to none. We see a young man fully equipped for life, starting out with high hopes and flattering prospects. He says, "I will put forth my utmost endeavors. Every nerve and muscle shall be put to the strain. I will deny myself. I will live by all the rules of temperance and morality, and I will be sure of success." Yet how often you and I have seen such confidence shattered by failure! Even when he has gained success, how

long he can retain it is uncertain. He may be one of the strongest of his nation in intellect, one of the most sagacious and learned, and he may climb, as did such an one of late, to the very pinnacle, and to-morrow a dastardly blow may stretch him at the bottom, crushed and dying. Our homes, where peace and hallowed joy reign to-day, may to-morrow be lying in the shadow of the death-angel's wings. I would not chill the happiness of any heart, but it is needful for us to think of these things. I never see one of my children when, steadied by its mother's finger, encouraged by the voices of the household, it takes its first few tottering steps, without thinking of the many snares and pitfalls into which that pathway just entered may lead.

A class of people have lately come into some prominence who call themselves Agnostics. They say—and we are often tempted to believe them—"I don't know anything." It is their creed that, outside of this present, material world, we can be certain of nothing. Let us look at a few things in regard to religion, of which all may be certain.

We are certain that Christianity exists in the world. We know that it has existed for 1,800 years. We can trace back its existence with certainty, and we see the fountain springing up in the little realm of Judea. And we know that that fountain has swelled into a mighty river that is sweeping all barriers away. Through all the world the force of Christianity is to-day greater than any other that is known among men. We know that this old book, the Bible, has survived all revolutions. It has come down to us through the ages that have witnessed the rise and fall of nation after nation. It has stood the attacks of the fiercest criticisms, and come forth unscathed. One philosophy after another has come and gone, but this book abides, and never, during the centuries of its existence, has it had a stronger grip upon humanity than it has at this day. Nowhere is its influence so pow-

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erful as in those lands which boast the highest civilization. We know that, even if it be untrue, it gives us the grandest conceptions of a God the world has ever known. Is Jesus Christ a myth? Whose was the sublime imagination that created such a character? It has been well said that such a creator would have been as transcendent a character as Jesus Himself. We know that this Bible reveals to man his own needs and weaknesses as nothing else does. It sees the secrets of his inmost nature. It voices his deepest aspirations. It touches with a master hand the chords of emotion, and administers consolation for his most poignant griefs. We know that its precepts are the purest and wisest that have been given for the guidance of life. Then we know that, whatever this Book may be, it satisfies human longings to the very uttermost. Like the rising tide that flows into every frith and inlet and bay, so the Bible fills each recess of man's nature, heart, and mind, and soul. And it is for all classes—the child and the sage, the lowly and the exalted, the unlearned and the scholar. It reaches all and makes new creatures of them.

But the Christian may be certain of much more than this. Paul had no doubt as to the Gospel. He had already entered upon a race, and he was not for one moment uncertain as to what the course was. Every man may have that certainty, and, if he will surrender himself to Christ, may be fully assured of the truth of the Gospel. And yet there are Christians that are troubled with doubt. I may be certain what road is the right one, and yet be uncertain whether I am on that road. I may be assured that Christianity is true, but not that I am a Christian. Paul was sure of both, and I believe every Christian may have all of Paul's confidence. I believe doubt is from the devil. It was invented by a priesthood that didn't want men to become sure of their inheritance in heaven, but wished to hold them in subjection by fear and superstition.

Then, again, I may be sure of the right road, sure I am on it, and yet be doubtful whether I shall reach the goal. Unto such I commend the words of an old darkey whom I once met. I asked him how long he had been serving the Lord. "Fifty years," he replied. "Well, uncle," I said, "after keeping the faith so long, you must feel pretty confident of holding out to the end?" "Ah, massa," he responded, "it isn't a question of *my* holding on, it's only a question of whether de Lord can hold on, and I reckon I can trust Him."

It is the privilege of every Christian to have a like faith. "No one shall pluck them out of my hand," said Christ.

But irreligion also has its certainties, and first among them is that dim, undefined unrest of soul. Do what one may to conceal it or to crush it, it is still there, an enemy to peace, a destroyer of happiness. The shadows of the future are certain. Laying aside the teachings of revelation, the realm beyond death is only a dark mystery. See the philosopher ascending the highest mount of speculation, and his only answer to questions of the future state is, "I don't know; I can only guess." Hear another as he cries out, "I am taking a leap into the dark," swinging off into an unknown eternity.

Could anything be more terrible? And another certainty is the dread of judgment after death. The river of life is swift and smooth, perhaps, but the sinner, unreconciled to God, knows that there is a cataract over which he must plunge to ruin, and every moment is bringing him nearer to it. A conscience forever reproaching, a soul that is never at peace, death with its shadows projected far ahead, and the dread of an awful judgment day—these are some of the certainties of irreligion.

PREFERRING FALSEHOOD TO TRUTH.—
You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it.—*O. W. Holmes.*

INIQUITY FINISHED.

Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

James i: 15.

[We shall occasionally give the outlines of sermons by some of the remarkable preachers of a former generation. It is wise to study the methods of the fathers, both as to sermonizing and preaching—especially those distinguished by special traits of excellence. Few of the preachers of the first half of this century were more worthy of study and comparison than the Rev. DANIEL A. CLARK. Although less known, he was the equal of Dr. Lyman Beecher, in vigor and robustness of intellect, and strikingly resembled him as a preacher, in many particulars. There was little adornment in his sermons. He despised the arts of the mere rhetorician. He used great plainness of speech. His sentences were short; his style, clear, crisp and vigorous; his art of sermonizing, well-nigh perfect. Like Paul, and Edwards, and Beecher, and Finney, he "reasoned," and reasoned with masterly force. He grappled with the sinner's conscience, and held it fast as in a vise. There was no resisting the torrent of logic and searching appeal that swept down on his audience. Several volumes of his sermons were published in 1836, but they are scarcely known by the preachers of this generation. His sermon entitled "The Church Safe," is one of the most remarkable in the English language, and was published in tract form by the American Tract Society. The two following brief outlines are fair specimens of this preacher's sermons.—EDITOR.]

Nothing here reaches maturity in a moment. Things begin to be, they grow, they ripen. It is so in nature, and so in character, and so in the moral world. Sin is a growth; it matures, and then its fruit is death. "The wages of sin is death." The growth of sin may be slow at first, but it ripens fast as the time of harvest draws nigh. Let me illustrate the subject.

I. The game of chance finds its maturity in the abandoned gambler.

II. Indulgence in the cup is matured in the sot.

III. Covetousness finds its maturity in the swindler, the thief, the robber.

IV. Lasciviousness has its maturity in the pollutions and obscenities of the brothel.

V. Profanity, too, has its maturity in those unrestrained blasphemies which have sometimes been uttered at the very juncture when life was going out.

VI. So the Sabbath-breaker matures his sin by degrees.

Think not to trifle with iniquity and come off without harm. If you begin a wrong practice, remember it may ripen into an obstinate and deadly habit. Oh! say not: I mean to indulge my sins at present, but do not mean to become an abandoned transgressor. "The heart is deceitful above all things;" and it may be that, in the very hour of self-security, your steps are just about to slide. May a merciful God save you!

VII. So the growth of infidelity may be traced from its low beginnings to the same destructive maturity.

VIII. So we might trace the sin of lying, from the first instance of prevarication on to the fixed habit of dauntless and deliberate perjury.

Finally, let me sum the whole up in one case: These sins sometimes all meet in the same man, and grow to maturity together. The gambler becomes profane, and false, and fraudulent, and intemperate, and lewd, breaks the Sabbath, and derides the Bible.

REMARKS.

I. How may we know when sin has approached nigh to maturity?

1. Maturity in sin stuns the sensibility of conscience.

2. Maturity in sin progressively excludes shame.

II. The subject addresses itself to parents.

1. We should be careful not to corrupt our children by example or precept.

2. If we love our children we shall be careful and watchful that others do not corrupt or lead them astray.

3. In view of this subject, be warned not to let any sin ripen in your hearts.

The Four Lepers.

Why sit ye here until ye die?—2 Kings: 7-3.

THIS was the despairing cry of a company of lepers at the gate of Samaria. There were only three courses open to them.

1. They might *return to the city*. But famine was raging there, and they were sure to die.

2. They might *stay where they were*.

But death was sure to overtake them there in the most horrible form.

3. They might "*fall into the host of Syrians*" who were besieging Samaria. But that seemed like madness, especially as they were lepers. Nevertheless they decided to enter the enemy's camp. And lo, they found it deserted! The Syrians had fled and left all their treasures and provisions behind.

This brief narrative illustrates the DILEMMA OF THE AWAKENED SINNER.

1. He may not go back to his former state of unconcern and stupidity. Conscience, fear, the Holy Spirit, will not let him.

2. Nor can he remain what and where he is. He is too miserable. He must get relief. He must also go forward or backward by the very laws of his moral being.

3. Nor can he make up his mind to go over to the open enemies of the Cross. Some do it, but it is a terrible step to take. The last end of such an one is worse than the first. The awakened soul that does not flee to Christ as for his life, is more likely to fall into the path of self-deception and take up with a false hope.

REMARKS.

1. How critical the condition of an awakened soul!

2. What madness to seek relief and peace anywhere save at the Cross!

3. What a multitude of suicides will there be at the judgment! All who quenched the Spirit and sinned away their convictions will appear there in the character of self-destroyers.

4. How precious, how glorious the invitations of the Gospel!

5. How dreadful the remorse and misery in eternity of all who were here brought under deep conviction of sin and ruin, and yet fled not to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel!

FAITH OF PHILOSOPHERS.—No doubt, at heart, the philosophers are far better Christians than they make themselves out to be. They have a profound trust in protoxides, and a simple faith in the spectroscope, which promises to keep bright their faith and trust.—*Gail Hamilton.*

A GOSPEL WORTH DYING FOR.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON, IN EXETER HALL, LONDON, ENGLAND.

To testify the Gospel of the grace of God.—
Acts xx: 24.

PAUL did not count his life dear to himself, and yet he highly valued life. He was not weary of life, nor did he count it a vain thing. He did not regard his life as a dear thing in comparison with bearing testimony to the Gospel of the grace of God. All the energies of his spirit were consecrated to the pursuit of one object, viz.: that he might everywhere testify to the Gospel of the grace of God, and the life he here lived was only valued by him as a means to that end. This was his mission. He had been "put in trust with the Gospel," and he resolved to be faithful, though it should cost him his life. All believers occupy a similar place.

Paul was a true hero—a hero of nobler stamp even than those brave Greeks whose stories stir the blood and fire the soul. He was now parting with his weeping friends and going forward to trials of unknown intensity, but he was unmoved by fear, and advanced on his way without a question. Read his words and judge if they have not this heroic ring: "And now, behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem," etc.

I. We shall inquire, first, WHAT WAS THIS GOSPEL FOR WHICH PAUL WOULD DIE? We have gospels nowadays which I would not die for, nor have any of you live for. I have lived to see half a dozen new gospels rise, flourish and decay. They told me long ago that my old Calvinistic doctrine was far behind the age, an exploded thing. And next I heard that evangelical teaching in any form was a thing of the past, to be supplanted by "advanced thought." I have heard of one improvement upon the old faith, and then of another; and philosophical divines are still improving their theology. I would not die for any one of the modern systems.

There used to be a Gospel in the

world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned; which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul's life; which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice; which tens of thousands have met together to hear at the peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed such a Gospel, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while.

Is there not such a Gospel remaining?

What was this Gospel which Paul valued before his life? He characterizes it as a message of *grace*—the grace of God. One note in the music of the glad tidings charmed the apostle's ear—*grace*. In these days that word is not often used, save by a few old-fashioned people. As one of those antiquated folks, I shall try to sound out that word "*GRACE*," so that those who know its joyful sound shall be glad, and those who despise it shall be cut to the heart. *Grace* is the essence of the Gospel! *Grace* is the one hope for this fallen world! *Grace* is the sole comfort for saints looking forward for glory! Perhaps Paul had a clearer view of grace than even Peter or John; and hence he has so much larger space in the New Testament. We need Paul again, or at least the Pauline evangelism and definiteness. He would make short work of the new gospels, and say of those who follow them, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ."

Let me try and explain how the Gospel is the good news of grace.

The Gospel is an announcement that God is prepared to deal with guilty man on the ground of free favor and pure mercy.

More than this. The Gospel tells us that God has removed the grand obstacle which stood in the way of mercy. He gave His only-begotten Son, that by

His death the law might receive its due, and the eternal principles of His government be maintained.

There is a motive for mercy which is in agreement with the grace of God. He saves men that Christ may be magnified and extolled, and that His own glorious name may be revealed.

That this Gospel blessing might come within the reach of men, God's grace has adopted a method suitable to their condition.

Faith is this method. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." God asks no good works, no good feelings, but that you accept what He freely gives.

Dost thou say, "But faith seems beyond my reach"? But even faith is God's gift; He works it in men by His Holy Spirit. Oh, what grace is this!

Are you inclined to accept the way and method of grace? Let me test you. God saves as a Sovereign. Does your pride revolt at this? You have no claim: it is all of grace: there is no merit.

This is the Gospel of the grace of God, and I know that it touches the heart of many of you. It often stirs my soul like the sound of martial music to think of my Lord's grace from old eternity, a grace that is constant to its choice, and will be constant to it when all these visible things shall disappear as sparks that fly from the chimney. My heart is glad within me to have to preach free grace and dying love. I can understand why crowds met at dead of night to hear of the grace of God. I can understand the Covenanters on the bleak hills listening, with sparkling eyes, as Cameron preached of the grace of the great King! There is something in a free-grace Gospel worth preaching, worth listening to, worth living for, and worth dying for.

II. HOW CAN WE LIVE FOR THIS GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD?

1. I answer, first, if any man is to live for this Gospel, he must have received it from God, and he must have received a call to minister or serve for it. He must feel himself under bonds

to hold and keep this Gospel, not so much because he has chosen it, but because it has chosen him.

2. The second thing Paul did was to make this Gospel known.

3. He desired also to testify to it. To testify is more than to proclaim; it means to bear personal witness to the truth. His personal experience of its power he used as a great instrument and argument for spreading the Gospel.

III. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD LIVE TO MAKE KNOWN THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

1. First, because it is the only Gospel in the world, after all. These mushroom gospels of the hour, which come and go like a penny newspaper, have no claim on any man's zeal.

2. Because it is for God's glory.

3. Spread it because you will glorify Christ thereby.

Now, if you and I arouse ourselves this day, and God's Holy Spirit shall help us to do so, and we begin to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, do you know what I think is sure to happen? I prophesy the best results. They tell us that all sorts of evils are growing stronger, and brethren darkly prophetic tell us that awful times are coming. Popery, for one thing, is to come back and dominate over all the earth? Is she? We shall see. If the Gospel of the grace of God be fully and fairly preached, it cannot be so. Listen to what John saw: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him." Do you see that angel? Observe what follows! Close behind him flies another celestial herald. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Fly, angel of the everlasting Gospel! Fly, for as surely as thou dost speed thy flight, that other angel will follow who shall proclaim the downfall of Babylon, and of every

other system that opposeth itself to the grace of the Lord God Almighty!

The Lord stir you up for His name's sake. Amen.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTALISM.

BY J. B. THOMAS, D.D., IN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.—Ezek. xxxiii: 32.

It is not well to pay too much attention to adverse criticism. It is often the fruit of oblique vision and of narrow ranges of thought. But we, too, are under the influence of bias as well. We may correct our posture by studying another's. Now, there are those who complain that Christianity and the power of the pulpit are on the wane. They claim, in the first place, that, while Christianity was never so wide in its extent, it never was so shallow in its power; while its adherents were never so numerous as now, they never were weaker in separateness and severity of life. They take up the badge of discipleship, now that religion is respected; but would prove cowardly were martyrdom required, or were they ostracised, as in the days of Christ. Their alliance with Christ is a slender cord, it is said. Piety is a painted thing, and does not reach down into the very blood. It is profession, and not confession. It has no solemnity of purpose. "Is Bismarck a Christian?" it was asked in Germany. "Yes, of course; should he be a Turk?" was the response. So here, as well as where a State Church is established, religion is formal, and the significance of its life is eviscerated. As one has said, it is merely "insurance against fire in the world to come, with honesty as the best policy!" One fancies himself "registered" among the membership of a church, and so qualified to "vote," as it were, at the judgment-day, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? Did we not join a certain church, and go to

its picnics and prayer-meetings? Are we not, therefore, Thy people?"

A second complaint is this: That those churches are best attended, and appear to be the most prosperous, where there is little strain put on the conscience of individuals, and the chief responsibility rests on the minister. Religion is ritualistic and vicarious. Men have no tinge of character received from an inward life, but they perform an outward round of observances in place of prayerfulness, self-examination and heart religion. They give decorous attention to forms; they found hospitals, perhaps, and rest satisfied in these things.

Again, it is said that those churches have the most influence that foster the æsthetic element; that provide attractive music; introduce the elegancies of life into the sanctuary, as seen in dress, conduct, and bearing, and allow nothing to offend a fastidious taste. The preacher's diction, like his coat and cravat, must be faultless. He must be vivid and pathetic, showing in everything the flavor of histrionic art. Nothing but what consorts with the culture of the age is to be tolerated in the service or sanctuary. Nothing "vulgar" is allowed; *that* is the unpardonable sin. "We study to please" is the motto here in the church as in the theatre. The sword wielded by the preacher is a shadowy one. The fire from heaven falls harmless as the roses of the magician, and out of the cross of the Crucified all that is coarse and sanguinary is eliminated, so it is no longer an "offence." The cross may shine on a lady's breast, or be embroidered on a priest's back, but it is not worn on the heart.

