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A GOSPEL WITHIN THE GOSPEL.

AN EXPOSITION OF LUKE XV. 11-32.

By Rev. William McKenzie, Ramsay, C.W.

PART I.—SIN AND MISERY.

In this parable of our Lord, so simple, touching, so artless, when regarded as a chapter of human life, and yet so profound, and full of meaning, when regarded as a revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, all of us should be able to find a place. It is a history of the sinner in his sin, in his repentance, and in his reception back again into the favour of God. We are, *all of us*, reproduced here; either as we have ever been, or, as we are hoping and endeavouring to be, or, as we have become by God's grace.

"And He said, A certain man had two sons." In this significant beginning of the parable we have the indication of a blessed truth. In one sense, God is the Father of all His intelligent creatures; but, in a very special sense, God is the Father of men. They are His sons. In the beginning they were were begotten in His likeness, for "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." Moreover, God is, and remains the Father of men, even in their apostacy from Him. They are His sons, His children, still; though they have become "rebellious children." He deals with them even then as a Father; His paternal love and grace extending to the very vilest sinner. This blessed truth pervades the whole parable.

In this first portion of the parable we have a history of the sinner in his sin and misery. "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

By this figure of a grown-up son, who

will be a young man before his time, and cannot endure to wait until his father dies for his inheritance, our Lord exhibits to us the root and origin of all sin. This request sounding so like a demand, denotes the entire alienation of the heart from all the love and duty of a son. This son breaks loose from his father. The bond of filial love is utterly broken. He feels the father's presence a restraint upon his freedom. His will is to be entirely independent, to have his own way. Estranged in heart, he can no longer tolerate the fellowship of his righteous father, whose authority had heretofore constrained him to an unwilling obedience, and so he confronts him with his selfish demand—"Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Here we have

SIN IN ITS ORIGIN.

In this extinction of the filial sentiment in the heart, in this severance of the bond of love, the foundation of all true duty and obedience, we have the secret root and origin of all sin, far more exceeding sinful in this its first beginning, and hidden principle, than in any after manifestation.

But it might be asked here, had the son not a right to prefer such a request? Had he not at least a legal right? He only sought the portion of goods that fell to him. No; not then. He could stand on no right.—These goods were not his. The father, as long as he lived, might have retained them, for they belonged to him. And, involuntarily, the son paid a tribute to this truth when he prefaced his demand with the words of petition, "Father, give me my

portion." The blessings we enjoy, even of an earthly sort, are the *gifts* of our heavenly Father. They are His by right—ours only by favour. And though we may ignore this truth, and by an unholy appropriation call them our own, and use them only according to our own will, only for ourselves, and for our own pleasure and glory; yet we are to remember that they are ours only by grace, the gifts of our Father above; to be enjoyed with Him and used for His glory.

This *demand*, for such it is essentially rather than a prayer—selfish, unfilial, and unfounded though it was, is not denied.—It plainly indicated apostacy of heart on the part of the son, that he had fallen from filial love and duty: but yet the father remains a father still, he will not now become a hard and despotic master. He is not willing to have only a servant in the place of a son, and when he finds that he cannot keep him as his child, he will yield the point, and allow him the freedom of his own chosen way. Thus does the blessed God deal with men who have forsaken Him, with His rebellious children. He leaves them to the freedom of their own way. He does not lay any outward restraint upon them. He does not constrain them by mere authority to an unwilling obedience. Neither does he withhold their portion of earthly good. His mercy is not taken away, it follows them in all their wanderings here. God is still a Father, whatever they may have become.

The extinction of the true filial sentiment in the heart, indicated by this demand of the younger son in the parable, is the hidden root of sin, but we now begin to see the process, or development of sin.—The secret root in the heart soon begins to bear its appropriate fruit, for "Not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far

country." What! Had he become so dead to every feeling which a son should cherish, that he could not remain under the same roof with his father? Had such a neighbourhood become so irksome, and unpleasant, that he was in haste to leave it? was it possible that though he had got his portion by paternal grace, yet he could not enjoy it according to his own heart until he had placed a long distance between himself and home? It was even so. The hidden apostacy of the heart now begins to discover itself, and to be developed in outward action, which is

SIN IN ITS PROCESS.

A son may leave his father's house, taking with him a father's blessing. In a distant land his heart often fondly turns to that still beloved home, it is a green and fragrant spot; the remembrance of it is his solace in a land of strangers; and the presence of those there, wherewith a living, because a loving, memory surrounds him, with all their well-remembered words of hope and counsel, are a shield and buckler against evil. Filial love and duty still live in his heart. But a son may seek to leave his father's house because to all filial love and duty his heart has become apostate. He receives his portion thanklessly, and, with a heavy heart, the parent sees him go his way. He is glad to be rid of the restraints of his father's house, in haste to drown the memory of its words and ways; no sooner does he set his foot in the far country to which he has gone, than he gives the rein to all his pent-up desires, and pursues their chosen path with eager step. Among strangers he feels at liberty; at liberty for words and deeds which would load every heart at home with shame and grief. And what is it that so darkens this picture, that makes it one of such exceeding baseness? What is the essential aggravation of his sin? Is

it not just this, that, though he is a *son*, yet in his corrupted heart all filial love and reverence are dead and gone?