These complaints have been recently urged against Protestantism as being results of that system; and a priest of Rome thinks that the cure will be a return to Rome—a return from sects to a hierarchical church. I say, no. We rather suffer under a prolongation of Rome. These are fruits, in part, of the Papacy: for there is a shadow of truth in the criticism cited. Religion is too formal, and not individual enough in

its character, and not full enough of spiritual power. How is it men get to be Christians now, with no great rent in their moral nature, no agony like Pentecost, no cryings out, "What shall we do to be saved?" How was the essence of truth lost? Every child born into the Papal Church is thought to belong to the Church. Luther taught the central idea of justification by faith; not by ordinance or service or gift, but by heart renewal. One may be *in* the Church, and not *of* it; as Paul's person was in prison, but his soul walked at liberty.

In mediæval days, religion was confined mainly to the monastery. Freebooters ranged abroad. Fruits of lust and of cruelty enriched the priests. They could count their beads and say masses and prayers. The bulk of the people were degraded. Behind the rail was glory, perfume, and melody. Today, two-thirds of the cathedral space is given to these ministrations, while a small space, comparatively, is allowed those who come to hear. Many who are lustful and covetous, though not outwardly immoral, are hoping to get to heaven under the skirts of the religious, by their mechanical relations to the Church, or perhaps because they think themselves beloved for their fathers' sakes. They pay their "commutation." At death they send for the minister to pray for them. They think that thus their load of wrong-doing, or of inactivity, will be wiped away.

Into theology and religion the æsthetic element comes, and the love for the spectacular. Many are lulled by incense and song, and by the charm of painting, statuary, and architecture, into sentimental repose, and float along as a queen in a golden barge, listening to ecstatic music. Conscience is not stirred, nor is the intellectual nature. The priest may speak in Latin. Men are not burdened with thought, but lost in the delirium of sensuous joy. They may weep, even, and think themselves very devout because they weep; yet one may weep at painted sorrow on the stage, or over a tale of fiction, yet kick

the beggar at the door. The feeling is evanescent. Now read the text. Remember that God sent both priest and prophet. The law made nothing perfect. Men got used to the priestly function, and saw no other aspects of truth. The priest went into the holy place for them. They asked nothing, and reasoned about nothing. They were saved as they were. They were in the kingdom of God without effort of their own. The prophet taught more. He corrected impressions that were superficial. He showed how thoroughly the whole ethical life had gone astray, and everything was secularized and nominalized. The heart went after covetousness, and there was no God there. They made light of the name of God, which at first to them was too holy a word to utter. They heard His truth as it were a lovely song, and a pleasant voice, and a well-played instrument. It produced no genuine effect on their life. No sin was slain, no appetite was rebuked.

We need to be warned against the same sentimentalism to-day: a shallow and superficial life that is satisfied with merely outward forms or transient emotions; with that which is dramatic, which makes one "feel good," but does not go down into the very blood and fibre of one's moral being, and does not affect character. The apostle John, who approached nearest of any of the apostles to what might be called emotional experience, knocks flat all these fictitious and sentimental ideas, when he says, "If a man love not his brother, whom he has seen, how shall he love God, whom he has not seen?" God has brought in the prophet. His stern utterances of truth go down into the marrow of life. A touch of his hand crumbles to dust the mere manikin of a formal profession. Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. May its teachings command our beliefs, and inspire our hearty and loving obedience!

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 THE WORTH OF THOUGHT.—It is worth fifty years of pain and toil and sorrow to say just one sentence that the world will never let die.—*Dr. Deems.*

WITHOUT HOPE.

By REV. J. M. SHERWOOD.

Having no hope.—Eph. ii: 12.

1. *An unconverted and unregenerate state is one of appalling horror.* "Having no hope" is the terse and expressive description of inspiration. No hope for this life, no hope for the life to come. No hope living, none dying, none at the bar of judgment. An eternal future before you; and yet, in all that measureless duration of being, no ray of light, no blessed experience; an eternal existence before you, and yet nothing—absolutely nothing—in all the past, nothing in all the future, to sweeten and bless it. Oh! is this your state?—the state of a moral, responsible, immortal creature of God; a creature with such capacities for enjoyment, such longings after happiness—with such a past to look back upon, and so fright an eternity unveiled to your view! "Condemned already;" "having no hope;" "without God in the world!" Oh, how those fearful words thrill the soul! They are the knell of that state of fixed and eternal despair to which impenitent sin quickly leads a man. Yet you can be thoughtless, unconcerned; yet you can imagine that all is well; yet you can indulge in the pleasures of the world, when you have only to look forward and see written on the door of your death-chamber, and on the stone which marks the place of your burial, and on the heavens over you, and on the throne of God, and on the bar of judgment, "No hope!"

2. *The text gives a vivid conception of the misery and despair of perdition.* From that world, "Hope" is forever shut out. Her sweet voice, her reviving influence, her blessed companionship, are never seen or felt there. There is an utter extinguishment of this mighty passion. The future gives no promise of relief or good. Forth from its infinite depths there comes no voice of consolation or gladness, no ray of peace or light. Darkness, and only darkness, forever and ever! Suffering, remorse, abandonment of God, exclusion from heaven

—the horrid companionship of hell forever and ever! Without change, without mitigation, without relief! Dreariness, sadness, “weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth”; blasphemies, the raging of passion, the reign of despair unchecked, unchangeable, eternal! *Forever! forever!* Oh! that is the sum of final misery. No hope from out the future. Pain, remorse, separation, darkness, dying—*eternal, eternal!* Oh, the inconceivable horror of such a state, such a world! On the despairing countenance of that lost spirit I see, gleaming in lurid light, these fearful words, “No hope!” On the massive chains which bind these prisoners of

despair, “No hope” is seen in glaring brightness. On “the smoke of their torment which ascendeth up before God forever and ever,” the inscription once more appears: “No hope!” And on the battlements of heaven, and on “the rainbow round about the throne,” those fearful words again gleam forth. And now a voice breaks on my ear: ten thousand times ten thousand tongues catch up the cry and repeat it; it rolls through the caverns of that despairing world, and breaks in thunder on the ear of Heaven. Oh! it is the same sentence which I have repeated to you so often, but now burdened with the sighs of a lost, despairing world: “No hope! no hope!”

PRAYER-MEETING SERVICE.

By REV. LEWIS O. THOMPSON.

NOVEMBER 14.—ESTHER. (Esther iv: 14.)

Meaning of her names: In Hebrew she was called Hadassah, the *Myrtle*; in Persian, Esther, the *Star*.*

I. Her elevation. This was due:

1. To the position of Mordecai.
2. To her beauty.
3. To the choice of the king.

II. Her character.

1. Pious. Seen in her faith, fasting, and prayer.

2. Prudent. Seen in her obedience

*Dr. Edmons on the *Myrtle* that became a Star.

I. Hadassah, the orphan. Mordecai took the little tree, growing without shelter from the storm, and planted it by his own hearth.

II. Look next at Hadassah, the captive.

III. Then at Hadassah, the beautiful maiden. Nobody should despise beauty of face; but bad character spoils beauty, whilst beauty of soul may supply the lack of physical beauty.

IV. Last of all, at Esther, the queen.

V. Let us conclude with a twofold wish:

1. May you grow like a myrtle, and resemble it in two qualities: in that it is an evergreen, and always fragrant. Be thou lovely in the dark days as well as the bright; and do thou always cheer thy dwelling with the fragrance of godliness.

2. May you glow like a star, which God has clothed with light and placed so high in the heavens. Do thou walk in light—Christ's light—the light of truth, and love, and holiness; and, finally, shine as a star in heaven, your home forevermore.

of Mordecai, and the wisest employment of means.

3. Resolute. Seen in her promptness to carry out these measures, and in her boldness to appear before the king.

III. God's hand in her history and that of her race.

1. In restraining the wickedness of the king and his councillors.

2. In the exaltation of Esther and the promotion of Mordecai.

3. In the deliverance of the Jews from threatened destruction.

IV. Lessons:

1. To make the most of our circumstances.

2. To be unselfish. Esther might have repudiated her race, and sought only her own safety, pleasure, and glory.

3. To watch the indications of Providence, and co-work with God in the accomplishment of what He designs.

NOVEMBER 21.—NEW MERCIES. (Lam. iii: 22, 23.)

The calamities thus far this year have been unusually alarming and afflictive. Tornadoes and epidemics, volcanoes and earthquakes, have been abroad in the earth (Ischia, Egypt, Java, etc.), and the loss of life has been very great. Their destruction has been swift and

beyond help. Surely, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

I. The mercies of the Lord.

1. They are great. (2 Sam. xxiv: 14.)
2. They are abundant. (1 Pet. i: 3; Eph. ii: 4.)
3. They are tender. (Ps. cxix: 156.)
4. They are new every morning.
5. They endure forever. (Ps. cxxxvi.)

II. Their scope.

1. In a state of nature:

- (1) Personal.
- (2) Family.
- (3) National.

2. In a state of grace:

- (1) Redemptive.
- (2) Free and unmerited.
- (3) Justifying.
- (4) Purifying.

3. In a state of glory.

III. How improved.

1. Are we thankful that we have not been consumed?

2. Has God's goodness made us better?

3. Are we led to a more implicit trust in God?

4. Are the Lord's mercies preparing us for our eternal home?

NOVEMBER 28. — CHRISTIAN KINDNESS. (Phil. iv: 10-20.)

The mutual esteem between Paul and the Philippians is noteworthy. It does not appear that the Church at Philippi was rich, and yet they abounded in liberality (2 Cor. viii: 2). He makes frequent and honorable mention of this, their thoughtful kindness to him.

I. Paul rejoices in the revival of their kindness—

1. In their care of him.

2. In its fourfold material expression: When he was at Corinth, twice while laboring in Thessalonica, and now, while a prisoner in Rome.

3. And in that this is an evidence of their fruitfulness in the Gospel.

II. Paul's secret of a happy life.

1. To be free from unsatisfied wants. (Ps. xxiii: 1.)

2. To be content in every state.

3. To be strong in the Lord.

III. Reasons for thankfulness (V. 20):

1. For God's gifts.*

2. For His grace and truth. (Ps. cxv: 1.)

3. And that God is our strength and sufficiency.

IV. Reflections.

1. The Gospel produces a spirit of kindness, sympathy, and helpfulness.

2. The rule of universal happiness consists in reasonable expectations and content with such allotments as Providence sends us. (See also 1 Tim. vi: 6.) Some are consumed by restless ambitions.

3. This rule requires of us that we shape our life more with reference to usefulness than to the supreme attainment of wealth, the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, or the pursuits of fame.

4. A self-sacrificing spirit is acceptable to God.

5. Whatsoever we do for the promotion of the Gospel shall not fail of an everlasting reward.

DECEMBER 5. — OUR REWARD. (Dan. xii: 3.)

The word "wise" is translated "teachers" in the margin. To teach is to impart knowledge, or to carry light.

I. What are some of the motives by which Christians should be influenced in doing mission work?

1. Duty.

2. Privilege.

3. The prospect of reward.

II. What is the nature of these motives?

1. They are unselfish. Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." This was only one motive out

* PRESENT BLESSINGS.—We ought to bless and praise God that we have—

I. The gift of life—not merely for the fact that we live, but also for those blessings which are included in the notion of our living.

II. The gift of sleep—rest from sorrow and trouble.

III. The blessings of Christian brotherhood.

IV. The blessing of present peace in the Church, and of freedom of speech and action.

V. The privileges of daily worship and weekly communion. Let us enjoy these privileges while we may.—J. H. NEWMAN, B.D.

of many by which he was influenced. (See also Heb. xii: 2.)

2. They contribute to the glory of God, and advance the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world.

3. They promote the best interests of mankind, both for time and for eternity.

4. They enlarge individual capacity for doing and getting good. Exercise strengthens faculties.

III. What is the nature of this reward?

1. It is luminous. How appropriate, that the reward of those who carry light shall be to "shine as the stars forever and ever."

2. It is enduring.

3. It is commensurate with individual faithfulness. (Rev. ii: 28; 1 Cor. xv: 41; Matt. xxv: 21.)

IV. Present incitements.

1. "To study wisdom."

2. "To study usefulness."

3. "To be encouraged by the prospect of a vast reward."

CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF CERTAIN PREACHERS.

NO IV.

BY JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

[CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON was born in 1834, his father and grandfather being Independent preachers. Converted at the age of sixteen at a Primitive Methodist church, he soon began lay-preaching near Cambridge. (The second volume of "Lectures to My Students" gives valuable instruction as to off-hand preaching.) He had then only a plain English education, with some knowledge of Latin. At eighteen he was pastor of a little Baptist church, and at nineteen was called to the New Park Street Church, in the South of London, where Dr. Gill, the commentator, was pastor for fifty-four years, followed by Dr. Rippon, the hymn-book maker, for sixty-three years. Here the house in a few years ran over, and he had to preach in immense public halls, until, in 1861, the Metropolitan Tabernacle was completed. In the thirty years' pastorate he has received about 15,000 persons into his church, which now has between 5,000 and 6,000 members. A critical estimate is a peculiarly difficult task where one has a valued personal acquaintance, and has been a guest in the house. Yet it may have greater hope of being useful where the subject is familiar both to the writer and to every reader.]

I. The main thing in a preacher, as in every man who attempts to influence others, is his character.

1. Mr. Spurgeon is a man of strong faith, deep religious experience, and intense earnestness. He has that thorough union of self-reliance and reliance on God which is often observable in eminently useful Christians. A man may be conscious of power, and determine to impress himself upon others, while yet he is conscious of weakness and humbly leans on the grace of God. The apparently paradoxical combination is seen in many little-known Christian workers, as well as in men like Luther, Calvin and Wesley.

2. He has strong doctrinal convictions, and has through life expressed them without the least hesitation or reserve. It seems, indeed, a wonderful thing that for thirty years of an age so passionately devoted to novelty, a man should have commanded such unflagging interest on the part of hearers and readers numerous beyond parallel, while never preaching about anything but the old-fashioned Gospel, and that in one of the sternest types. Some preachers of no mean gifts have thought it necessary, in order to keep up the interest, to diverge often into topics not properly religious. But, apart from other considerations, is this really good policy? A highly cultivated infidel once remarked to a friend, after hearing a sermon which treated of merely natural ethics: "I always prefer to hear a gentleman upon his specialty; and so, when I listen to a Christian preacher, I had rather he should speak about Christianity." Even those who personally care more for other subjects, see clearly enough that this is the class of subjects which a preacher ought to treat, and often know well enough that they ought to be interested in the Gospel, even if they are not. No doubt Mr. Spurgeon's example in this respect has insensibly affected thousands of other preachers; but thoughtful reflection would give it a still more powerful and wholesome influence.

3. He is very sharp in his antagonism. The earlier sermons are often strongly polemical in favor of Calvinism; in later years he has sometimes assailed the Establishment, and very often the popular rationalism and materialism. Thus he has changed with the changing wants of the times, treating questions of living interest, opposing present forms of unbelief, and against them all arraying the old Gospel, with its profound claims upon intellect and conscience.

4. Mr Spurgeon has not been an originator of essential thought, but is astonishingly fertile in new modes of presenting familiar truth. In this sense he shows great power of inventive imagination.

5. He has a great deal of quiet humor. This shows itself freely in conversation and in familiar addresses, and often appears in a very subdued way in the pulpit. The accusations which used to be made that he was sometimes grotesque and irreverent, probably came from unsympathetic and over-fastidious hearers, and certainly do not hold good for the last twenty years.

6. He has a high degree of personal magnetism, which is felt both in private and in public. You could not help listening to him if you tried, and you would be apt to feel that he meant precisely you. In going several times to hear him, a few years ago, I was anxious to study the great preacher for the benefit of pupils in homiletics; but in every sermon I was made to remember some things in my recent course of life that had been wrong, and was moved with desire to right them. It would surely be difficult to find a higher test of good preaching. As it used to be said of Robert Hall and Chalmers, so one feels in hearing Mr. Spurgeon that there is more in the man than he has ever said, and the hearer feels impressed by the speaker's personality.

7. His imagination, sentiment, cheerful humor and passionate earnestness are all controlled by a very high degree

of sanctified common-sense. He is a good judge of character, knowing how to select helpers with skill and put his spirit into them, as is done by the head of some great business combination or political party, or by the leader of a great army.

II. Let us turn to the materials of his preaching.

1. He shows extraordinary familiarity with the Scriptures; not only the facts and thoughts, but the very words. This sort of familiarity, which marked Chrysostom also and many other great preachers, is at the present day often wanting in the case of highly-intelligent ministers. We do have so many other things to read! Yet nothing can take the place, for one who wishes power in the Christian pulpit, of familiar acquaintance with the Christian Scriptures.

2. In youth, Mr. Spurgeon was by no means a good interpreter of Scripture. What he got from his text was very apt to be in itself true, but was often not really taught by that text, being obtained by a process of wild spiritualizing or loose accommodation. Of late years he has greatly improved in this respect. Yet, as is perfectly natural, exegesis with him always controlled by supposed homiletical uses. Better this, no doubt, than an exegesis exclusively grammatical or merely theological. But every busy, practical preacher ought to remember that he is specially tempted to prefer that interpretation of a text which will give him most to say. The retired student of exegesis has his peculiar perils also.

3. Mr. Spurgeon has been a great reader of the Puritan divines. He finds something congenial not only in their strong theology and devotional sweetness, but in their racy style, with its quaint turns of phrase; and in all these respects they have strengthened his own natural tendencies.

4. He, of course, draws very freely upon his own experience and observation, his knowledge of human nature and human life. Far from being content with the natural working of genius,

he exhibits in his later sermons not only keen flashes of insight, as he always did from the beginning, but much patient reflection, with greater maturity of thought and juster views of life.

5. He has shown a growing fondness for *historical* subjects, and great ingenuity in deducing from them interesting and wholesome lessons. This also is an adaptation to the changing taste of the times. Men who are averse to abstract thought often take great interest in facts and persons. The Bible abounds in these, and sermons upon Scripture scenes and characters will more readily command attention now than discussions of abstract doctrine. There is also a growing demand for well-managed expository preaching. Mr. Spurgeon has shown great gifts in this respect, not so much in his regular sermons as in the expository remarks with which he accompanies the reading of Scripture. These have been noticed by many persons as of extraordinary interest and value, and are often said by himself to have demanded more time in preparation than his sermons. Much of the fruits of this study may be seen in another form in the "Treasury of David." But it seems much to be desired that he should have many of these running expositions taken down, and published with the passages to which they refer.

6. He has always made many brief quotations. The chief sources are the Bible and the Lyonn-book, the Puritan divines and modern religious biographies. Of late years he is observed to quote more freely from secular poets, especially from Coleridge and Tennyson.

7. Mr. Spurgeon has extraordinary power of illustration. He draws chiefly from nature and common life, from history, biography and newspapers, and from Scripture. His volume called "Feathers for Arrows" presents merely the overflow from a large collection of illustrations jotted down as they occurred to him, and which he has found no occasion to use in all the vast

amount of his speaking and writing. This is really a wonderful fact.

8. His applications are exceedingly pointed and personal, frequent, urgent and importunate. He has somewhere remarked, "Where the application begins, the sermon begins."

In general, Mr. Spurgeon's power is not in single great sermons, but in a constant succession of good sermons. This also suits our time, in which men are rather impatient of "great efforts," but want always something easy to listen to and practically helpful.

III. Several things are also noteworthy in the arrangement of Mr. Spurgeon's discourses.

1. His sermons are nearly all textual or topical-textual, only now and then strictly topical. Even when interpreting loosely, he holds himself to those specific aspects of truth which the text, as he interprets it, presents; and the sermon throughout is colored by its text. From this practice his preaching derives an inexhaustible variety. He shows a perfectly wonderful fertility in developing a single seed of thought or expanding an image.

2. His plans are often quite ingenious, yet almost always simple. A few years ago it would have been necessary to say that his sermons exhibited an unpleasant sameness of general structure, but of late there has been greater variety of plan. It is quite possible that in this and some other respects the great preacher has profited by the preparation of his own "Lectures to My Students." A wise man is very apt to teach himself in teaching others.

3. He usually applies each point as he goes, but sometimes applies the whole at the end. Yet he never makes mere general exhortation in closing. When the distinct points of discussion or application are finished, the preacher quits promptly. If the earlier divisions have been much expanded, the last is apt to be greatly shortened, so as to bring the whole service within certain pretty exact limits. This is quite important now, not only because the age is restless, but because everybody car-

ries a watch, and many persons have engagements for almost every half hour of the day.

4. As to style, Mr. Spurgeon is always clear and direct, and very often striking. He has always been remarkable for pithy phrases, and perhaps increasingly so since the production of "John Ploughman." While often familiar and not seldom homely, his style is never coarse or low, being saved from this both by reverence and by taste, and there are numerous felicities of expression, with occasional passages of extreme beauty. While never writing any part of his sermons beyond brief notes, he has gained much from the careful correction of the short-hand reports. It is an exceedingly useful thing for one who speaks freely to notice afterwards, in cold blood, just what he did say. During the latter half of his active career, he has written numerous books and an immense variety of matter for periodicals. Such practice must have had a good effect upon his spoken style. Yet some of his earliest published sermons show very great force and beauty of expression.

5. As to delivery, Mr. Spurgeon would probably almost lose the sense of personal identity if he should attempt either to read or to recite a sermon. He is in every sense a speaker. In later years, overwhelmed with other engagements, and sometimes oppressed with bodily suffering, he usually preaches with only an hour or two of special preparation; and both he and Mr. Beecher are wont to state freely that such is their practice. It is much to be regretted that they say so and that they do so. The example misleads many men who have neither their experience and attainments, their prestige, nor their native power. And not a few of their later sermons really fall quite below their own earlier standard. It could not be otherwise with such a method of preparation.

Mr. Spurgeon's action in speaking is, according to the usual English feeling and taste, quite inconsiderable, and scarcely a model for Americans, who

are naturally more vivacious and demonstrative. His voice has extraordinary penetrating power, so that, without seeming to speak loud, he is heard to a great distance. This is a native quality of voice, but may be cultivated by habitually seeking to produce *pure* sound and by distinct articulation. I remember once to have sat in the first gallery, at the farthest point of the Tabernacle from the preacher. Behind me, and twice as near as the pulpit, the great London omnibuses roared along the street. After the prayer, when the doors were reopened, a crowd of the belated came in, and were shuffling along in front of me and anxiously consulting with the ushers as to obtaining seats; while on my right a vigorous baby squalled, and anxious parents sought in nervously loud tones to quiet him. Yet, amid all this, the far-off preacher was quietly reading a hymn, and I heard every word.

6. In the conduct of worship, Mr. Spurgeon greatly excels. He reads hymns very impressively, and, in the absence of an instrument, makes an agreeable interlude by again reading each stanza before it is sung. Mention has already been made of his expository remarks in reading the Scriptures. As to prayer—well, it is real praying. To use a phrase of former days, he seems to "get so near the throne." Nothing about him impressed me so much as his prayers.

No space is left to speak of the way in which his pastoral work, conducted with extraordinary administrative talent, his varied authorship, his missionary and educational work, co-operate with and react upon Mr. Spurgeon's preaching. At least 1,500 of his sermons have been printed, not half of which are included in the ten volumes published in this country. Most persons have probably seen his monthly magazine called "Sword and Trowel." He has made a good collection of hymns, entitled "Our Own Hymn-Book." This contains several hymns of his own composition, but they are hardly an exception to the rule that few great

preachers have written excellent hymns. The second volume of "Lectures to My Students" gives on the fly-leaf a list of all his works.

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**THE OLDEST CHRISTIAN SERMON,
PRAYER, AND HYMN.**

No. I.

BY PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN SERMON.

THE oldest Christian sermon was preached, we all know, by St. Peter from the fullness of the Holy Ghost on the birthday of the Christian Church. No such effective sermon has been preached since. It converted three thousand persons, and founded the mother congregation of Christendom. Now it often takes a number of sermons to convert one man.

The first post-apostolic sermon after the age of inspiration had passed away has only recently come to light, and is a matter of considerable interest. It bears the name of Clement, the first (or third) Bishop of Rome, a pupil of St. Paul and St. Peter, who died in the reign of Trajan between A. D. 98-117, probably about A. D. 100, at the time when St. John, the last survivor of the apostolic age, passed from this world. From this Clement we were long in possession of a Greek epistle to the Church of Corinth in Greece, which in the first four centuries stood in the highest esteem, and was read in public worship, but then disappeared until a copy of it was discovered in 1633 in the celebrated Alexandrian Manuscript of the Bible, which Cyril Lumar, patriarch of Constantinople, presented in 1628 to King Charles I. of England, and which is one of the greatest treasures of the British Museum. In the same manuscript there was a fragment of a second epistle of Clement to the same church. But it is far inferior to the first in originality, power and unction. Hence some critics have conjectured that it was the production of another writer and the fragment of a homily or familiar sermon, rather than of an epistle.

This conjecture has been proved correct by a recent discovery of the whole document. In 1875 Bryennios, a scholar of the Eastern Church and Archbishop of Serree (now of Nicomedia), found in a convent library of the Greek quarter of Constantinople (the Fauar) an old manuscript which contained a complete copy of both epistles of Clement. The second was found to be twice as large as the fragment previously known. Bryennios published both with learned Greek prolegomena and notes, in Constantinople. A copy of his edition is in the Union Theological Seminary library. The discovery created, of course, a great sensation in the literary world, and elicited a good deal of discussion. Gebhardt, Harnack and Zahn incorporated it in their latest edition of the Apostolic Fathers; and so did Professor Funk, of Tübingen, in the fifth edition of *Hefele's Patres Apostolici*. Bishop Lightfoot, who had published a commentary on the First Epistle of Clement, found it necessary to issue an appendix with the newly discovered portions.

The Second Epistle of Clement turns out to be a sermon from the first half of the second century, written and read probably at Corinth by an unknown Presbyter, or possibly by a layman, for the difference between clergy and laity was not yet sharply drawn at that time. As already intimated, it is not remarkable for strength or depth of eloquence, but it is a pious exhortation to repentance, and suited to the condition of the times when the Christians were a persecuted sect without any legal rights in the heathen empire of Rome. For this reason it has considerable historic as well as homiletic interest. We cannot give the whole sermon (which is composed in Greek), but we offer the first three and the last three chapters as fair specimens of the whole. We avail ourselves of the excellent translation of Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham:

1. Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead. And we ought not to think mean things of our Salvation: for when we think mean things of Him we expect also to receive mean things. And they that listen as concerning mean things

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do wrong; and we ourselves do wrong, not knowing whence and by whom and unto what place we were called, and how many things Jesus Christ endured to suffer for our sakes. What recompense then shall we give unto Him? or what fruit worthy of His own gift to us? And how many mercies do we owe to Him! For He bestowed the light upon us; He spake to us, as a father to his sons; He saved us, when we were perishing. What praise then shall we give to Him, or what payment of recompense for those things which we received? we who were maimed in our understanding, and worshiped stocks and stones, gold and silver and bronze, the works of men; and our whole life was nothing else but death. While then we were thus wrapped in darkness and oppressed with this thick mist in our vision, we recovered our sight, putting off by His will the cloud wherein we were wrapped. For He had mercy on us, and His compassion saved us, having beheld in us much error and perdition, even when we had no hope of salvation, save that which came from Him. For He called us, when we were not, and from not being He willed us to be.

2. Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not. Break out and cry, thou that travailest not; for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband. In that he said, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not, He spake of us; for our Church was barren, before that children were given unto her. And in that He said, Cry aloud, thou that travailest not, He meaneth this: Let us not, like women in travail, grow weary of offering up our prayers with simplicity to God. Again, in that He said, For the children of the desolate are more than of her that hath the husband, He so spake, because our people seemed desolate and forsaken of God, whereas now, having believed, we have become more than those who seemed to have God. Again another Scripture saith, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. He meaneth this; that it is right to save them that are perishing. For this, indeed, is a great and marvellous work to establish, not those things which stand, but those which are falling. So, also, Christ willed to save the things which were perishing. And He saved many, coming and calling us when we were even now perishing.

3. Seeing then that He bestowed so great mercy on us; first of all, that we, who are living, do not sacrifice to these dead gods, neither worship them, but through Him have known the Father of truth. What else is this knowledge to Him, ward, but not to deny Him through whom we have known Him? Yea, He Himself saith, Who so confesseth Me, Him will I confess before the Father. This then is our reward, if verily we shall confess Him through whom we are saved. But wherein do we confess Him? When we do that which He saith and are not disobedient unto His commandments, and not only honor Him with our lips, but with our whole heart, and with our whole mind. Now He saith also in

Isaiah, This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. * * *

18. Therefore let us also be found among those that give thanks, among those that have served God, and not among the ungodly that are judged. For I myself too, being an utter sinner, and not yet escaped from temptation, but being still amidst the engines of the devil, do my diligence to follow after righteousness, that I may prevail so far at least as to come near unto it, while I fear the judgment to come.

19. Therefore, brothers and sisters, after the God of truth hath been heard, I read to you an exhortation to the end that ye may give heed to the things which are written, so that ye may save both yourselves and him that readeth in the midst of you. For I ask you as a reward that ye repent with your whole heart and give salvation and life to yourselves. For doing this we shall set a goal for all the young who desire to toil in the study of piety and the goodness of God. And let us not be displeased and vexed, fools that we are, whensoever any one admonisheth us and turneth us aside from unrighteousness unto righteousness. For sometimes while we do evil things, we perceive it not by reason of the double-mindedness and unbelief which is in our breasts, and we are darkened in our understanding by our vain lusts. Let us therefore practice righteousness that we may be saved unto the end. Blessed are they that obey these ordinances. Though they may endure affliction for a short time in the world, they will gather the immortal fruit of the resurrection. Therefore let not the godly be grieved, if he be miserable in the times that now are; a blessed time awaiteth him. He shall live again in heaven with the fathers, and shall have rejoicing throughout a sorrowless eternity.

20. Neither suffer ye this again to trouble your mind, that we see the unrighteous possessing wealth, and the servants of God straitened. Let us then have faith, brothers and sisters. We are contending in the lists of a living God; and we are trained by the present life that we may be crowned with the future. No righteous man hath reaped fruit quickly, but waiteth for it. For if God had paid the recompense of the righteous speedily, then straightway we should have been training ourselves in merchandise and not in godliness; for we should seem to be righteous, though we were pursuing not that which is godly, but that which is gainful. And for this cause divine judgment overtaketh a spirit that is not just, and loadeth it with chains.

To the only God invisible, the Father of truth, who sent forth unto us the Savior and Prince of immortality, through whom also He made manifest unto us the truth and the heavenly life, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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We must not take the faults of our youth into our old age, for old age brings with it its own faults.—
Goethe.

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

No. VIII.

BY WILLIAM ORMISTON, D.D., LL.D.

RECEIVING THE IMPLANTED WORD.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.—James i: 19-21.

DIFFERENT READINGS: V. 19. Instead of ὧστε, the authority of MSS. favors ἴστε; one, ἴστε δέ. Alford, Westcott, Lachman, Lange, and Huther read ἴστε. This reading has been adopted by the Committee on Revision. Tischendorf, in his latest edition, gives the Rec. ὧστε. Instead of ἔστρω, some read ἔστρω δε, and one has καὶ ἔστρω.

V. 20. Some critics favor οὐκ ἐργάζεται for ὃν κατεργάζεται. The former has the greater authority. The two words differ slightly in sense—the latter signifies *worketh out*, or *bringeth to issue*; the former, *practiseth*, or *worketh habitually*.

V. 21. For περιδεδίαιον, in one MS. περιδεδύμα is found. The words are synonymous.

OTHER RENDERINGS: V. 19. Ye know, or know ye, for "wherefore."

V. 21: Overflowing of wickedness (*Rev. Ver.*), or abundance of malignity, or rankness of malignity, for "superfluity of naughtiness." Implanted (*Rev. Ver.*) for "engrafted."

COMMENTARY: The passage is an inference from what has already been stated. If the word wherefore be retained, the duty of receiving the word of truth is inferred from the statement that it is the instrument or means of our regeneration. If the other reading—and, consequently, the different reading—is adopted, then the connection is: Ye know; or are aware of, what has already been stated, but be cautious, and receive that truth with meekness. The same word is used, in a similar way, in

Ephesians v: 5; Hebrews xiii: 17, implying the recognition of well-known or admitted facts. Alford understands the word in an indicative sense, and as referring to what precedes. Huther thinks it better to regard the word as imperative and as referring to what follows. The word would thus correspond with "Do not err," in verse 16, and is, like it, followed by a direct address. The reference is most naturally and obviously made to the foregoing statements. Divine good gifts impose heavy human obligations. Privileges not only measure duty, but bind to its performance. The recipients of so many blessings are morally constrained to grateful obedience. Hence the tenderness and solemnity of the admonition, "My beloved brethren." The same affectionate salutation is repeated by James, and the term "beloved" is often used by the apostles Paul, Peter, John and Jude. (1 Cor. xv: 58; Rom. xii: 19; 1 Pet. ii: 11; 2 Pet. iii: 8; 1 John iii: 2; Jude 3.)

V. 19: "Be swift to hear." As this injunction is given to "every man," it is not necessary, as many commentators suppose, to supply the phrase, the word of truth. The sentence, though not a direct quotation, expresses a sort of proverbial truth of universal application. The intention of James, however, is clearly to inculcate on his readers the propriety of applying it to their conduct as Christians, "*perlinet ad christianos, quatenus sunt christiani*." What holds good in the case of all men, is, in this instance, peculiarly appropriate to Christian men. In that age, instruction in all branches of knowledge was mainly oral—so specially of the Gospel; hence all believers are enjoined to be eager listeners. The terms rendered *swift* and *slow*, found in this sense only here in the New Testament, form a direct contrast; the one, readiness; the other, reluctance.

"Slow to speak." The counsel is a good one, as hasty utterances, on any subject, are seldom profitable, and frequently excite hostility and lead to angry strife. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." But the special reference

here is to religious controversy, or disputations concerning the Gospel. A judicious Christian, while ready to give a reason for the hope he entertains, and in love to speak a word in season to the ignorant and the sorrow-stricken, will not be rash to reply to every accusation or imputation against himself or the truth, but will weigh well his words. Willingness to learn will lead to the implanting or cherishing the new life; haste to speak tends to heat the temper and excite wrath.