Reader, is this your portrait? Would it be impossible, think you, to make good against you a charge of heart-apostacy from the blessed God? Does your way of life, your habitual course of outward action, not indicate that root of bitterness in your heart? Is it not true that you can fully enjoy your portion in this life *only away from God*? That you can delight yourself in your chosen pursuits and pleasures *best when God is farthest from your thoughts*? Nay, that you find it needful to *banish* the thoughts of your Father in heaven, if *you are to enjoy them at all*? Just like him in the parable, who gathered all together, and went into a far country, and there "wasted his substance with riotous living." This suggests to us that *Life without God*, which is

SIN IN ITS CONSUMMATION.

Far now from his father's house, far from underneath his eye; beyond the reach of his authority and influence, among strangers, in a land of strangers, this apostate son feels at liberty. *Now*, he can live the life he has pined for, a life, the very zest of which consists in the liberty from all home influence, in the wretched freedom gained by that far separation from the father's house. And what is the difference between this, and that round of pleasure which men call *Life*? What gives the relish to all those expedients for spending time pleasantly, such as the ball-room, the theatre, the jovial meeting with kindred spirits, which have received the stamp of the world's approbation? Is it not the unrestrained freedom of such a far separation from every holy influence? Is it not because, for the time, they come between the soul and God? Is it not the broad brand of *ungodliness* upon them

which gives them their zest and relish?— There is an utter incongruity between such scenes and fellowship with God.— Let a child of God for once stray among them, one whose heart still beats with filial love, and whose joy consists in the presence and fellowship of his heavenly Father.— Let him by word or deed recal the thought of Him who is his chief joy, and, straightway, the flow of mirth is checked, the jest remains half uttered, a shadow darkens every countenance, until some one gathers courage to make, in a tone of rebuke, the bold confession, that all such things are *out of place there*. Indeed! Then it is the far country, far from the father's house, away from his presence and influence, where all things help to banish the very thought of Him from the heart: those dwelling there love to have it so, for on this depends the very zest of all their pleasure.

Life without God is sin in its consummation. The intense word, here translated "riotous living," might be rendered "a self-destroying life." The idea conveyed is that of *wasting* life, not *using* it. We need not confine the meaning to a life of open riot, abandoned profligacy. These are of course included in the idea of a wasted life, and heart-apostacy from God is often consummated by such a life. A life without God, a *Godless life*, is emphatically a wasted and *lost life*. Such a life may be accompanied with honour among men; it may leave you all your energies to heap up riches, and you may succeed; it may be spent in company with troops of friends who cheer you on, but, without God, you have never risen to the conception of what *life* really is. You are "wasting your substance." In a little while all shall be gone. In forsaking God, you give up your place in the Father's house, you sell your birthright: and whatever may be that other portion you have

chosen as the price, sooner or later it shall be *spent*, the *whole* of it, and a great eternity shall remain behind utterly unprovided for.

We see here then the beginning of sin in the heart-apostacy of the sinner, its process in the gradual forsaking of God; and its consummation in a life without God, an ungodly life may not be characterised by glaring sin. It may be a life adorned with all outward proprieties, what men call a successful life, leading to worldly fortune and honour, for "men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." But reader if your life is spent *not for God*, then emphatically it is a wasted life, *you are destroying yourself*.

And now, in successive steps, the misery to which sin leads is exhibited to us.—
First,

THE BEGINNING OF WANT.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." In a short time all he had gathered together was scattered and wasted. Just at that point, giving force to the similitude, it is said, "there arose a mighty famine in *that land*," the far country, far from the father's house.— There is and must always be a famine there, a lack of the true bread, the proper nourishment for an immortal soul. Perhaps for a while and with large means to command earthly pleasures, there is little sense of want in the soul far from God.— Pleasure has not yet palled upon the taste, its full round has not yet been run. When the banquet is set, and the chosen guests assembled, it is not the time for carking care. The hall resounds with mirth, with the song, and the jest, and the light laugh; the shadows flee away in that hour of light and thoughtless gayety. But the morning light looks in upon another scene. The guests are fled; the footstep sounds hollow

in the empty hall; the remnants of the feast, the extinguished tapers, the empty vessels, are the relics of departed joys. The silent void around drives back the soul to commune with itself, and then the sense of inward want makes itself felt. In those intervals of pleasure, when the soul, left to its own companionship, engages in the unwonted exercise of reflection, it *begins to feel want*. Those intervals, to the soul without God, are dull, dark seasons, fruitful of sad thoughts and low spirits: for, when the soul thus turns within, it is like one passing through an empty banquetting hall; a dull and dreary void is all it finds. That soul has "*begun to be in want*."

RECOURSE TO FALSE HELP.

This is the next step in the progress of the sinner misery. When he began to be in want, this apostate son "went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." He does not think of returning to his father's house: he seeks help in his own way, persisting still in his apostacy. He draws closer the bonds of fellowship with those who dwell in that land of famine. And now that impatience of restraint, that lust for independence, which had driven him from home, results in the vilest servitude. Thus is it with the soul far from God. To drive away the dull, aching sense of want, which he begins to feel, the sinner seeks a larger measure of those earthly pleasures which have thus declared their insufficiency; he draws closer his connection with those who are like-minded with himself; he ever requires to seek *new* pleasures and new companionships; these become absolute necessities for him, he *must have them*, to save him from himself, from being left alone with his empty soul; he *must have them* to keep the sense of want at arms length away.— And thus, the *freedom* of sin, that *liberty*

for which men forsake God, resolves itself at the last into a bitter, a *profitless*, and degraded servitude. For his utmost efforts cannot preserve him from the last stage of misery.

UTTER DESTITUTION.

Sent into the fields to feed swine, "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." He is left by those among whom he dwells, whose help he has sought, to perish. They cannot help him even if they would. And so with that soul living without God. The very help such an one seeks, when want begins to be felt, only deepens his misery. The pleasures of sin, like the husks that the swine did eat, are no proper nourishment for his soul. Every hour of his life on earth may be filled up with them, but his soul, his immortal soul, only sinks into a lower deep of want and degradation.—The parable depicts the extreme of outward poverty and misery, such as, oftentimes, does result in fact from a life of sin; but no such outward circumstances of want and wretchedness, can add to the *real* misery and degradation of one who has come to the end of a long life spent far from God. God may have given an one a full portion here; he still possesses all the comforts and luxuries of earth; he has lived a life of refined pleasure in his own circle of society; and even now, with hoary head, and failing strength, he fulfils like an hireling the same round of paltry pleasures, which, to him, have long since lost all their zest. Such an one might be like a shock of corn, filling and ripening for the joyful home-gathering; but there he is, fading away in his ways, poor, degraded, lost. How many might be sons and daughters in the Father's house, who prefer to remain, in contented degradation, amid the want and misery of the land of famine.

In this picture of the misery consequent upon sin the colours are strong, they are employed unsparingly, and yet with perfect truth. How accurately, even in the minutest touches, the pathology of such a sin as *intemperance* is here depicted.—Here, for example, is a young man beginning life with the fairest prospects. At the first, the wine cup is only one of many pleasures, used to fulfil the offices of good fellowship. But, after the soul has begun to feel want, it is sought after as a *help*, either to give a new charm to those pleasures which have begun to pall on the taste, or as a convenient defence against the depressing inroads of care and serious thought. Thus gradually, step by step, the desire grows, the habit strengthens, until the chains of a bitter slavery are fast riveted upon him. And *then*, at the bidding of the now imperious habit, the suggestions of worldly interest, the claims of affection, even the very sense of shame, are cast aside, until, with wrecked means, and broken character, he sinks to the fellowship of the vilest offscourings of society, to reach ere long a premature and dishonoured grave. To the man who has forsaken God there is no security against the dominion of the most degrading; but the man whose heart still beats with filial love to his Father in heaven, and whose strength and defence God is, cannot be so enslaved.

Now, reader far from God; remember that far country is a land of famine, where you cannot sustain the life of your soul.—In our nature there are capacities too large, and wants too deep, to be supplied by any earthly good. Though separated far from God by sin, still He is our Father, our God, our chief joy: still our true end in life is to glorify Him; and still we have our original capacity to enjoy him. It *cannot be*, then, that any mere created good, or even *all* created good, should be able to fill

up in our soul that place which at the first was set apart for God. There *must* be, sooner or later, a sense of want and misery until He occupies the true place in *your heart*, reader, until you enjoy His favour which is *life*. Moreover, the most honourable place which the world can give you as the reward for its service, is, in reality a position of deep degradation to one who might fill the place of a son of God. Why then remain in that far country? You may try the whole round of earthly pleasure, you may seek to fill your soul with earthly good, but the end of life shall surely find you weary and empty. O reader, that you would, even now, and without tasting that bitter experience, hear the voice of God calling on you in fatherly exhortation and entreaty—Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.—*Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.*

FAMILY DISCIPLINE.