V. 20: "*Wrath of man.*" All intemperate zeal, undue excitement, quick resentment, or rash expression, even with regard to what we hold to be the truth—sometimes unpalatable truth—excite ill-will and inspire the language of uncharitableness or detraction; and unfounded statements provoke indignation, and suggest a bitter or unkind response. But all feeling of personal dignity, of vanity, or desire of controversy, must be subordinated to a love of truth and the spiritual benefit of all.

"*Righteousness of God.*" This phrase, as used by Paul, means the divine method of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It may also designate an attribute of the Deity; here, it denotes the righteousness which God approves, and which is produced in man by the word of truth. "The wrath of man works not that which is right before God." (Luther). "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." A true Christian spirit "suffereth long; is not easily provoked."

V. 21: "*Lay apart—and receive.*" The twofold injunction of this verse follows naturally and impressively upon the solemn statement which precedes. In order that the word of truth may have its designed effect on ourselves, or, through us, exert a happy influence on others, we must assiduously remove every obstacle arising from the wickedness and imperfection of our hearts, and give a hearty and docile reception to its teachings, since self-will and passion will exclude us alike from the love and the labor of God. The allusion is

to the processes of agriculture, and probably to the parable of the sower. The ground must be cleaned and cleared of all weeds and rank growth, so that the seed may take root and attain maturity. So the heart must be freed from all the wickedness and malice which is polluting and abundant in us by nature; every root of bitterness, and all the rank, luxuriant growth of malignity, must be extirpated, so that the seed of the Word may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in all holiness of heart and life.

The words filthiness and abundance are both to be joined with malice. So that it is the vileness and rankness of malignity which is to be laid aside. The word *naughtiness* has now lost the meaning it formerly had, of wickedness, or sin, and does not adequately convey the idea of the word in the original, which denotes wickedness, and specially malice, which is the idea intended here.

"*Receive the engrafted word.*" The word rendered engrafted occurs only here in the New Testament, and means *implanted*, or sown. It does not here mean *innate*, nor simply as planted or preached in the world. It is an attribute or characteristic of the word of truth, that it can be planted or sown in the soul of man. This word is to be patiently and attentively heard and eagerly taken hold of by the heart, *received* gladly "with joy of the Holy Ghost," with *meekness*. This, in striking contrast with the malice which is to be laid aside, denotes not simply with a docile mind or a modest disposition, but with a heart gentle, loving, and well-disposed toward our neighbor. Avoiding all unchristian tempers and practices, and gladly receiving the truth in the love of it, we will find it to be the power of God to save the soul. The reception of the truth is the best means of eradicating malice; and as the heart is freed from the dominion of evil propensities, the truth will gain and maintain the ascendancy. (See 1 Pet. ii: 1; Acts xx: 32; Heb. iv: 12; 1 Pet. i: 23-25.)

"*Your souls,*" *ψυχὰς*. "It is the

φωχη which carries the personality of the man: which is between the πνεῦμα, drawing it upward, and the σάρξ, drawing it downward, and is saved at last—passes into life or death, according to the choice between these two. And the λόγος ἑμφυτός, working through the πνεῦμα and by the divine πνεῦμα, is a spiritual agency able to save the ψυχή." (Alford). Huther says: "Instead of τῆς ψυχῆς ὑμῶν, James might simply have written ὑμᾶς."

HOMILETICAL.—In the passage we are taught: With what dispositions we are to wait on the Word; with what spirit we are to receive the Word; and what is accomplished by the Word.

I. WITH WHAT DISPOSITIONS WE SHOULD WAIT ON THE WORD.

"Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." This language is universally applicable to all subjects of human inquiry or research; but, as used here, doubtless refers to the word of truth—the Gospel of salvation—the subject in hand. It is not simply an excellent rule in relation to the civilities and courtesies of social intercourse, but an injunction with regard to the right manner of giving and receiving instruction in religious truth.

We notice the injunction, and the argument by which it is enforced.

1. *The injunction*, which is threefold, and relates to the ear, the tongue, and the temper.

(1) "*Be swift to hear.*" Faith cometh by hearing; and hence, indirectly at least, hearing becomes a channel of salvation. The ear is one of the chief receptive organs of the mind, and it is obviously most important that we should be solicitous, not only how, but what, we hear. There is much which is erroneous, impure or profane; much that is vain, frivolous and unprofitable, which it were better not to hear at all, and in reference to which the less heed we give the better. Much also is said that is censorious, or calumnious, against which we should close our ears, or be slow to hear. But all that God has revealed—specially the truth, which when received is able to save the soul

—demands a reverent, ready and docile attention. The mind should be kept open for the reception of the truth of God, from whatever source it may come. We should be *swift to hear* all voices which reveal to us the mind and will of God. But the Scriptures should be searched with special assiduity. God's law should be pondered day and night; and attendance, regular and punctual, on the services of the sanctuary and the ministry of the Word and ordinances, should be faithfully maintained. A dust-covered Bible on the shelf and a vacant pew in the church at one service on the Sabbath, and not infrequently at both, is sad proof that the owner of either is not swift to hear, and willfully neglects the divine injunction. Great stress is laid by the inspired writers on hearing. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear," is the injunction given to each of the seven churches of Asia. Our Lord Himself, during His ministry, frequently delivered the same precept. (Matt. xi: 15; xiii: 9, 43; Luke xiv: 35.) Obedience to the precept implies that we are to seize with alacrity on every opportunity of hearing, and take earnest heed how we hear. There is an art of hearing profitably, which should be cultivated. We should listen to the word of truth eagerly, attentively, intelligently, and prayerfully. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

(2) "*Be slow to speak.*" Words are sacred, serious things; winged agents of good or evil, and mighty in their influence. The words of Christ are spirit and life, and should be treated and used with respect and solemnity. The propriety of careful thought before speaking is embodied in the adage, "Silence is golden"; yet, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise." Every man may adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say: "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." (Compare Matt. xii: 36, 37; Prov. xxix: 20; xiii: 3; xv: 2;

Eccl. v: 2.) Shakespeare says: "Be checked for silence, but never taxed for speech."

In the early days of the Christian Church, their public assemblies were conducted as a kind of conference, in which many were wont to take part in a conversational way, and there was danger lest some would speak when they had nothing to say, and seek to take the place of teachers when the seat of the learner was their appropriate place. Hence the peculiar suitability of the advice at that time; nor has it lost its force or appropriateness to-day. Even when we are called upon to speak in vindication of the character and claims of Christ, or for the advancement of His cause and kingdom; or when it becomes our duty to comfort the sorrowing, instruct the ignorant, or rebuke the erring, our words ought to be well weighed and deliberately chosen. We should listen and learn much before we assume the functions of a speaker or teacher. The injunction is specially applicable to every form of controversy or disputation on religious subjects, which is apt, through rashness of utterance on either side, to degenerate into vain wrangling or profitless logomachy. We should never be rash in judgment or hasty in speech in reference to the great doctrines of our holy faith, or the character or opinions of our brethren.

(3) "*Be slow to wrath.*" This applies to both hearers and speakers. In listening to what another says, we should restrain impatience and repress any feeling of hostility or indignation which his words may tend to excite. A pricked conscience, offended dignity, or wounded pride will sometimes glow with unhallowed fervor and prompt a rash reply. Still more, however, is a man likely to be carried away by the heat of temper, who is hasty of speech and fond of debate and argument. We ought, therefore, to be on our guard, and exercise great caution and self-restraint. Utterance often feeds the fire of unhallowed zeal, while silence tends to smother and extinguish it. Even on occasions where

a righteous anger and a legitimate indignation are natural and just, we must be thoughtfully circumspect, so that we may "be angry and sin not."

2. *The argument.* "For the wrath of man evoketh not the righteousness of God." In this world of evil there are many things which are fitted to provoke anger and to throw the soul off its balance; and not infrequently party zeal, prejudice, or adherence to some dogma, run into bigotry and fanaticism, which under the name of religion, exhibits a passionate and most reprehensible spirit, and prompt or approve the adoption of harsh, violent, or persecuting measures, with the professed object of advancing the cause of truth and the kingdom of God. But such a spirit necessarily fails. It misrepresents the Gospel of peace and good will, divides the friends of truth, hinders the spread of the Gospel, and gives the enemies of the Cross occasion to revile. Controversy may be unavoidable and useful; but angry feeling is never either necessary or helpful. Passion never nourishes piety, or aids in the perception of truth.

II. WITH WHAT SPIRIT WE SHOULD RECEIVE THE WORD.

The injunction is twofold, intimating, first, what must be avoided by way of preparation, and, next, what must be attained in order to the full fruition of the truth. The soil must be thoroughly prepared for the planting of the seed in order to its germination, growth and productiveness. So from the soul the rank, foul growth of passion, and anger, with all uncharitableness, must be laid aside, in order that with simplicity and mildness of temper, with docility and teachableness of disposition, it may receive and obey the truth, and grow up into the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The meekness inculcated stands opposed to all angry irritation, haughty self-will, contentious wrangling, or self-asserting arrogance, and includes a childlike readiness to learn from any who can teach the truth, and a spirit of gentleness and submission to God who reveals the

truth. A spirit of ingenuous tractableness which is pure, peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated is the right attitude of mind toward the Word of God. "When the heart is meekened to obey a truth, the mind is soon opened to conceive of it." The Master saith that if any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way." (Ps. xxv. 8, 9). God draws near the contrite, humble, trembling soul. The Savior says: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Compare Ps. cxlix: 4; Isa. lxi: 1; Matt. v: 5; Gal. v: 23; Eph. iv: 2; 1 Tim. vi: 11; 2 Tim. ii: 25; 1 Pet. iii: 15.)

III. WHAT THE WORD IS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH. "Save your souls."

The strongest reason why the Word should be meekly received, without cavilling or doubt, as the highest proof of its excellence, is that it is able to save the soul. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. The Word, the implanting of the Word, the meek reception of the Word, are all means to this great end—the salvation of the soul. "There was in the implanted word, taken in its widest sense, the promise and the potency of salvation. Yet it did not work as by compulsion or by a charm, but required the co-operation of man's will." (Plumtre.)

Faith receives this saving truth, and lodges it in us, as an abiding treasure and power. Faith not only perceives and realizes, but accepts the truth, which, used by the Spirit, regenerates, renews, sanctifies and saves the soul. The truth saves from the darkness of ignorance, the serfdom of sensuality, the thralldom of sin, the burden of guilt, the tyranny of selfishness and the dread of death. It plants in us the seeds of holiness, and promotes their growth. It sanctifies our whole nature, and changes our entire character. In the hands of the Spirit it can subdue the hardest and cleanse the filthiest.

It converts the vilest and fiercest rebels into the most loyal and devoted subjects, changes violent persecutors into valiant apostles, and brings back the wayward wanderer to his father's home. The Word of truth, the engrafted Word—the Gospel of Christ—the Gospel of the blessed God, is now, as it ever has been, able, fully, universally able to save your soul—to save all that believe. The salvation is a real, spiritual deliverance, and the truth, which is the means of this deliverance, must be personally received by our spirits ere we can enjoy the blessings which it brings. A constant daily reception of the truth is indispensable to our spiritual life and growth. "They that live above, or without ordinances, do not live at all spiritually, graciously. Painted fire needs no fuel. The Word, though it be an immortal seed, yet needs constant care and watering." (Manton). Hence the significance and reasonableness of the injunction, "Receive the word with meekness."

1. *Search the Scriptures. Take heed how ye hear.*

2. *Cultivate a gentle, charitable, teachable disposition.*

3. *Secure a present, full, complete salvation, by acquiescence in, submission to, and obedience of, the truth.*

SELECTED OUTLINE. DIVINE LEGISLATION FOR MAN IN A WORLD OF EVIL. James i: 19-21.

I. *Legislation for the ear.* "Swift to hear." Teachableness is the state of mind required. And it includes—

1. Freedom from prejudice.
2. Eagerness to learn.

II. *Legislation for the tongue.* "Slow to speak."

This does not mean—1. Unsocial taciturnity; 2. A drawling utterance. But cautiousness, because of the danger of speaking—1. The wrong thing; 2. At the wrong time.

III. *Legislation for the temper.* "Slow to wrath."

1. Men in the world of evil are in danger of being provoked to wrath.

2. That wrath in no case tends to excellence of character.

IV. *Legislation for the life.* "Lay apart," etc.

1. Renunciation of all evil.

2. Appropriation of good.

Receive with meekness—(1) *The thing* received—its essential vitality—its fitness to human nature; (2) *The manner* of receiving it; (3) *The reason* for receiving it.—(W. R. Thomas.)

MISQUOTED SCRIPTURES.

No. XIV.

By TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D.

1. In Genesis iv: 23 we read, "For I have slain a man to my wounding," which is a very obscure utterance. Nor is the darkness removed by the margin, "I would slay a man in my wound." If we follow the oldest versions the little poem, the earliest on record, becomes clearer. Lamech has killed a youth in self-defence, and informs his wives that, in case he should suffer for it, he would be avenged tenfold more than Cain would be, according to the Lord's promise.

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech;
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me:
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold

2. In Gen. xiii: 18, Abraham is said to have dwelt in "the plain of Mamre," a phrase which is repeated in xiv: 13 and xviii: 1. Mamre was an Amorite chieftain who became a friend and ally of the patriarch. But, in the judgment of all scholars, Mamre's abode was not a plain—there is no plain in the vicinity of Hebron—but a grove, and the phrase should be rendered "the oaks (or terebinths) of Mamre." It was the custom to pitch tents under the shade of one or more lofty trees. There is still shown, not far from Hebron, what is called "Abraham's oak;" but though it is very large and venerable, one may well doubt whether its boughs ever sheltered the father of the faithful.

3. In the next chapter, it is said of Melchizedek, "He was the priest of the most high God." But the article before

priest should be omitted, both because it is wrong, there being none in the Hebrew, and because it is misleading, as if Melchizedek were the only priest then existing. As it stands in the original, the text, with some others (*e. g.*, *Revel* in Exodus ii: 16; iii: 1), is a pleasing evidence of the fact that God had at least some genuine followers outside the line of the patriarchs, and that acceptable worship was offered by some who had only the traditions in the family of Shem.

4. In the ratification of the covenant with Abram (Gen. xv: 17), it is said that after dark "a smoking furnace and a burning lamp" passed between the pieces of the divided victims. Now, while it is true that lamps were and are common in the East (candles never being found there, unless brought by foreigners), yet here the original word means a *torch*, and should be so rendered. The same term is used in the account of Gideon's three hundred men (Jud. vii: 16), who carried in their pitchers not "lamps," but torches, and also in the description of the crocodile in Job xli: 19, out of whose mouth go flaming torches. The furnace and the flame in Genesis are of course symbols of the Divine presence, and indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice.

5. According to the authorized version of Gen. xviii: 19, God assigns as His reason for making known to Abraham His purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah the fact that the patriarch will command his children and his household after him. But the original will not bear this interpretation. Strictly rendered the passage runs thus: "For I have known him to the end that he may command his children, etc., that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." According to this the reason is God's previous knowledge of Abraham, in the intense sense that word has in Scripture (*e. g.*, Amos iii: 2: "You only have I *known* of all the families in the earth." Gal. iv: 9:

"After that ye have known God," or rather *are known* of God, a knowledge implying or resting upon a close personal communion. Since Jehovah had already entered into such intimate relations with the patriarch, in order to perpetuate a godly seed, and so ultimately be a blessing to all nations, it was proper that he should be informed of the impending judgment and of the reason for its infliction.

NEW READING OF FAMILIAR TEXTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

No. I.

By G. W. SAMSON, D.D.

"*Sin Offering*" for "*Sin*."—Gen. iv: 7.

AMONG truths that are vitally important, that of the grounds on which man's service can be made acceptable to God must, from the nature of the case, be made to take the lead in a revision of the English Scriptures. The statement given by Moses as to Cain and Abel is first in place and importance on this central and absorbing theme of revelation. The contrast is palpable between two ways of securing divine acceptance; the first, "If thou *doest well* shalt thou not be accepted?" is unquestioned as to its natural and necessary meaning; and perhaps the statement following, the second proviso, "If thou *doest not well*," would be as plain if prior opinion did not divert the student from the laws of legitimate interpretation.

The jurists' laws of the interpretation of human statutes are always first to be regarded; since, unless a record is proved beforehand to be figurative, its statements are to be regarded as framed on the laws of man's common speech, in which men seek, as they ordinarily do, to present their thought in language as distinct as possible for the guidance of their fellows.

The jurists' laws of interpretation, specially applicable to Moses' writings, always designated as "The Law," are substantially these: To be assured of the author's meaning in any statement, observe; first, his ordinary use of words;

second, the immediate connection in which he employs them; third, the subject which calls forth his entire work; fourth, the history that leads to the statement; fifth, the consequences of ascribing one or the other meaning to his words. Applying these rules successively to Gen. iv: 7, it is to be observed: First, the word "hattâth," rendered sin in the received version, is used about 130 times by Moses, in ninety-one of which cases it is rendered "sin offering," while in three others it is rendered by the yet more distinctive term "purification." Again the word "râbâts," rendered "lieth," used thirty times in the Old Testament, is invariably used to indicate the quiet repose of domestic animals, the only exception (Gen. xlix: 2) being one that "proves the rule," since the lion, when perfectly gored, "couches" as inoffensive as a lamb. The only two interpretations given to these words, the former modern, are these: that Cain is *warned* that if he "does not well," sin, like a lion, "crouches," not "couches," at the door to spring upon him; while the other, the early Christian, is, that a "sin offering," like Abel's lamb, lies close at his door ready for the offering of "faith." Second, the immediate connection, "and unto thee shall be his desire," compels the latter interpretation. Moses is alluding, as in the case of Esau and Jacob, to the natural Asiatic law of primogeniture; according to which the elder brother, as the superior in age and experience, is the natural "keeper" (v. 9.) of the younger; this promise has force when the latter interpretation is given; but it is meaningless if the former interpretation be given. Third, the subject-matter of revelation is *not* to teach physical science in the first and second chapters of Genesis, nor moral science in the third and fourth chapters; but its end is to teach the plan of redemption from sin. This Jesus constantly taught in his constant statements like this: "Moses wrote of Me;" "Search the Scriptures; they are they that testify of Me." This Paul develops at length in the epistle to the Hebrews; and this the

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old prophet, whom John, the beloved apostle, in his Revelation, was about to worship, attested when he declared: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Fourth, the *history* which introduces this incident, as Sanchoniathon, the early Phœnician sage; Philo, his Greek translator of the second century; Eusebius, the early Christian historian of the fourth century, and Grotius, the profound jurist, have successively noted—the *history* here refers to the origin of *sacrifices*, found in the *first* family as in all subsequent families of mankind. This fact Paul's allusion and comment (Heb. xi: 4) fully confirm. Fifth, the *consequences* of accepting the former, which is the modern interpretation, are; first, the forcing of a meaning upon the word "lieth" which it never had, and of attributing to the king of beasts an act of which he was never guilty—stealthy "crouching at the door" of his victim; second, the utter neglect of the connection and of the history which were meant to explain the statement; third, the setting aside of the great fact recognized by the early Christian writers, partially forgotten in the reaction against the Roman Church, "sacrifice of the mass," which, however, Luther in his translation of "râbâts" could not allow undue influence. The acceptance of the term "sin offering" permits Moses to be intelligent and connected; allows all the laws of interpretation their due weight, and puts, as was intended, the contrast between salvation by *works*, and redemption by *faith*, in the front-ground, as *the subject* of divine revelation.

LIGHT FROM THE POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE OF THE JEWS.

No. I.

By RABBI MAX MOLL, MINISTER OF "AITZ RAANAN CONGREGATION, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

MANY a question has been raised by the Jewish teachers of old about the creation of the light: and as many as were the questions, so many were the different answers. The creation of the

light on the first day, and the creation of sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day, indicated to them the existence of a "primitive light," a "central sun," from which sun, moon, and stars receive their light. We find this clearly stated in the following passage of the Midrash Tanchumato Numbers viii.: 2: "Great is the (primitive) light of God; sun and moon illuminate the world, and whence do they get their light? From the sparks of a higher light." (Vide Hab. iii.: 11.) Again we find in Midrash Genesis Rabba, chapter iii.: "The light which was created at the beginning cannot shine by day, for it would make dark the sun; it cannot shine by night, for it was made to give light. For whom is it then concealed? For the pious in the other world." (Compare Isaiah xxx: 26.)

In Exodus Rabba we read another hypothesis about the creation of light. It runs thus: "Three things preceded the creation of the world, viz.: water, wind, and fire. The water became pregnant and brought forth the darkness; the fire became pregnant and brought forth the light; and the wind became pregnant and brought forth the wisdom."

Rabbi Simeon asked R. Samuel, "Whence was the light created?" He answered, "God covered Himself with a garment, and through its lustre the world was illuminated from one end to the other." (Exodus Rabba L.) Comp. Ps. civ: 2. "Light was the first work of the creation, to teach us that it must also be the first in all our creations." (Ibid.)

And God said, "Let there be light." This alludes to Abraham.* (Vide Isaiah xli: 2): "Who waked up from the east?" Do not read, הָעֵינַר "waked up," but הִתְאִיר, "enlightened." And God saw the light, "that it was good."—כִּי טוֹב—Ki tob. R. Elazar said, "Even for the sake of *one* righteous man the world would have been created, for it is writ-

* Abraham was the first who proclaimed the one true God; thus he gave light, i. e., he enlightened.

ten: And God saw the light, 'Ki tob,' which means nothing else but 'the righteous.' (Vide Isaiah iii: 10.) Imru tsadik 'Ki tob:' Say ye, the righteous, 'who is good.'" I must mention here the comment of the Talmud on the words, Imru tsadik Ki tob: "Is there a righteous man who *is* good, and one who is *not* good? But he who is good to God and good to men, he is 'tsadik tob,' a good righteous. Good to God and not good to men, he is 'tsadik she'no tob,' a righteous who is not good."

Beautiful is the exposition of the Midrash to the words, "And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night:" "God does not connect His name with the evil, but only with the good; for it says, 'God called the light day;' but it says not 'God called the darkness night.'"

Again, God called the light day—this is Jacob; and the darkness night—this is Esau.* "One day," *i. e.*, the day of which the prophet Zachariah speaks. (xiv: 7.)

And God divided between the light and the darkness, *i. e.*, between the works of the righteous and the works of the wicked. The Talmud allegorizes this very* nicely, as follows: "The cock said to the owl, 'I hope and long for the light of the morning, because it belongs to me—is there for my welfare. But to thee, owl, indeed the light does not belong—thou must shun it.'"

That the Jewish teachers of old were fully convinced of the existence of the world before the beginning of the biblical era, is plainly shown in the following exposition: "'And it was evening.' It does not say here, *יְהִי עֶרֶב*, *Yehi ereb*, and it shall be evening; but *וַיְהִי עֶרֶב*, *vayehi ereb*, and it was evening; whence we conclude that there must have existed an era before."

* Jacob represents the true belief in God—light, day; while Esau represents heathenism—darkness, night.

ONE pound of learning requires ten of common sense to acquire it.—*Persian Proverb.*

THE THINGS NEW AND OLD.

No. VII.

By REV. A. McELROY WYLLIE.

WE have spoken of the *old* as identified with the unchangeable truth; of the *new* as relating to the methods and factors in its presentation.

In the present day the impression more or less widely prevails, that he who adheres to the old must necessarily grow uninteresting by reason of want of variety; and that, to awaken attention and prolong the interest, one must join the Athenians in the Agora, and be ever alert for the new. Hence, not a few of our younger clergy have revealed a dangerous tendency to seek the new as well in substance of doctrine, as the new in their methods of presentation.

Nothing could be more erroneous than such a notion.

Light can be broken into just seven colors, and these can be yet further reduced to three primitive hues. If any one wants to receive a lasting impression of the endless variety of tints and shades, let him go, in Paris, to the famed manufactory of the Gobelins Tapestry, and let his eye dwell with rapture on the collection of some fifteen hundred or two thousand distinct shades which the cunning of French chemistry has produced and spread out before the vision; and let him ask himself whether there is any limit to the combinations and variations of such tints. He reflects that all these possibilities of artistic effects can be traced to the original seven, and, less still, to the primitive three.

Let him rid himself of the notion that it is necessary to abandon or treat lightly the *old* in order to secure variety and fix the attention. No greater mistake could be made.

Our previous line of thought led up to this point. In the region of the *flexible new*, one's *personality* must hold the foremost place. Let us be pardoned if we think this part of our subject will bear further illustration. The weak things are the imitations. The personality is powerful when conse-

crated, because it is through this, as an agent, that the sovereign spirit of God works from man to his fellow. God must hold in light esteem all shams, all masks, and mere imitations: and He must honor that personality which respects His own separate thought in the creation of that personality.

Whatever, therefore, a man's individual and separate endowment may be, and whatever his own peculiar combination may be, let him educate that to the very uttermost of honest forth-putting. Let him fire it with zeal, and use it with all the projectile force he can command. If he be gifted in fancy and imagination, and not in logical acumen, let him not torment himself in the attempt to become the fine cleaver of logic. If he can allure the fancy, let him allure it with all his might, and seek to draw men back to God through the fancy and the imagination. If he is most at home on Milton's track, let him move the gates whose hinges grate with "harsh thunder," and let him also ope the portals "on golden hinges turning."

Let him, in Scriptural proportion, fascinate the hope and excite the fears by powerful unfoldings of the eternal sanctions which must follow this state of moral probation. Let him remember this law of our being that, while things repeated to our senses grow weaker and weaker in their effects, those things which reach the soul through the channel of belief and the powers of the imagination assert more and more of power and sway over the man and his character. In the light of this law he who is largely endowed with the panoramic faculty carries a great advantage.

Likewise, if he be largely endowed with the emotional nature, let him, with all the might he can command, seek to stir men to feeling—to "exhilarate the emotions," so that he may move men to return to God. (We freely confess here that the highly emotional man ought not to stand alone. He had better follow one who has provided abundance of matter by faithful and patient instruction. It is dangerous to start

much heat where there is no substance to hold it. The earth retains the inner molten fires because of its immense mass; pour that heat outward upon the thin atmosphere, and it would soon disappear and leave a greater cold. Tinsel is quickly heated, and as quickly cools. The moral just here is that your emotional evangelists should follow the man who has laid the mind of his hearers full of the solid blocks of truth—put a coal mine in each man's soul. Now you may safely turn on the heat after the fuel has been prepared.)

But to proceed: If he be terribly matter-of-fact—if logic be the only law to him, let him, with all the energy he can command, seek to "satisfy by logic;" let him drive home the conviction, though it be by the cold hammer of reason: earnest and repeated blows will make it hot. Let him stand by this, that, in the long run, the human mind acts logically from the premises it adopts. The whole history of ethics and religion shows this to be true. It is only a question of time, and logic will vindicate itself. The Inquisition was the logical sequence from the Jesuitical premise, that the end justified the means; and American toleration and liberty are the logical sequence from the basis of the Reformation. Here, in this great metaphysical fact of our nature, is a Gibraltar for the strong logician. Recognizing this law, he seeks to fill the souls of men with correct data, and lead the way into correct processes of developed reason. He remembers Him who said, "Come, let us reason together;" and he reflects that God, as the author of reason, must be the *most reasonable* being in the universe. Remembering this, even his logic must glow, and thus, by the force of conviction, take on the hues and heat of a living and propagating force. "Logic on fire" is the highest type of a sermon and makes a Chalmers. His is indeed a lofty vocation, and one an angel might covet, who mounts the pulpit to vindicate, from Heaven's premises, "the ways of God to men."

Moreover, if his be the versatile gifts,

so that he can "illuminate by exposition," let him, with all the turnings he can command, gather up his unstrung pearls—his unclassified, but glittering and unjoined gems, and let these be poured out in honor of the truth as it is in Jesus; and God will surely honor him as he honors God. If he can unroll the panoramic scenes; if he can marshal and march his auditors before the cross—make them see the Form Divine, marked, marred, pierced for them; if he can draw again the darkness, mysterious and awful; if he can make the ground shiver under the feet by the earthquake returning again; if he can bid them gaze upon the rending rocks, the opening tombs, the parting veil, and, in the glooming, march again the sheeted dead rising from their graves as Jesus conquered death; if he can muster his people past the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection—let him do it with all the energy he can summon, though he reach such a climax as to compel the people to shout out in terror or to blaze in hope. But, in all the swinging or flashing of gifts, let him bear this supremely in mind: no power is genuine unless it moves upon the conscience and will—those twin citadels of man's soul. "This, in the absence of other endowments, is often at once both the scepter of a preacher's command, and the mysterious seal of his commission."

The apostolic and Pauline rule was: "To every man's conscience in the sight of God." All things are lawful if this be held high and conspicuous above the crowd of inferior aims. You may have fancy in its best play, exhortation in highest exhilaration, logic in compactest metal, reason in purest ring—yet, if you subordinate not these and all to the determined movement upon the conscience, and to a desperate grapple with the rebellious will, you have failed of your errand, and dishonored your commission.

Newtown, Pa.

THE whole trouble is that we won't let God help us.—*Geo. MacDonald.*

BEST METHODS OF PREACHING AND SERMONIZING.

No. VI.

The Lutheran View.

By G. F. KROTEL, D.D., AND A. C. WEDEKIND, DD.*

REV. DR. KROTEL.

My practice is very largely expository preaching, and such is very apt to be the case in the Lutheran Church. I have preached courses of historical sermons, both from the Old Testament and the New, but they have been largely expository. The preaching of topical sermons, suggested by public events of the day, depends on circumstances. I do not think that is very frequently done in the Lutheran Church. We observe the church year, and the selection of our subjects for preaching is largely influenced by the church year, by the gospels and the epistles. Each particular season of the church year suggests to us our subject; even if we do not confine ourselves to the gospel and the epistle lessons, they yield to us a selection of subjects appropriate to the season. On that account there is a good deal of system in the selection of texts and subjects through the year.

After having selected my text, my first point is to make myself thoroughly acquainted with its meaning, in its connection with the context, so that I can fully understand, as far as it is possible for me to do, the meaning of the writer—the style, the spirit of the word as it is presented in the Scriptures. When I have done that I select a theme, with the appropriate natural heads, divisions and sub-divisions, think out the whole plan, and prepare a short outline in writing. Understand me; merely the heads, divisions, sub-divisions, sub-sub-divisions, and so on. Then I am ready, the language being altogether extemporaneous.

I do not write my sermons except on very rare occasions. I have found in my experience that it is best for me not

*In interviews for this publication.

to write any part of a sermon that I propose to deliver extemporaneously, because I find that the two processes interfere with each other; endeavoring to recollect what is written is one mental operation; to present thought previously thought out or prepared is a different thing. I confine myself altogether to the latter. I take it for granted, if I thoroughly understand a subject, that the best words to present it will come at the moment of delivery.

In the beginning of my ministry I wrote every word of a sermon and committed it to memory. After awhile I wrote and did not commit to memory—simply impressed the heads and subdivisions, memorized something, but left the rest for extemporaneous consideration. And so I gradually passed over into the other method.

I was brought up in a part of the Church in which it was altogether out of the question for a minister to appear in the pulpit with a manuscript; I was brought up in the German Church. In Germany it is the rarest thing in the world for any one to preach from manuscript. Some of the ablest and most eloquent ministers in Germany have written and committed their sermons *verbatim* for years, but never appear with a manuscript in the pulpit. So that, in the very beginning of my ministry, it was, to me, almost a *sine qua non* to prepare myself to preach without a manuscript before me.

I am strongly in favor of extemporaneous preaching. Different persons must try different methods, but the object should be to arrive at the extemporaneous method. Of course the written method has its advantages. A man can prepare his language more carefully; he can be more precise; the manuscript that he has prepared is of service afterward; he is always ready, and he is not subject to those various disturbing circumstances and influences that very often affect the extemporaneous preacher.

REV. DR. WEDEKIND.

I have never been absolutely wedded to either written sermons or extem-

poraneous preaching. My practice has generally been the use of a manuscript in the morning, and of a tolerably full skeleton in the evening. Of late years I rarely take a manuscript into the pulpit.

My conviction is decidedly in favor of thorough preparation, and then of free, or, as it is commonly called, extemporaneous delivery. Nine-tenths of the laity, I am pretty sure, are generally in favor of this method.

The practice of writing a sermon and then committing it to memory is simply monstrous.

SHUNNING EVIL MEN.

*Then said Saul * * * I will no more do thee harm.*—1 Sam. xxvi: 21. *And David said * * * I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.*—1 Sam. xxvii: 1.

The two passages show us Saul profuse in professions of penitence, and David more than ever afraid of this royal penitent. David had several times spared Saul's life, when he had the power to slay him. After each act of mercy Saul repents, and David takes new precautions.

Saul never sincerely repented. After the disobedience at Shur (see chap. xv.) Saul repented in fear of a penalty. After each escape, by David's forbearance, he repented that he had been in great peril. But his wicked will remained unchanged. He was deliberately and persistently wicked.

There are other such evil men in the world. We are apt to forget it; we want to believe that all men are as good, or as bad, as ourselves; and so good people are always surprised at a deceit or a crime. David's lesson—that he had to do with a man who could not be trusted—we also may have to learn. There is no value in a sentimental good opinion of all men: it is as unwise to deny that the bad man exists, as to doubt that there are good men.

A wise caution in shunning the bad man is a duty. Perhaps, like David, we may have our chances of personal victory over him: but David could not touch the Lord's anointed: we cannot do evil to evil men, but we can avoid them.

THE MISSIONARY SERVICE.

"The Gospel in the regions beyond."—2 Cor. x: 16.

The First Band of Christian Missionaries.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word.—Acts viii: 4.

The late Dr. Wayland said that "this little band did more for the conversion of the world than all the Christians of the present day united have done." This was so—

1. Because every individual felt that the conversion of the world was a work for which he himself, and not an abstraction called the Church, was responsible.

2. Instead of relying on man for aid, every one looked directly up to God to forward the work.

3. God was exalted. His power was confessed, and very soon, in a few years, the standard of the Cross was carried to every part of the then known world.

Texts and Themes of two Prominent Missionary Sermons of the Past.

I. William Staughton, D.D. (Philadelphia, 1798): "*Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*"—Isa. lv: 12.

Theme: A review of the old dispensation leads one to justify the application of this text to the Gospel times, and to explain it as illustrative of the influence of Christianity—

1. On the missionaries themselves.

2. On the people to whom their mission is directed.

II. Horace Bushnell (New York, 1847): "*Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.*"—Judges xvii: 13.

Theme: Barbarism the First Danger. After many illustrations of tendencies to barbarism to the emigrant from life in the woods, etc., he asks: "What, then, shall we do?" In answer to which, he says: "We must throw ourselves out, therefore, upon Home Missions as the first and sublimest Christian duty that the age lays upon us."

Ho! for Alaska!

"If a bishop and four clergymen, with at least \$12,000 per annum, could be secured for Alaska, and these men could get into the field and take possession before *whiskey* settles there and the people are demoralized by it, there might be a work done among these Indians equal to that in the Fiji Islands, and in as short a time."