What motives are laid upon all Christian parents to make the first article of family discipline a constant and careful discipline of themselves. I would not undervalue a strong and decided government in families. No family can be rightly trained without it. But there is a kind of virtue, my brethren, which is not in the rod—the virtue, I mean, of a truly good and sanctified life. And a reign of brute force is much more easily maintained than a reign whose power is righteousness and love. There are too, I must warn you, many who talk much of the rod as the orthodox symbol of parental duty, but who might really as well be heathens as Christians; who only storm about their house with heathenish ferocity, who lecture, and threaten, and castigate, and bruise, and call this family government. They even

dare to speak of this as the nurture of the Lord. So much easier is it to be violent than to be holy, that they substitute force for goodness and grace, and are wholly unconscious of the imposture. It is frightful to think how they batter and bruise the delicate, tender souls of their children, extinguishing in them what they ought to cultivate, crushing that sensibility which is the hope of their being, and all in the sacred name of Christ Jesus. By no such summary process can you dispatch your duties to your children. You are not to be a savage to them, but a father and a Christian. Your real aim and study must be to infuse into them a new life, and, to this end, the Life of God must perpetually reign in you. Gathered round you as a family, they are all to be so many motives, strong as the love you bear them to make you Christ-like in your spirit. It must be seen and felt with them that religion is a first thing with you. And it must be first, not in words and talk, but visibly first in your love—that which fixes your aims, feeds your enjoyments, sanctifies your pleasures, supports your trials, sanctifies your wants, contents your ambition, beautifies and blesses your character. No mock piety, no sanctimony of phrase, or longitude of face on Sunday will suffice. You must live in the light of God, and hold such a spirit in exercise as you wish translated into your children.—You must take them into your feeling, as a loving and joyous element, and beget, if by the grace of God you may, the spirit of your own heart in theirs.

This is Christian education, the nurture of the Lord. Ah, how dismal is the contrast of a half-worldly, carnal piety; proposing money as the good thing of life; stimulating ambition for place and show; provoking ill-nature by petulance and falsehood; praying, to save the rule of family worship; having now and then a religious fit, and, when it is on, weeping and exhorting the family to undo all that the life has taught them to do; and then, when the passions have burnt out their fire, dropping down again to sleep in the embers, only hoping still that the family will some time be converted! When shall we discover that families ought to be ruined by such training as this?—*Dr. Bushnell.*

MODERN OPPONENTS OF THE BIBLE.

(Speech of Rev. D. McVicar at Bible Society's Meeting at Montreal, January, 1864.)

Let us ask, What progress has the Bible made of late years in the face of the desperate opposition offered? Or, what are its opponents obliged to yield in this respect? The answer to this question will place before you what I conceive to be the real state of religious discussion and controversy at the present time. This reply is not, of course, intended to include any notice of the general opposition offered to Divine truth in Popish, Mohammedan, and heathen countries, nor have I in view those theological disputes carried on between different sections of the Church, but only the position now assumed by those usually known as infidels or sceptics.

For one thing, they are obliged to concede that the Bible has gained possession of the popular mind of Britain and America. This is a great and undeniable fact, not overlooked by the enemies of Revelation, realized by them and by all, within the last fifty years, since the Bible Society commenced its truly evangelical work of disseminating the Word. The Book has mainly done this work itself; being placed in the homes of these nations, from the palace of Royalty down to the humblest cottage, it has found its way to the hearts of the people; they have learned to appeal to it under all circumstances for lessons of wisdom and comfort, of instruction and correction, and the more they have looked into it the better they have loved it; it has taken a firm hold upon the heart of the nation. And if it is true that Britons are proverbially loyal to their Sovereign, it is equally true that they are loyal to the Bible; if Englishmen are found all over the world to pray earnestly, "God save the Queen," with equal fervour they pray, God save the Bible. I speak, of course, of the mass of the British people, and sceptics know and acknowledge in various ways that what I say is true. This appears in their periodical and more voluminous literature—in the Westminster Review, and in recent volumes written in the interests of infidelity. The writers affect pity for the deluded masses who are ruled by the Bible; they express strong reluctance to disturb the old and universal faith of the nation. What is this but to grant that the nation is under the dominion of this book in spite of their efforts? Accordingly, they have ceased to address their arguments and books exclusively to the limited circle of the learned, and seek now to make their appeals to the popular mind. Strauss is engaged upon another edition of his "Leben Jesu," not, as

the former one, addressed to the learned, but adapted to the general reading public, containing replies to the objections made to it, designed to free it from the general reprobation with which it was covered. Renan also, in his "Life of Jesus," while unconditionally contradicting his German predecessor, Strauss, enters the same field with him, selecting for his constituency not the learned circles of France, but the general public—those men, and their coadjutors, thus acknowledging the wide sway of the Bible. This is an important confession from their lips.

It is further conceded by them that no manifestly evil consequences have flown directly from the circulation and influence of the Bible. There is confessedly a universal influence diffused by the Book through the heart of the nation, and if you ask its opponents, what is the character of this influence, they are bound in honesty, in the light of history and reason, to say it is not evil. The most bitter and determined among their ranks feel now unable to argue that conformity to the life and character of Jesus disqualifies a man in any way to be a most happy and useful citizen. They feel unable to furnish proof that the fullest subjection of the human soul to all the laws and principles of the Gospel is found to operate injuriously to the individual, to the community, or to the nation—they feel that none of the evils which afflict society are to be traced logically and legitimately to the direct influence of God's book. They can, indeed, point to the blood-stained page of Ecclesiastical History, to strifes, discords, and persecutions flowing from the perversion of Christian principles, but they have discernment enough to see that these things are traceable to human depravity, and that they are distinct from a correct and consistent imitation of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

We may place this subject in another light, and venture to affirm further, that the opponents of the Word of God are now constrained to confess, that the morality inculcated by the Bible regarded in a personal, commercial, or national point of view is far superior to that taught elsewhere. We rest this proposition upon direct testimony from their own lips. Thus Strauss, while most bitter in his opposition to the dogmatic and historical Christianity of the Church, asserts firmly that Christ and Christianity is the very highest moral ideal to which the world can ever hope to attain. (*Soliloquies, Part II, Sect. 27-30.*) And Renan, while fearlessly affirming that Strauss is mistaken in his theory of the compilation of the Gospels, agrees with him in his testimony in favour of the purity and superiority of the moral lessons and princi-

ciples taught in them. He is, in fact, an enthusiastic admirer of the lofty, manly, self-denying virtue, and honest patriotism inculcated by the life of Jesus. This, too, is the tone adopted by the famous authors of "Recent Inquiries in Theology," and by the Bishop of Natal. They are all conscientiously religious, more pious in their own estimation than those who justly seek, as we think, to exclude them from the office of the Christian ministry. They cling most tenaciously and with feelings of highest admiration to the good and pure morality of the New Testament. Now, this is a great concession on their part—it affords the very best answer we can desire to the profane sarcasm and horrid buffoonery of Voltaire, Paine, Hume, and others of that class. Those who now side with them against God's word refuse to defend their coarseness and profanity.

I mention another, and a far more important concession now made by many of the opponents of the Bible; they are constrained to accept the *evidence of testimony as upon the whole reliable*. When a company of men confessedly sane, and honest, not ruled by self-interest or any improper motive, are cognizant of simple matter of fact, and testify unitedly and repeatedly respecting such matter of fact, and even submit to suffer great inconvenience and loss rather than abandon their testimony, such evidence the present foes of Divine truth are disposed to accept as reliable. Thus they have fallen from the position taken by Hume and his disciples—they have made a great and most valuable admission, which enables us to establish beyond the possibility of doubt, the birth, the miracles, the teachings, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and ascension of our Redeemer; and having established this much we feel no alarm respecting the Pentateuch and the other books of the Old Testament. Thus granting, as they do, that the Bible has gained possession of the popular mind of Britain and America, that it cannot be shown to disseminate or inculcate injurious principles; that its morality and ethics are far superior, upon the whole, to anything ever offered to the world; and that the evidence of testimony in its favour is reliable, do not the antagonists of the Bible seem overcome? In truth, their position in the present aspect of religious discussion and controversy may be presented in this form. Collecting all the internal and external evidences in favour of the genuineness and authenticity of the Book on the one hand, and all the objections and difficulties which its opponents feel able to offer, on the other, and leaving them to indicate a conclusion based upon these premises, they are constrained to confess that the Bible and Christianity are *great facts*, obliged to

yield that the Book is supernatural if not Divine in its origin. Are we therefore all agreed respecting it? By no means. Those men raise another and most grave question. How is this Book to be understood? What is its meaning? How much truth does it contain? If given by Inspiration, to what extent? This is the question—this is the great battle-field at the present moment. Shall we receive the record entire? shall we adhere to the old doctrine of plenary inspiration? or shall we only give the book a superiority of rank over the rest, and allow critics to eliminate what portions they please? The question with certain of them is not, have we received a revelation from heaven, but what are its character and extent? Thus if you allow the Bishop of Natal to cancel the five books of Moses, to say in his own phrase that they are "unhistorical," and therefore legendary and of no authority, he will accept the New Testament and portions of the Old with certain reservations; he will cleave to Jesus Christ while he parts company with Moses, and thus sets himself in a most untenable position; for the Saviour said to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v. 46, 47.) There can be no doubt that our Lord received the whole of the books of Moses as inspired, authentic, and authoritative; he spoke of the creation of Adam and Eve recorded by Moses as historically true; he referred to the deluge, the destruction of the world, and the preservation of Noah in like manner; he alluded in Luke xvii. to the fire and brimstone which destroyed Sodom and the cities of the plain, and to the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; he accepted the statements of Moses respecting the appearance of God in the burning bush; the miraculous effect of looking at the brazen serpent, and the miraculous supply of manna in the wilderness; and yet the Bishop of Natal will tell us that he believes the Saviour, but regards the books of Moses as "unhistorical." But I would do him, and others of the same class, no injustice. The difficulties they feel and express will generally be found to have reference to the historical and literary portions of the word, rather than the doctrinal; and in the last century even writers upon inspiration were disposed when pressed by the pertinacity of the deistic controversialists, to yield a little to doubts in this connection; but now there is a strong reaction in religious minds in favour of the opposite view, that held by the Puritans in the seventeenth century, and I confess that I look upon this as a pleasing indication; for it yet remains to be proved, and such proof will be found