"There will be no trouble about the men or the money; and, even though the new bishop should have 'no cathedral, no staff of clergy, and no endowment,' he could have a good support, a steam yacht, and a dozen dog teams, and with these, if he were the right man in *body* as well as in *spirit*, he could convert that world."

This is the way the Episcopalians talk about Alaska. Such a spirit will insure success.

THE BARBARISM OF CHRISTIAN NATIONS.

—This work in Alaska should be undertaken at once, before our mariners, explorers and traders lodge and deep-root in the minds of the natives prejudices against the whites. Even now it will take many a good word and many a good deed to overcome the educational effect of the unnecessary destruction of a village on the Alaskan coast, a year or so ago, by one of our government vessels. Familiar Anglo-Saxon cruelties begin to crowd each other. Lieutenant Schwatka, of fair Arctic fame, telegraphs across the continent that he found it necessary to shoot three out of six of his native guides, because they would not pilot him through the rapids on the Yukon River! After half their number were shot the "others submitted," we are naively told, "and the rapids were run." No doubt! To these surviving simple natives the rapids did not seem so cruel as the guns of the Christian whites. These are the kind of John the Baptists we are sending into heathen lands, to prepare the way for our missionaries. Is it a wonder that our Christian teachers make so poor headway? The barbarism of the whites, more than anything else, stands in the way of the conversion of our American Indians, of the success of the Gospel in Africa, in India, in China.

LIVING ISSUES FOR PULPIT TREATMENT.

The world will not let die a religion which helps it to solve its vital problems.

Divorce—An Alarming Evil.

Every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband, committeth adultery—Luke xvi: 18.

Among the social problems which are forced upon us for solution, none are more radical in their relation to society at large than the matter of divorce; none are charged with greater danger for the future of the United States. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. xi: 3.)

I. THE LAW OF CHRIST IN RELATION TO THE SUBJECT.

This is found in the passage given from Luke; also in Matthew v: 31, 32; xix: 3-9, and Mark x: 2-12. Observe how Christ increased the scope and strictness of the Jewish law (Deut. xxiv: 1) and put the woman on a footing of equality with the man. According to Christ's precepts marriage is dissolved by adultery, so that the innocent party may marry again, *but for no other offence*. And yet divorcees have come to be granted for other causes; causes often of the most trivial character. Human law is thus brought into direct antagonism with the divine law.

II. THIS SIN AND SOCIAL EVIL IS SPREADING LIKE A CONTAGION AMONG US.

Recent statistics are appalling. Where we should least expect it, as in New England, the land of the Puritans, the evil is assuming large proportions. The ratio of divorce to marriage in several States is now as one to ten, or even greater in some States, and in one State the ratio has within twenty years increased from one to fifty-one, to one to twenty-one! In this city, in only three of our courts, nearly 3,000 divorces have been decreed since 1870, and the number in 1882 was almost double that in 1872. Whereunto will this grow? Is it not time to sound the alarm? Is not the marriage bond fast becoming a mere rope of sand?

III. THE CAUSES OF THIS TERRIBLE LAXITY.

They are manifold. Among them may be specified—

1. The tendencies of modern social life. Extravagance in living. The attractions away from home life. The general loosening of moral restraints.

2. Secrecy in obtaining divorce. Instead of the publicity of an open court, cases are now generally sent to a referee. This favors collusion. "Detectives," too, are employed to collect or manufacture testimony.

3. The rapacity of a class of lawyers, who agree to obtain a divorce without publicity, for a consideration.

4. The extreme laxity of divorce laws in several States, by which every facility is afforded for annulling the marriage contract.

5. The recent decision of the Court of Appeals of this State, which practically removes all restraint upon the subsequent marriage of persons, even where they were divorced for acts of marital infidelity.

IV. THE REMEDY.

1. The Church has a duty to perform. (1) To vindicate the law of Christ in relation to divorce. (2) To maintain discipline and duly punish offenders. (3) Her ministry must refuse to marry divorced persons, unless they have a clear right to remarry, according to Christ's precepts.

2. Our courts have a duty in the case. In the interest of morality and public virtue, they are bound to frown upon this growing laxity, and lay a strong hand upon the evil to the full extent of their power. Also to take the lead in a movement for a reform of State divorce laws, and to secure a national law that shall be uniform and wholesome in its operations. "No more important question can come before Congress than that of preparing for a national divorce law by a constitutional amendment. Eminent judges and lawyers favor that

mode of relief from our present embarrassments."

3. The community at large are profoundly interested in this matter. They should agitate it; rouse public sentiment; form leagues everywhere, as they have in New England, in which

all denominations are heartily united petition Congress; offer special prayer. No time is to be lost. The peril is imminent. In striking down the family, you destroy the "foundations;" and the State and the Church must fall with it.

HINTS AT THE MEANING OF TEXTS.

"It is not always best, I think, to have the frame of a sermon like the frame of a Swiss cottage—all shown on the outside."—R. S. STORRS, D.D.

Funeral Service.

PRAYER IN DEATH.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—Acts vii: 59.

A CHRISTIAN should die praying. Other men die in a way fitting their lives. The ruling passion of life is strong in death. Julius Caesar died adjusting his robes, that he might fall gracefully; Augustus died in a compliment to Livia, his wife; Tiberius in dissimulations; Vespasian in jest. The infidel, Hume, died with pitiful jokes about Charon and his boat; Rosseau with boasting; Voltaire with mingled imprecations and supplications; Paine with shrieks of agonizing remorse; multitudes die with sulleness, others with blasphemies faltering on their tongues. But the Christian should die praying. For

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gate of death,
He enters heaven with prayer."

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" This is the prayer of faith, commending the immortal spirit to the covenant care of Jesus.

THE CERTAINTY AND PROXIMITY OF THE LIFE BEYOND?

To-day shall thou be with Me in paradise.

Luke xxiii: 43.

1. *To-day.* No long period of sleep in the grave. No intermediate state. The transition direct and immediate.

2. *Heaven a place,* as well as a blissful state. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." "With Me"—not in the grave, not in the spirit world simply, or in a sinless state, but with Me in the world of glory. A place so near that it could be entered that day. "I go to

prepare a place for you," said Christ to His sorrowing disciples, "that where I am there ye may be also." "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is a precious thought that we can locate our friends, who have died in the Lord; think of them as actually in heaven, before the throne, and in fellowship with angels and the spirits of the just made perfect.

3. *The ground of this faith.* (1.) We have Christ's own words, "To-day," etc (2.) Christ knew whereof He affirmed. He came down from heaven and knew all about the spirit world. He knew also His power over death and the grave. At His word Lazarus came forth from the grave, and the widow's son of Nain, while on the way to burial, was restored to his mother. "I am the resurrection and the life!" He proclaimed as a cardinal doctrine of His teaching. We can implicitly trust His teachings, and they illumine the Christian's death chamber and the grave with celestial radiance.

Revival Service.

REVIVALS AND SINGING.

I will praise Thee with my whole heart.

Ps. cxxxviii: 1.

COTTON MATHER says: "It is remarkable that when the kingdom of God has been making any new appearance, a mighty zeal for the singing of psalms has attended it and assisted it." During the great awakening in this country in the last century, the people so abounded in the singing of praises to God that President Edwards felt there was need of guarding and restraining influences. Hence he wrote some cautions concerning this subject, and discussed the pro-

priety of "companies singing in the streets going to or coming from the place of public worship." But if there be joy and shouts of praise among the angels over repenting sinners, why should there not be in the Church below? Singing is the fitting expression of a joyful heart. There is never so much singing as in a revival. There is power in sacred song not yet fully developed. The devil understands this and reaps a great harvest from song. The "service of song" ought to be made a permanent feature in our public worship. The burden of the Psalms is praise and song. We have quite too many *doleful* Christians, and not enough *singing* Christians.

"Why should the children of a king
Go mourning all their days?"

THE SILENCE OF SIN.

And no man after that durst ask Him any question.—Mark xii: 34.

I. HOW CHRIST SILENCED SIN.

1. *He was conclusive in His reply.* He did not endeavor to evade the questions put to him. He resorted to no subterfuge, no tricks of logic, no beclouding with technical terms. He spoke right to the point, simply, directly, clearly, and *stopped when His answer was complete.*

2. *He was consistent in His life.* It is comparatively easy to silence a man as far as your reasoning is concerned, but your practice must correspond to your theory before you can be invulnerable. Jesus had just expressed the highest truth of the Gospel, the one most difficult of attainment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, * * * and thy neighbor as thyself," and yet by the side of such a standard His life afforded no ground for criticism.

II. WHAT THE SILENCE INDICATED.

1. *That they were dumbfounded.* They had been trained all their lifetime in the discussion of these matters, but Christ spoke to them from a higher plane, where they could not hope to meet Him with success. They were wranglers; He was a lover of truth, and He refused to descend to their level. Let Christians imitate Him.

2. *That they were insincere.* Here was one who spoke words of wisdom, such as they had never heard, yet *they had nothing to ask Him.* They cared nothing for the truth, everything for an argumentative triumph. Now all their doubts might be set at rest, but they hug them to their hearts, and are silent.

III. A PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

There are many who refuse to come to Christ because they have doubts and perplexities which they cannot set at rest. But He can set them all at rest if they will bring them to Him. He is the fountain of truth, and if they will not resort to Him their insincerity is confessed. They do not wish the light because of the darkness of their hearts.

DUTY PERSONAL AND IMPERATIVE.

ANONYMOUS.

What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.—
John xxi: 22.

PETER WAS MORE concerned about the duty of another than about his own, and hence our Lord's rebuke. Peter has a multitude of imitators in this thing. One of the strongest tendencies of human nature is to shuffle off individual obligation; to note and blame faults of character and omissions of duty on the part of our neighbors, while unconscious of our own sins, and neglecting the plainest personal duties. What John shall do or be has no connection with Peter's responsibility or welfare.

I. VARIOUS CLASSES OF SINNERS TO WHOM THIS REBUKE APPLIES.

1. Those who refuse to follow Christ because there is so much that is difficult and hard to be understood in the Bible.

2. Those who are not willing to repent, and obey the Gospel, until they have settled all the great doctrinal questions involved in the plan of salvation.

3. Those who refuse to repent of their sins and believe in Christ because they cannot know just how they became sinners, or whether or not they are responsible for Adam's sin.

4. Those who refuse to take a bold,

open stand on the Lord's side, because there is such a diversity of religious opinions among men. They scarcely know what to believe, and so they excuse themselves from believing anything.

5. Those who stand aloof from Christ and His people because they see so many faults and failings in professing Christians.

"But what is that to THEE? Follow THOU ME" Christ's claim is obligatory on every man; not one is excused. It is not my neighbor's vineyard that I am to keep, but my own. If all the world refuse to follow Christ, it will not lessen my obligation one iota. In the last great day I must "answer for myself, and not for another."

SERMONIC CRITICISM.

"And how did Garrick speak the soliloquy last night?"

"Oh, against all rule, my lord, most ungrammatically; betwixt the substantive and the adjective, which should agree together in number, case and gender, he made a breach thus—stopping as if the point wanted settling; and betwixt the nominative case, which your lordship knows should govern the verb, he suspended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times, three seconds and three-fifths, by a stop-watch, my lord, each time."

"Admirable grammarian! But in suspending his voice was the sense suspended likewise? did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm? Was the eye silent? Did you narrowly look?"

"I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord."—STERNE.

PREACHING TO THE INDIVIDUALS.—Daniel Webster once said: "If ministers in our day would preach more to the individuals and less to the crowd, there would not be so much listlessness among their hearers." By this we suppose he meant to say that a sermon was not an oration to a great audience so much as a personal address of one speaker to one hearer—as the address of Nathan to David—"Thou art the man." And it can scarcely admit of a doubt that the efficacy of pulpit addresses would be greatly increased if ministers would borrow more of the spirit and manner of Christ's addresses to Nicodemus, to the woman at the well, rather than the lofty style of the orations of Edward Everett or Mr. Webster himself. But there is a danger, in the other extreme, in our cultivation of this conversationalism in the pulpit. We must not allow ourselves to fall into a habit of urgency and iteration of appeal. We have no illustration of this in any address of Christ. In His most urgent and impassioned invitations or warnings, He never lost His dignity. He gave the invitation, or the warning, or the rebuke, and then left it with His hearers. After He had put the whole truth before the young ruler, he only added: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

THE REASON NOT THE ONLY TEST.—"B. T.," in a sermon before us, deduces from the text, "Come, let us reason together," the theme, "The reason the only test for truth." The text does not teach this theme, nor is the theme true. There are other tests for moral and spiritual truths besides those supplied by reason; tests equally, perhaps more, infallible. The instincts of a well-developed soul reach upward and inward into the spiritual world. Says Christ: "If any man willetth to do His will he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." (John vii: 17.) He will know as a Mozart knows that a combination of sounds is a harmony or a discord; know as an Angelo knows that a painting is beautiful. The truths up to the level of which a soul has risen need bring no credentials. They are a matter of course—self-evident. As we said in a previous article, the *developed soul is its own touch-stone for spiritual truths*. The affections, the moral sentiments, have an illuminating power.

"For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway, Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness."

They have more than an illuminating power; they have eyes with which to see, they have the sense of spiritual touch.

SIMPLICITY IN A SERMON.—Many preachers despise simplicity, as evidence of shallowness. They wish to be thought profound, and so they elaborate, and mystify, and crowd into their discourse irrelevant matter. But great minds are generally simple. The grandest thinkers and preachers are simplicity itself. The highest style of art is, really, the simplest. As deep water runs still, so great minds work out their processes and results quietly, without any show of effort, and with such seeming ease and directness that a shallow mind will mistake simplicity, transparency, for lack of power and profundity. A text should have, and usually does have, but *one leading thought*, and the object of the sermon should be to work out and enforce that thought. To that single purpose the divisions, and arguments, and illustrations should all contribute. Not a thought or a word should find place that is foreign to the main thought. To disregard this rule is to confuse the minds of the hearers, and throw away the chance of making a deep impression. Here is where so many preachers fail. They will not confine themselves to the one great truth contained in their text. They get into their sermon a "body of divinity;" they press into their service a score or more of texts or points that have no immediate connection with the text under treatment. We have an instance of it in an outline of a sermon sent us for criticism, based on that grand text (Rev. xxii: 17), "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The meaning of the text lies on the surface. It is single, simple, direct; and there is no mistaking its scope or application. It makes its own divisions: 1. The invitation. 2. Who invites. 3. Who are invited. There is so much embraced in the text as to call for a somewhat general treatment. But in the outline before us there are nearly a score of divisions and sub-divisions. The continuity of the main thought is thereby broken. The attention is distracted by a great number of minor issues. Topics are introduced that are not germane to the subject. A number of the illustra-

tions would admirably fit into a sermon on education, or the power of habit, but we cannot see what they have to do with these closing, glorious words of inspiration, which seem to catch up and emphasize and give a trumpet-tongue to the message of redeeming grace to a sinful and lost world.

THE CLOSING WORDS.—To begin well and to close well are the hardest things in preaching. Both require brains and skill in unusual measure. Both fix the usefulness of the sermon. A bad start costs the good will of the hearer and endangers the preacher's chance of getting "ears to hear." The bad ending spoils the effect of the sermon by leaving a bad taste behind it. Therefore both ends of the sermon should be carefully fixed. It is common for extempore preachers to leave the ending to the feeling of the moment; and those who read sermons often depend on a few familiar religious phrases. Some of both classes often close by a reference to death, judgment and eternity—no matter what the theme may be. The defect of such generalizing is that, if it has any effect, it puts new thoughts in place of the sermon, whereas the closing words should *fix* the sermon's main thought in the mind. Perhaps the most important caution is this: *Close the sermon without spoiling it or depreciating its value.* There is so much danger of this that one often hears extempore preachers described as "kicking over a full pail of milk" at the end of their discourses. This strong figure is most frequently applied to those who deliver a general exhortation unfitted to the theme. After taking precautions against spoiling a good effect at the close, the preacher may wisely consider how he can *add to the value and impressiveness* of his sermon. It is certainly not best to make a long general application. The hearer should be notified that the end of the sermon has come, and the closing words should be few, but not too few. There should be no shock of an unexpected stop; there should be no wearying prolongation. The things

said should be appropriate and well said. A skillful way of driving the nail home in each case may wisely be studied out and worked out—fitness, brevity, force, being the qualities sought for. Apply the sermon; but do it carefully and quickly. The *tone* of the close may be as fitting as the *tune* which is sung after it; but this is a matter beyond instruction. The wise preacher will seek this harmony; at all events, he will not spoil all by an entire change of key and notes in a wild exhortation.

PERSONALITY IN THE PULPIT.—Is it admissible? Is it wise? Is it, on the whole, beneficial? Doubtless there are occasions when the use of personalities might be justified, but we believe they are exceedingly rare. Circumstances may possibly arise when the cause of truth and righteousness might demand such a course; but, as a rule, and a rule having few exceptions, we believe personalities better not be indulged in from the pulpit. It is a cheap way to get notoriety. It is a species of mock heroism that deceives nobody. Precious little good ever comes out of it, and a great deal of evil. Men are not reformed in that way, nor convinced of wrongdoing, nor made ashamed of their sins. The truth is not vindicated, nor errors exposed, nor the guilty brought to justice by such a course. On the contrary, evil passions are excited, strife is kindled, contention is let loose, injustice is often done to the innocent, and the preacher suffers in the estimation of the wise and the prudent. Besides, there is unfairness, often *meanness*, in it. The preacher takes advantage of his position and place to hurl charges at his personal or theological enemies, or to cast odium upon them, when they are not present to defend their good name, or, if present, not allowed by custom to do so. There has been a marked improvement in this respect during the last fifty years. There is still, however, quite too much of the evil habit remaining, and now and then we have exhibitions of it so gross in char-

acter as to shock all propriety, and bring reproach upon the ministry and the Church. Let there be no more of it.