impossible, that whole books are to be rejected from the Canon of Scripture. Honest and accurate criticism we allow, but reckless and bungling assaults we detest. And if it be asked, what has given rise to the foolish and precipitate conclusions adopted by some respecting the Word in the present day? Without pretending to go into the special historical statements demanded by this question, we may answer in a general way, that one cause has been a flagrant displacing or misapplication of natural laws. The rapid advances made of late in natural science have thrown before the human mind such masses of new facts, and opened on every hand such fresh fields of inquiry, that we might expect to find the mind stunned, perplexed, and confused in attempting to classify and arrange these facts, and especially in seeking to ascertain their relation to Divine truth. Natural laws have indeed been discovered and displaced; they have been carried into regions where they are utterly inapplicable, and, by some, exalted to the throne of the Creator. No other power is appealed to in accounting for natural phenomena, and the declarations of revelation are in this way set aside. This is the sort of thing advocated by Dr. Temple in his sermon before the University of Oxford, during the meeting of the British Association in 1860, in which he affirms "that one idea is now emerging into supremacy in science, a supremacy which it never possessed before, and for which it still has to fight a battle; and that is the idea of law." The same opinion, as is well known, has ruled the minds and greatly aided in moulding the character of the works of Hooke, Hinton, and Humboldt.

Then on the continent of Europe, especially, appeals have been made to human consciousness; every thing pertaining to truth has been subjected to the test of "pure reason." Man's soul has been deified; the same pantheistic tendency which looks to natural laws as deity finds the highest manifestation of Godhead in the human soul. Adopting these assumptions it is easy to see how the whole doctrine of Inspiration falls into discredit; and those views, let us remember, have been slowly propagated, so that in this respect, the present aspect of religious discussion and controversy is not a thing of yesterday; it stands associated with ancient pagan opinions transmitted to us, and advocated by poets and philosophers. Coleridge in England did much to introduce this subjective method of viewing all things—the Lake Poets of England did the same—Newman in his writings, and Carlyle, especially in his life of Sterling, have followed in the same school; and upon this continent they have found disciples in Theodore Parker, Emerson, and others. Along with those two

very manifest and potent tendencies just noticed, we may mention the rise of the science of historical criticism, as leading to recent attacks upon the Bible. Under the influence of that science, if it has yet gained the position of a science, men, looking over documents heretofore accepted as historically true, have asked once more Pilate's old question, "What is truth?" Truth there is, and truth there is in the Bible, but what is it? Now the answers, as we have said, have been varied; attacks have been specially made upon the Pentateuch and Old Testament, not because these parts are more vulnerable in themselves than the rest of the word. We think it all divine, and therefore true; but the Church has neglected the study of the Hebrew Scriptures, and this has in part given form to the present controversy. The Greek and the Latin of Oxford have been allowed to set aside the language of the descendants of Abraham and the living oracles of God of which it is the vehicle; and the common people have in like manner learned to neglect those older Scriptures in the vernacular. It is a singular fact that when a text is announced in some of the books of the Old Testament few persons in a congregation know where to turn for it; and I doubt not that while present assaults are in part occasioned by neglect in our schools and families, they are wisely permitted and will be employed by a holy Providence to rouse us to activity and to impress upon our minds the Saviour's lesson, "Search the Scriptures." And while we glance at causes conspiring to determine the form of present doubt and error we may not overlook those two great fundamental causes by which early apologists were apt to account for all error, and which often formed the gist of their answers, *moral depravity* and *satanic agency*. These are still active, operative causes of unbelief, and of opposition to the word of God. But instead of dwelling further upon the aspect of religious controversy and the causes which mould its character, let me ask, as the resolution suggests, is this conflict of opinion, this struggle inside and outside the Church, productive of evil alone, and in no way destined to do good? We answer, it has done good already, and it will do more; it has called forth the talent of the Church, and turned her learning to account, and will continue to expand her learning in departments hitherto neglected. We have not yet seen the worst forms of error, nor the strongest bulwarks of truth. We have still to witness the transplantation to our soil of many European errors of which most of us are now happily ignorant. This we cannot prevent; book-makers and book-vendors must have their own way; but upon the heels of their errors come a fuller discovery and wider

dissemination of truth than we have ever known. The history of the past leads me to entertain this view. Every student of history knows that scepticism respecting existing opinions has been, if not the cause, at least the occasion, of the greatest advances in science and religion. Astronomers doubted, and so were led to discover new laws, and new planets. Navigators doubted old opinions and foregone conclusions, and thus discovered islands and continents. Theologians doubted, and disbelieved the dogmas of a benighted church, and then the light of the Reformation dawned upon the world. Luther cast the bulls of the Pope into the fire, and so the world was emancipated. And so we may feel confident that the things which are now happening will "fall out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel." Thousands will spring up, and be called out from their silence and repose to pierce the armour of our learned infidels, and to expose the imperfections of their logic. Indeed, those men in spite of themselves help forward the cause of truth. Thus Renan, in his *Life of Jesus*, has marked a multitude of references to the New Testament, sufficient, if turned to and read, to enlighten all Europe.