THE DISCIPLES IN THE UPPER CHAMBER.—It seems a pity to speak of any fault in so excellent a sermon as that of Rev. G. F. Kingsolving, given in outline on page 213 of the January MONTHLY (Vol. VIII, No. 4). Yet one statement strikes me as so great a mistake that I ask the attention of your critical readers to it. The gathering of Christ's disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem is spoken of as "an hundred and twenty men and women full of distrust and despair." Now, when we remember that they were held in that room, or at least in the city, by the express command of Jesus (Luke xxiv: 49), and when we read the account of their feelings given by Luke (xxiv: 50-53), it seems evident that their attitude was quite the reverse of "distrust and despair." The sermon goes on to say, "Aye, but they had faith enough to pray; the upper room was left open to them," etc. Now, if we consider Acts i: 15-26, we see that prayer constituted by no means the entire occupation of the "tarrying at Jerusalem." They were making arrangements to start fully equipped on their world-wide mission so soon as the Holy Ghost should give the signal. Nor (See Luke xxiv: 53) did they morbidly seclude themselves from the world in that upper room. Are men who pray in "distrust and despair" likely to receive the Holy Ghost?

J. P. O.

QUITE WIDE OF THE MARK.—"Clergyman" writes us:—

"I preached a sermon on the theme, 'The Triumph of Woman.' Speaking of the victories she has wrought in achieving her present position in the world, and the marvelous influence that will be hers in the future—she being the superior of man spiritually—I chose as my text, Revelation xii: 1: 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' Was this text admissible?"

Plainly not. It has not the remotest relation to "Woman." It cannot

be twisted or tortured to make it the basis of such teaching. It seems trifling with Scripture to force such an unnatural and utterly foreign meaning upon it. By the "woman clothed with the sun," we are to understand the Church of God, glorious, and of divine origin; with the moon under her feet to signify the conquest which the Church should gain over sublunary things; and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, or, as others think, to the twelve apostles, by whom the Gospel was first preached. Had "Clergyman" read the context and got a vision of the "great red dragon," which "stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born," he must have seen the absurdity of his interpretation. Such amazing conceits and blunders weaken the power of the preacher, and serve to inspire his hearers with distrust as to the soundness of his exegesis of God's Word.

MAKE POINTS.—Without them a sermon is fatally defective. A few weeks ago a candidate stood in a Brooklyn pulpit. He was young, he was pious, and said many good things, but failed utterly. One of his hearers remarked of him, "He talked and talked and talked, but said nothing!" That is, he made no points. The query of any common mind, "What is he driving at?" could not be answered.

Lecturing before a class of colored students of theology, the late Dr. Colver remarked, in that vivid, quaint style for which he was distinguished, "Always have at least two mule's ears to every sermon." The white visitors saw no sense in the simile, but the students seemed to enjoy it greatly, for they were wont to ride mules with neither saddle nor bridle, and were compelled to lay firm hold of the two ears in order to keep their seat.

Ordinary congregations fail to keep up with a speaker who has no points. Not only the ignorant but the cultured crave them. The best thinkers think orderly, and the best talkers talk orderly. A pointless discourse is but an

arrow shot at random into the air; but a definite, personal, pointed argument or appeal is like the nail that Jael drove clear and sheer through the brain of the Canaanitist captain, Sisera. God's word is sharp and pointed, and the diction and style of the pulpit should be modeled after the same pattern.

Brooklyn.

E. P. T.

TOO MUCH ILLUSTRATION.—There are too many preachers who feel called upon to illustrate truths which are already as clear as sunlight. They light their little match of illustration to guide their hearers to some glorious Gospel truth that has been glowing on the world ever since they were born, and before. I see so much here, there, and everywhere, about the necessity of "illustrating," that I really feel like a heretic in making the above observation; but I don't propose to sign my name, so I shall be brave and finish. Old Diogenes never found the man he sought. Of course not; he didn't deserve to find him. If he had thrown away that lantern of his, and depended upon the clear sunlight streaming all about him, he might have been more successful. Lights are for the dark, and illustrations are for obscurity. Let us have them flash upon every dark corner, and in every night of ignorance; but if you are so fond of them you must use them at high noon, go down into the cellar where they are needed, and frighten away the rats. G. J. P.

NEW TEXTS FOR OLD SERMONS.—A great many good sermons have been preached from "The Anchor of the Soul" (Heb. vi: 19). The best plans are those which show how human hope is an anchor, how these anchors fail, and how the Christian hope is sure and steadfast, and therefore gains "a strong consolation." Of course the "anchor" is clung to all through such a sermon. The worst use of this text which we have noticed is that of a very good preacher, who refers neither to the anchor nor to hope in his discourse. He apparently had a sermon on "Be ye steadfast"

—very pat to that text—and for some reason wishing to change the text (probably for the sake of seeming to have a new sermon), he looked for another text having the word "steadfast" in it, and fell foul of Paul's anchor. His mishap is a warning against fitting new texts to old sermons. A good sermon is apt to be indissolubly married to one text and to refuse to commit bigamy.

Things a Preacher Should Remember in the Pulpit.

- That to his Master he standeth or falleth.
- That the life is quite as effective a preacher as the tongue.
- That "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
- That he is God's "ambassador." "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
- That the most glorious and responsible of all callings is that in which he is engaged. He must demean himself accordingly, both in the pulpit and out of it.
- That long and formal prayers are not conducive to the ends of worship. Brevity, warmth, directness, simplicity in thought and language, will find response in the hearts of the people.
- That the spirit and impression of the devotional part of the service will gauge the interest

and effect of the sermon. It is the best possible preparation for seed-sowing.

—That the infinite treasure of God's grace is committed to "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Not I, but Christ. Not talent, gifts, genius; but the Holy Spirit must be his main reliance.

—That preparation, mental and spiritual, to lead the devotional service, is quite as important as preparation for preaching. Preaching would be far more effective than it is, if more life and power were put into the praying and the singing.

—That some soul may have come to God's house disconsolate in spirit, or burdened with a sense of sin, or hungry for the bread of life, or feeling in the dark after Christ. To remember this will touch his heart, and help him to divide the Word aright, and give to each a portion in due season.

Things a Preacher Should Forget in the Pulpit.

- That he has a reputation to look after. If he does his duty, God will take care of that.
- That some of his people are given to criticize his sermons and find fault with his methods of work. Possibly he gives them some occasion.
- To "trim his sails" lest a fearless and faithful utterance of God's Word, and a firm adherence to Christian principle, should give offence and drive away his supporters.
- That social distinctions have any significance in the kingdom of grace. "There is no difference"—no rich or poor, no high or low, no class or caste—but all are on a footing of equality before God. The Gospel levels all human distinctions. He must recognize none.

PREACHERS EXCHANGING VIEWS.

Some said: "John, print it;" others said, "Not so."

Some said: "It might do good;" others said, "No!"—BUNYAN.

Church Entertainments.

As the season when they are most in vogue is near at hand, is it not desirable that pastors should discuss the whole subject in the light of Scripture and experience, with the view, if possible, to ascertain what is the best course to pursue in reference to them? That they are carried to excess often, and in many ways are injurious, I think few thoughtful persons will deny. I am willing to contribute some thoughts and give the fruit of my observations as to their effects.

I do not believe it wise to suppress them altogether. I know some pastors who are so strongly opposed to everything of the kind as to interdict them, and talk and preach against them, much to the disgust of a portion of their people. They see nothing in them but frivolity and sin, and the desecration of God's house. This is not wise. I ob-

serve that such pastors lose their hold on the "young people," and sour the minds of others, and come to be regarded as morose, "strait-laced," and unwilling that their people should have even innocent amusement. The social element in man is strong, and just begins to be understood by the Church; and, instead of ignoring this element, the pastor should press it into the service of religion. The young people, especially, are bound to have entertainment and amusement; and if they cannot find it in church circles in which they move, they will seek it elsewhere—at the club, the theatre, the saloon, and even worse places. Hence there is necessity laid upon the Church to provide rational entertainment and the opportunity of social intercourse so far as it can be done consistently. And I fully believe that pastors, in the way of suggestion and co-operation, might render

important service in arranging for concerts, readings, charades, sociables, etc., for their people, and thus help supply a felt want, and keep many of them away from the theatre and other places of evil resort.

On the other hand, it is too true that many churches have gone to excess, even the "excess of rioting," in these matters. The house of God has been turned into a house of merchandise, and feasting, and frivolity. All sorts of worldly "entertainments" are given by the church, or its representatives, and questionable methods, if not the principle of gambling, are resorted to in order to raise money. I have been pained beyond measure at such exhibitions which I have witnessed and known of. Surely, no pastor ought to countenance a thing of this kind. He should set his face as a flint against it, and use his utmost endeavor to reform these excesses, or do away with them entirely. These things have become a great scandal. The world, the secular press, sneer at them. Money thus raised is raised at too great a cost. The tendency of such entertainments is in the direction of worldliness and questionable amusements and practices, if not of something worse.

MODERATION.

Pulpit Exchanges.

THERE is a diversity of practice among pastors on this subject, and also of opinion in reference to its beneficial effects. I know some pastors who are so exclusive in their devotion to their own particular church that they never seem to have a thought or wish in regard to neighboring churches and ministers. They are known to be averse to exchanging services, and so they are never seen in any pulpit save their own, and the people to whom they minister seldom if ever hear the voice of neighboring brethren. I know other pastors who make it a habit to exchange very frequently. They are always ready for it, always seeking it, and will scour the country far and near for the opportunity. Now, is such a course a wise one in either case? I should like

the testimony of observation and experience on this point. Obviously the thing may be carried too far. If a minister resorts to *frequent* exchanges to get rid of preparing sermons, it is a personal injury to him. If every three or four Sabbaths the pastor is away and another takes his place, the continuity of his preaching and ministry is broken, and it cannot fail to induce bad habits on the part of his people. As a rule, people much prefer to hear their own pastor, and his services are more likely to do them good. On the contrary, it almost seems selfish, heartless and egotistic for a pastor never to leave his own flock to serve another, and never to invite a neighboring brother to his pulpit. I believe it will do any minister good, mentally and spiritually, occasionally to break away from the established routine and put himself in different circumstances, and look into new faces, and cultivate a feeling of sympathy and good fellowship beyond his own immediate circle. And, certainly, every people like sometimes to see a new face and hear another voice in their pulpit. They may hear no better preaching and praying than they are wont to, and yet it may do them more good; get them out of the ruts or grooves in which their minds have been running. And then such interchange of service promotes Christian fellowship. If it extends to different denominations, so much the better; it will tend to draw them together and break down the walls of separation.

EXCHANGE.

A Clean Press.

THE virtuous public are not half awake to the tremendous power for evil of a perverted, prostituted press. It is impossible, even to those who have given attention to the subject, to gauge the corrupting and demoralizing effect of the sensational books and papers, "cheap and nasty," which by the million are printed and sold and make their way into the homes of the people, and are stealthily read in our academies, and colleges, and female seminaries, and public and private schools, and

even Christian families. Boys and girls everywhere read them. So does the laborer at noon-time, the servant girl in the evening, and the shop-girl in going to and from her place of work. So great and terrible has this evil grown to be, that the friends of virtue, and morality and religion, must arouse themselves to stem this flood-tide of social and moral corruption, or utter demoralization and ruin will ensue. To the Church, first of all, we must appeal. She must lead in the crusade against it. Ministers must sound the trumpet long and loud from the pulpit, from the religious press, by means of Pastoral Letters, by the action of Synods, Conferences, Presbyteries, and Associations, and a standard must be lifted up high against it before all the people.

In this evil literature, which is now spawning all over this great and fair land, like "the frogs of Egypt," we have the sum of all "villainies," the germs of all manner of vice and crime. Let us arise in the might of virtuous indignation and throttle the monster. Since the antidote—good literature, at equally low rates—is at hand, the task is not impossible. The victory is sure if the battle is pressed hard. J. S.

Ministers Gambling in "Futures."

ALLOW me to congratulate you on your excellent and timely rebuke to the clergyman who is speculating in "futures" (see September HOMILETIC, p. 723). I am painfully surprised that any man professing to be a Christian minister should be guilty of such practices. The case is an isolated one in my experience. Is it possible that "A. G. W." has ministerial company in his ventures?
D. L. H.

Cincinnati, O.

If we are to believe the statement of Wall Street brokers, ministerial visitors are not altogether unknown to their offices. They enter hastily, and depart soon. If there is a side-door they display a preference for it. Soft felt hats, with turned-down rims, they seem to regard as more business-like than their ordinary silk hats; and they are too modest to place the "Rev." before, or the "D.D." after, the name they give. A few days ago we received a letter to

be forwarded to "A. G. W.," and, as we have not the latter's address, we took the liberty of opening the letter, expecting to find some good brother's good advice on letting "futures" alone. The letter ran about as follows:

"A. G. W.:

"DEAR BRO.—I see, by THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY, you have had some experience with brokers in Wall Street. Now, I should be greatly obliged if you would refer me to a reliable broker, to whom I could safely intrust a few dollars," etc., etc.

After reading this outcome of our "rebuke," we were somewhat discouraged.

The Church-going Bell.

WONDERS will never cease. We live in an age of progress. A hue and cry is heard in some quarters against this venerable and hallowed institution. "It must go," we are told, for it grates on delicate ears, disturbs the repose of sleepers, and worries the sick. It can no longer be tolerated. We suspect the real ground of complaint is a moral one and not physical. If there is a sermon in "stones," there certainly is in the tones of the church bell. And it is just possible that they disturb the consciences of some people, and so they vote them a "nuisance." But the sentiment of the Christian world is in favor of retaining this ancient and hallowed usage. Church bells have been in use some 1,500 years, and were introduced when Christians could openly meet to worship God.

"The cheerful Sabbath bells, wherever heard, Strike pleasant on the sense, most like the voice Of one who, from the far-off hill, proclaims Tidings of good to Zion."
—CHARLES LAMB.

There are tender and solemn memories, and hallowed associations, connected with the church-going bell which we are not yet prepared to sacrifice at the bidding of a few graceless brawlers.
S.

Working Through Hope.

I overheard a layman speak of his pastor as follows: "He tells us plain truths, points out our faults, but doesn't stop with that, like some

preachers do, leaving us in a slough of despond. He goes right on, pointing out the way, clear as light, in which we ought to go, and, what is best of all, makes us feel that we *can* go in that way. He works through our hope."

I found a practical lesson in these words, which I do not think I will ever forget.

PASTOR.

How Frequently May Collections be Made?

Dr. Deems, when asked how often he took up a collection in his church, answered: "I always take up a collection; in fact, I take up a collection at every service except family prayer,

although the report that I take up a collection at funerals is not true."

This question of frequency of collections has vexed me a good bit. May we not overdo it? Where is the line of prudence? I would like very much to read the experiences of some brother ministers on this point. N. E. S.

Cheap Mucilage.

There is nothing simpler or better than gum arabic, as I know from many years of use. A half pound, procured from a wholesale druggist for fifty cents, will last, with ordinary use, for years.

J. G. B.

Pine Hill, N. Y.

AROUND THE EDITOR'S TABLE

"The secret of tiring is to say all that can be said."

Objections to Spiritualism.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A SPIRITUALIST.

—"THEN, if I understand you correctly, you do not believe that there is any communication between this world and the world of spirits?"

"We did not say so; on the contrary, we believe in the communion of saints, and do not believe that death ends it. All Christians we know of believe in the ministry of angels. But that does not require belief in communication earthward through rappings and table tipplings and materializations."

"You think it impossible for spirits thus to manifest themselves."

"All things are *possible* with God. That is not the question. The question is one of fact: *Do they?* That they can and would do so if there were need, we do not doubt. Were there occasion, as in the Bible times, the inhabitants of the world of glory would make known their presence by physical manifestations. Who doubts this? What Christian doubts that spirits are about us, good and bad? It is a consoling thought, and the Bible does not forbid it, that our departed loved ones are *nearer* us than before the veil of flesh parted. Could we see with the opened eyes of Elisha's servant we should behold, we do not doubt, the mountains and plains covered with angels, giving help in the

great battles for right, healing the broken-hearted, guiding into right paths the footsteps of the erring. In the Wilderness, on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the Garden, spirits ministered to the Savior. If need be, said Christ, a legion of angels would come at His summons. Now, as then, the heavenly hosts are near, and so are the powers of darkness."

"Then why does the Church so object to Spiritualism?"

"For many reasons; but chiefly for two. It does not accept as satisfactory the *proofs*. There is not evidence sufficient that there is at work in the séance room anything but trickery—generally, at best, what seem to be subtle physical forces under control of certain abnormally constituted persons. Admit all you claim—admit that intelligence outside the medium operates—you have still a long way to go before you have proved *what* that intelligence is. Your task is but barely begun when you have demonstrated that the power there is an intelligence outside of earthly life. The inner, or spiritual universe, is a vast, unexplored universe. As to what it is capable of, we know nothing outside the Bible. The other objection is, the communications are almost always unworthy of the world of light. We believe that Christ was sent by God

not because of His miracles. He put little stress on them. He rebuked those people who sought for evidence in this direction. He said, it is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign, that is, physical evidence. We believe Christ, because the truths He uttered are divine truths. The utterances that come from séance rooms are unworthy of their professed source."