Since therefore we are able to trace so many favourable indications in the present state of religious controversy, let me ask, what have we to contend for? I answer, for a book, for a revelation from heaven. It is true that the wants of the individual soul are met by presenting a personal Saviour; by telling of guiltless blood shed for the guilty, of a sufficient and perfect atonement made by a Divine Saviour, and a free pardon and complete sanctification through his blood; but these great peculiar and central doctrines of the gospel are only revealed in the world of God—not expressed by the sublime science of astronomy—not uttered by the brooks and rills that adorn our earth—not discovered by *pure reason*—not taught by natural laws—they are only found in the book of God, and therefore we must contend earnestly for the book as containing the faith delivered unto the saints. We must not fail to teach men that natural laws and secondary causes are nothing apart from God; that these laws are only his fixed order of procedure; that in Him and not in them we can see personality and power. We must not fear to teach men that in addition to all the indications of Divine wisdom and power given in these laws, God has distinctly spoken out, "spoken at sundry times and in divers manners." We must fight the battle of Inspiration, for it is the great battle of the present day; we must enter the arena of the evidences, and adapt our arguments to present forms of error; not, indeed, despising the work

of our fathers, or imagining that all wisdom is confined to our generation, but doing the peculiar work of our own age in defending the eternal ramparts of truth. And while we do this, let us circulate the word: the best victories, as we said at first, that have been gained for the Bible have been gained by itself; the Bible is its own witness. We need not tremble for the ark of God. We may feel certain that the God of the Bible does not look upon this strife with indifference. He stands by his own truth, and it must prevail. Then let us commit it to the care of the Holy Ghost—let us circulate it, and allow it to display its gold and diamonds, and tell their value. It will make a path for itself amid moral and intellectual darkness. Its views of government, of human happiness and destiny are such as to command respect and gain dominion. It is the truth of God; then let us send it to the 330,000,000 Pagans in our world who still dwell in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death—let us send it to the 135,000,000 Roman Catholics, many of whom are longing to see its emancipating and life-giving light—let us send it to the 120,000,000 Mohammedans who are now reading instead of it their idle and impure Koran—let us scatter it in every language under heaven—let us send it to every island and every shore, to every home and every nation on earth; and it will be found to enlighten men's souls, to bless their lives, and gladden their deathbeds, found possessed of power sufficient, being accompanied by the Spirit of God, to raise those nations to the position of truth, and honour, and imperishable glory which we justly claim for Protestant Britain and America.

As chickens find warmth by close sitting under the hen's wings, so the graces of the saints are enlivened, cherished and strengthened by the sweet secret influences which their souls fail under when they are in closet communion with their God.—*Brooks*.

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend of his faults. If you are angry with a man, or hate him, it is not hard to go to him and stab him with words; but so to love a man that you cannot bear to see the stain of sin upon him, and to speak painful truth though loving words,—that is friendship. But few have such friends. Our enemies usually teach us what we are at the point of the sword.—*Anon-ymous*.

FORWARD! FORWARD! FORWARD!

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

You have been awakened, conscience has been alarmed; you have begun to feel the terrors of the law: you have heard the crack of the whip, and felt it on your back. You are trying to escape from your sins; you are not, as you used to be, a contented bondsman, but you pant to be delivered altogether from sin in its power and its guilt.

You have been flying as best you could from sin; but the whole of your sins are after you, and your conscience, with its quick ear can hear the sound of threatening judgment. "Alas!" your heart is saying, "unless God help me, I shall be in hell."—"Alas!" says your judgment, "unless God be merciful, I shall soon perish." Every power of your manhood is now upon the alarm: the different parts of your heart are talking to one another, and they are all foreboding desperate mischief.

Now, what shall I do for you? Shall I pray for you? Ay, that I will. Shall I bid you pray? Ay, that I may: and we may blend our prayers together—"God be merciful to us sinners! Lord save us, or we perish!" But, methinks, while I am praying for you, I hear my Master saying, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Tell them to go forward, preach Christ to them, instead of praying any longer, or bidding them pray.

Deliver to them the message of the gospel—"Forward, sinner, forward to the cross! Forward to the five wounds! Forward to the bloody sweat and to the crown of thorns! Go forward to the agonies of Gethsemane, and to the death struggles of Golgotha. Forward! Forward to the place,

'Where the full atonement's made,
Where the utmost ransom's paid.'

I know what you say. "Right before me rolls the great sea of God's wrath. I am surrounded with a dark, dark night, and I see no light but the sheen of these terrible waves of fire. If I go forward, God's eternal wrath is in the way." Forward, sinner, whatever may obstruct the way; let not hell itself block up the road, for, do you not know that when Jesus is your leader, he will at once divide the Red Sea of Jeho-

vah's wrath. He *did* divide it; he went through it himself when he suffered the wrath of God instead of us. As you go forward, you shall find Almighty justice standing up as a protecting wall on either hand, and no longer rolling as a devouring flood. Forward in the way of faith, in the Saviour's name; and when you have passed through the dry bed of a sea, once deep and stormy, you shall look back and see the deep sea swallowing up your sins, and shall sing, "The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left." Forward sinner, forward!