—"You wouldn't believe though an angel spake—"

"If an angel spake we should expect to hear angelic truths. If instead we heard nonsense, we should doubt the evidence of our eyes if our eyes reported that it was an angel speaking, and doubt wisely."

Preaching Past and Present.

CHARLES H. HALL, the eminent rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, writes us the following bit of interesting reminiscence, which doubtless will have its echo in the memories of many of the more aged among the clergy:

"When I began preaching we were compelled to study only the ponderous sermons of Barrow, South, Robert Hall, and other giants of the olden times, who wrote at leisure exhaustive essays, not without numerous learned quotations, and called them sermons. Our little efforts seemed the squeaks of pigmies, and I recall with pleasure the effect of certain small volumes by Hooker

of actual discourses by living men. Suddenly it occurred to me that

Tempora mutantur et nos,
and that something less, something shorter, was wanted."

Sept. 28, 1883. CHARLES H. HALL.

The Swiss Pulpit.

We quote the following from a letter just to hand from the eminent commentator whose name is appended:

"The Swiss pulpit is not a unity, but a plurality of twenty-two cantons with a great number of churches. There is no little variety in pulpit preparation and in pulpit delivery. Not many of the sermons delivered in Switzerland are published. The publication of sermons is not so common here as in some other countries."

F. GODET.

Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Sept. 20, 1883.

An Admirable Hint Touching Funeral Sermons.

We clip the following from a letter lying open on our table, written by one of the most successful pastors in America:

"In reference to funeral sermons let me say, that I *never wrote* a funeral address and never expect to. The more off-hand, tender, simple, and adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the individual case they are, the better.

THEODORE L. CUTLER.

Sept. 2, 1883.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"K. T."—A.: We easily may go too far in our admiration of *form*; substance is of infinitely greater value.

"A. R. S."—A.: Avoid blind imitation as you would a plague; that way does not lead to a high level. Nature unfolds variations, and these are complements of one another.

"S. L. A."—What books would be the best helps in preparing a series of biographical sermons on Biblical characters?—A.: Schaff-Herzog's great encyclopædia, Dr. W. M. Taylor's "Elijah, the Prophet," and "David, King of Israel"; and Dr. Van Dyke's "Through

the Prison to the Throne," and "From Gloom to Gladness," would afford you valuable aid.

"H. T. B."—What work would you suggest as affording the greatest aid in the preparation of a course of expository lectures on the Epistle to the Romans?—A.: "Godet on Romans" is an invaluable commentary for this purpose. And Meyer's great work, which we shall bring out early next year, is said by eminent scholars and divines to be unrivaled. Meyer is pronounced "the prince of exegetes." "Robbin's Commentary," published by Draper, of

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Andover, Mass., is also an excellent work.

"A. N."—Do you believe it right, or good policy, for the clergy to take so absorbing an interest in politics as have our Ohio brethren in the October election? By so doing do we not antagonize a large portion of the community, and that through the advocacy of a principle or policy that is not vital to salvation? Would it not be better to seek first the kingdom of heaven, knowing with that all things will be ours—prohibition and the rest? A.: A religion which does not antagonize wrong and wrong-doers will fall into contempt. To oppose wrong and stand by the right, is to be in the way that leads to the "kingdom of heaven." It is the way to seek and to find that kingdom. The clergy in Ohio fought under the prohibition banner, and did yeoman service. May God bless them, and raise up many like unto them in our other States! The whiskey interest had thrown its entire weight against the Scott law, which was moderate in its provisions. Their cry was free rum and free Sunday: "Boodle and Beer *versus* Betsy and the Baby." If there is a question to-day in agitation that involves the deepest principles of morality and religion, it is the question of temperance. That religion is altogether too ethereal for earth which is too ethereal to grapple with this question. All honor, again we say, to the Ohio clergy and the Ohio women who so bravely fought this fight.

"W. K. D."—I mail to you a criticism on a text used by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon for the sermon in April number of THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY—"The Use of the Bow." The point is this: The verse (2 Sam. i: 18) appears to be an incorrect rendering, and the thought expanded in the sermon, although found in the English, does not belong to the original; it is not "the use of the bow," but "the song of the bow." Authority for this: Gesenius, De Wette and Keil; also "Bagster's Comprehensive Bible," and the annotated paragraph Bible. I would not pretend to criticise Mr. Spurgeon,

but would like to know if I am misinformed?—A.: It is a difficult thing to determine with certainty whether the passage should read "*the use of the bow*" or "*the song of the bow*." There is no word in the original for either "use" or "song," but these words are supplied in the English by the respective translators as they may incline to either word. The weight of authority seems to be at present in favor of "the song of the bow," as Oehler in his Old Testament Theology states that it was a very ancient custom to teach the youth songs in order to establish memory of great events and of the history of past days. (Deut. xxxii: 22.) Dr. Gill thinks that if this was the meaning there would have been no need of the following reference, as the whole song is here recorded. And it is also suggested that the book of "Jasher" might have been a sort of a military order book in which David's orders were recorded, and the method to be observed in their execution.

"SCIENCE."—Modern science has proved the Bible at fault in many of its astronomical and geological teachings. And since science has done this, why do you pretend respect for both science and the Bible? Both cannot be true.—A.: What science—last year's or this? Science is yet in its infancy. There are not yet enough facts clearly established by it to warrant generalization, much less ultimate conclusions. Scientists are not at all agreed among themselves. The theories and conclusions of one school or clique are rejected by another class. The last hobby of the infidel scientist, an evolution based on the theory that "matter contains the promise and potency of all things," is denounced by very many of the most eminent scientific minds both of Europe and America. Even many of its earliest and most radical advocates have greatly moderated their tone. Besides, the attacks of infidel science are really not against the Bible itself, but its fallible interpreters. Thus the testimony of geology is found to be not antagonistic to the record of creation in Genesis but in singular harmony with it, when cor-

rectly read and interpreted. And if the hypothesis of evolution shall ultimately be proved by scientific evidence, some of our most eminent Biblical scholars and interpreters of Scripture assure us that it will not necessarily conflict with the Bible. On the whole, therefore, we think it will be wise not to throw away our old Bible until "science" is sure of its foothold and has attained its majority, and demonstrated that Scripture, rightly interpreted, is irreconcilably in conflict with true science. We feel perfectly confident that

if we hold on to the Scriptures that long we shall hold on forever.

Answers to Queries Referred to Our Readers.

"A. K.," in October number, asks: What is the best undenominational work giving a collection of Scripture passages for use in visiting the sick and the afflicted? "J. H." answers: "I have a little work which I use, called 'The Visitor's Book of Texts,' by the Rev. A. A. Bonar; published by James Nisbet & Co., London."

GERMS OF ILLUSTRATION.

Good sir, reject it not, although it bring appearances of some fantastic thing at first unfolding.—
GEORGE WITHEL.

Michael Angelo was once commanded, by Pietro de Medici, to mould a statue out of snow, and he obeyed the command.

It is a very observable but significant fact noticed by the authorities that in the "Iliad" of Homer, among all its *dramatis personae*, there is no villain. See "Ecce Homo," p. 252.

A little bird will sit and sing on a spray; the spray may be so small as to seem to be quite insufficient to support the bird, but still he sits and sings. *He has wings.* The storm comes, it beats against the spray and drives it every-whither-way, but the little bird still sits and sings. *He has wings.*

He would be considered a very foolish man who went into a store and spent his money for wrapping paper and string, such as merchants use freely to wrap up their goods; for if he would buy something of value and use, the merchant would throw the wrapping paper and string in, and say nothing about it.

The tuning of a piano is a very inharmonious and annoying process. Few do not wish to shut their ears or run away, but when it is accomplished, or nearly so, the tuner will now and then bring out not only harmonious chords, bits of choice tunes, but at last he may treat us to a grand symphony that causes us quickly to forget all that we have endured in the tuning.

A touch of nature. A little country boy was selling cherries on a railroad train. As he passed through the cars his attention was arrested by two prisoners handcuffed and under guard on their way to prison. His heart was touched; the great tears started in his eyes. They were strangers to him; he only knew that they were guilty and about to be locked up in jail; and in his sympathy, he as quick as thought put a handful of cherries in each of their laps and

passed on. In another moment he turned, emptied his whole basket on the seat between them, burst into a flood of tears, rushed out of the car and quickly disappeared.

The natives of South Africa have a very odd way to catch monkeys. They take a dried calabash or gourd, cut a little round hole in it, just large enough to admit the open paw or hand of the monkey; they then fill the calabash with rice and fasten it up in a tree. The monkey thrusts his open hand into the orifice, grasps a handful of rice, but is not able to get the *clenched* hand out. He doesn't incline to open the hand, lose the rice and get away. So he is caught.

"It will na' stand the book." Mr Peter Carter, of Robert Carter & Bros., publishers of New York, tells the following: Some years ago, in the days of "wild cat" currency, an old Scotch woman came into the store to buy a Scotch psalm book. In payment for the book she tendered a five-dollar bill. The old woman was doubtless very honest, and she thought her bill was *good*, but she knew it had been refused by several who had carefully examined it and compared it with a book, she knew not what, and so the moment I took up Thompson's Bank Note Reporter, and began to examine it, the old lady, throwing up her hands, burst out with the exclamation! "O Mr. Carter! Mr. Carter! it will na' stand the book! it will na' stand the book!"

A touching scene. Fourteen men stood in line, all that was left of a regiment after one of the severest battles in the late war. A woman, the late colonel's wife, approached them, having a flag clotted with human blood. She addressed them as follows: "Boys! I have come from a visit to the hospital, where many of your comrades lie dying; there I found this flag, saved by them from the hands of the enemy. I have

* This page is under the editorial charge of the editor of the Book Department.

* At the Department the bad is as respects

given to my country all I have to give, my husband, he led you to battle, he was left dead, as the most of your comrades, on the field. The dearest object left to me is this flag. This flag waved proudly over your ranks when you entered the

conflict. Soldiers, this flag I give to you, knowing that you will ever remember the dying words of my husband, "Never surrender the flag." The officer in command received it from her hand.

NOTICES OF BOOKS OF HOMILETIC VALUE.*

By J. STANFORD HOLME, D.D., EDITOR OF BOOK DEPARTMENT.

THE BOHLEN LECTURES, 1882. THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO CIVIL SOCIETY. By Samuel Smith Harris, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of Michigan. New York: Thomas Wittaker.

This is a course of lectures on the foundation of the John Bohlen legacy, delivered at Philadelphia, 1882, by Dr. Harris, Bishop of Michigan. The subject, "The Relation of Christianity to Civil Society," is one of especial interest, and Bishop Harris is an enthusiastic American. The objective idea of the work may be gathered from a single sentence: "Here, under these open heavens, I believe the world is destined to witness the establishment of the true relation between Christianity and civil society." In the first part of the book he gives us the history of the planting and training of civil society in America; in the latter part he considers the tendencies, and what he regards as likely to be the ultimate issue. He presents some pretty strong claims for especial services in the cause of liberty in this country for parties not much heard of by some of us before. He is disposed to be a little iconoclastic in relation to some primitive idols, and he does not think that all the good seed came to this country in the "Mayflower." But, when he comes to discuss the great fundamental principles of our civil society, he is very clear, truly American, and very decided in his views.

These lectures will be found to be of especial interest to ministers, as they present many practical suggestions as to the treatment of a class of pulpit themes of interest, but not without perplexity.

THE INNER LIFE OF CHRIST, as Revealed in the Gospel of Matthew. By Joseph Parker, D.D., Minister of the City Temple, London. Vol. II, SERVANT OF ALL. By same author. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. Cloth, \$1.50 each.

We would refer our readers to the April (1881) number of THE HOMILETIC for a notice of the first of this series of discourses, "These Sayings of Mine." That volume was good, this is better. Perhaps we understand Dr. P. better, and therefore appreciate his work more than we did. The difference between this and other lives of Christ is that they are generally biographical or theological; this is homiletic. In them we have an army enrolled, and an arsenal stored with ammunition and equipments, and storehouses well filled with provender. In this we have an army mobilized, in active service. Every sermon is like a battle; and, as it is said that everything is

fair in war, Dr. Parker does many things in a way that would be inexcusable save in the heat of battle, or under the pressure of a deadly struggle. You never know what he will do next. But he never descends to buffoonery nor to charlatany. He is in dead earnest, and his earnestness gives dignity to things which, otherwise, would be inadmissible.

His style is rough, dashing, and bold; to refined taste sometimes offensive; especially if an occasional sentence be detached from its connection, and looked at by itself from a near point, it is a deformity like the crooked tree in the landscape; but when looked upon from a distance, this very deformity becomes a beauty.

Dr. Parker is a sort of Doré in the pulpit. He could not paint in colors to save his life, but in rough illustrations with the crayon he is one of the most vivid and effective artists that ever lived. This free, off-hand manner gives freshness to ordinary thought. Such smooth, sophistical, specious, and superficial fellows as Monseigneur Capel are dispatched in a way not agreeable, but quite effective. "The mischief," says Dr. Parker, "for which I blame the priests of every age, is, that the Book has been separated from all the literature of the world, and been locked up with a death's-head in a closet of its own."

The discourses in this volume are like framed pictures, as they have all the advantages which can be afforded by the accompanying prayers at each service.

THE PREACHER AND HIS SERMON: a Treatise on Homiletics. By Rev. John W. Eter, B.D. Dayton, Ohio: United Br. Publishing House.

This is a book on preaching, by a Moravian, and the source from whence it comes will secure attention and awaken interest. It is broader than most books on Homiletics. It discusses all kinds of sermons, from the most stately and elaborate to the most familiar and popular. The introductory sermon, the farewell sermon, the funeral sermon, the holiday sermon, sermons to the young and to the old, to man, woman, and child; in-door and out-door sermons; sermons with figurative illustrations, and sermons illustrated with figures on the blackboard and the canvass. In short, every possible kind of a sermon will be found to be discussed in this book, and it would seem to be Dr. Eter's purpose "by all means to save some."

The work is well written and well arranged.

*At the beginning of this new volume of THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY, the Editor of the Book Department wishes to say that the meshes of his net are quite too large to catch small fish; that the bad fish are quietly thrown overboard, and the good ones only are held up and commended as especially worthy of notice.

THEMES AND TEXTS OF RECENT LEADING SERMONS.

1. Relation of Religion to Our Natural Affections. "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides?"—Gen. xix: 12. P. S. Henson, D.D., Chicago.
2. The Salvation Army: The Military Spirit in Religion. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."—Judges vii: 18. Geo. C. Lorimer, D.D., Chicago.
3. A Tight Grip of Truth. "His hand clave unto the sword."—2 Sam. xxiii: 10. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., Brooklyn.
4. The Church and Young Men. "And he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men," etc.—2 Chron. xxv: 5. Emory J. Haynes, D.D., Brooklyn.
5. The Worship of Wealth. "After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed and revered Haman; for the king," etc.—Esther iii: 1, 2, 5. J. M. Pullman, D.D., New York.
6. The Divine Claims of the Church of Christ. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."—Isa. xii: 6. John Hall, D.D., New York City.
7. The Spiritual Life of Man. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matt. iv: 4. H. B. Thomas, D.D., Chicago.
8. With Faith Nothing is Impossible. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."—Matt. xviii: 20. Samuel E. Herrick, D.D., Boston.
9. The Unending Conflict. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—Matt. xxvi: 41. Prof. David Swing, Chicago.
10. The Coming Sermon. "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God."—Luke ix: 60. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., Brooklyn.
11. Martin Luther and His Work. "And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which," etc.—Luke x: 23, 24. Geo. C. Lorimer, D.D., Chicago.
12. The Dignity of Labor. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—John v: 17. R. S. Storrs, D.D., Brooklyn.
13. The Flattery of Present Prospects is Often of Great Peril. "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete."—Acts xxvii: 13. R. S. Storrs, D.D., Brooklyn.
14. The Ground for the Christian's Gratitude. "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. i: 4. Phillip Brooks, D.D., Boston.

SUGGESTIVE THEMES.

1. God Glorified in the Life rather than the Death of the Christian. ("I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."—Ps. cxviii: 17.)
2. The Power of Memory. ("That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been, and God requireth that which is past."—Ecc. iii: 15.)
3. Man, not God, the Cause of Sin. ("Lo! this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."—Ecc. vii: 29.)
4. The Sure Grounds of Faith for a Spiritual Harvest. ("He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."—Ecc. xi: 4.)
5. A Man's Religion may be his Ruin. ("For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."—Isa. lxxviii: 20.)
6. Christ Compared to Rivers of Water. ("And a man shall be * * * as rivers of waters in a dry place."—Isa. xxxii: 2.)
7. The Enormity of Human Egotism. ("Is not this great Babylon, that I have built," etc. Dan. iv: 30.)
8. Christ a Physical as well as a Spiritual Reality. ("And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition. And they cried out for fear."—Matt. xiv: 26.)
9. The Blindness of the Mere Student of Nature. ("When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the heaven is red * * * Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times."—Matt. xvi: 2, 3.)
10. Selfishness Defeats its Own End. To Save Life is to Lose It. ("For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it."—Matt. xvi: 25.)
11. To be Kept from Sin, Better than to be Delivered from Afflictions. ("I pray not that Thou shouldst take them from the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil one."—John xvii: 15.)