"Well," saith one, "I will pray about it." Beware of substituting prayer for faith; faith is your present duty, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "I will think about it a little longer." Do no such thing, thinking is a very poor substitute for believing. Forward! forward at once and on the spot; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "But I am not fit to believe." Forward, in God's name—forward! What have you to do with fitness? God commandeth you to believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

Forward, is my message—I come not to tamper with you, to deal with your "ifs" and "buts," and excuses, and peradventures. Hell is behind you; you are shut up on the right hand and on the left by God's providence, your own fears, and divine justice; there is but one way of safety, and that is the way of faith. Forward, sinner! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Why, some of you have been frittering away your time, weeks, and months, and years, thinking about it, praying about it, reading about it, hoping about it, fearing about it, but never coming to Jesus just as you are. It is all wrong—it is all wrong. God's command is neither work, nor feel, nor fear, but it is simple and plain. Believe! Forward! Trust a Saviour's wounds; and trusting there, there is life in a look at him, and you are saved.

O, I wish I could get behind some of you and whisper a word in your ear, for I know what Satan says. He says, "Tarry, tarry, tarry." Ah! he loves to have you in the place of breaking forth of children, that he may vex and torment you. Go

back," says he, "go back!" Ah, I know he would like to have you at your old sins, but you cannot go back if God has once brought you out of Egypt. I know what he whispers. He says, "It is of no use going forward. If you believe in Jesus," says he, "you will perish after all." Back, thou old liar, back! God never did permit a man yet to walk in a path in which he commanded him to go and not to walk safely.

Forward, sinner, forward! Christ is before thee, and heaven in him is before thee. If thou stayest where thou art, thou shalt die. If thou goest forward, thou canst but die; and, therefore, take the captain's word, for it is the word of the captain's King—"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—*Spurgeon*.

THE WANT OF THE AGE.

Not a little is heard, now-a-days, about "*the wants of the age!*"—Good men and bad, wise men and unwise, real and false philanthropists, the pulpit and the press, all have much to say as to the demands of the age, and the best way of supplying them.

The Fourierite tells us we must *herd human beings*, as we do cattle, the Agrarian, that we must divide up property and land; the agitator, that we must fall in with his favourite scheme of excitement; the Swedenborgian that we must have faith in his dreams; and the Mormon, that we must bow down and worship in his temple. Every one cries out, that the age must adopt *his views, or it is undone!* One tells us the demand of the age is for universal education; another, that it requires liberty of speech, person, and conscience; and still another, that it must and will have an upheaving of the social state, and perfect uniformity of social privilege and enjoyment!

But as opposed to *some*, and far above and beyond *all* these things, there is a want, and it is *the want of the age*. Do you ask what it is? *It is THE GOSPEL!* This is what the age wants—pre-eminently and supremely wants—and must have for its improvement and salvation.

The Bible is THE book of the age—of this, as of every age!—It is not antiquated, old-

fashioned, out of date!—It needs no remodelling for the nineteenth century; and he is but a madman or a fool who pretends it! The idle, who would be amused; the visionary, who prefers dreaming to reality; the vicious, who would wallow in indulgence, may turn away from it to novelties, excitement, or the wild schemes of scepticism, delusion, selfishness, and lust. But if souls are to be renewed, communities benefited, the age regenerated, our country and the world redeemed, it must be *by the Bible—by Christianity!*

The *lawless spirits* of the age must yield themselves to the law of God; the *free spirits* of the age submit themselves to the righteousness which is by faith: the *proud spirits* of the age be humbled to acknowledge their dependence on the cross; the *depraved spirits* of the age, be renewed by the gospel of Christ as applied by the Holy Spirit. The *great doctrines* of the Bible must be made known, and the *great duties* of the Bible pressed home on every conscience, and heart, and life, in all their power, and by all the sanctions of eternity!

The *want of the age is the gospel!* the plain, unadulterated and unmodified gospel—the gospel preached from the pulpit, taught in the family and Sabbath school, sent forth in the Bible, and tract, and printed volume, borne by the press, the missionary, the colporteur, the private Christian, to the city and wilderness.—*N. E. Puritan.*

AN EARNEST MINISTRY.

One element in John the Baptist's character was his *earnestness*. The phrase is familiar to us all;—it has passed into a proverbial saying.—"*an earnest ministry.*" Here was a living exemplification of it; and its earnestness was the secret of its power. John (so far as we know) was neither polished, nor learned, nor eloquent. Judging from the brief recorded specimen of his preaching, he had nothing of the logical acumen and intellectual grasp of the great scholar of Gamaliel. His sentences, as we have already said, are strong—pointed—vigorous—epigrammatical;—the arrowy words of a bold, outspoken man,—no more.

But,—mightier than all eloquence, and than all the logic and learning of the schools,—his winged appeals went forth from his inmost heart. The words were those of one who

deeply felt all he said,—whose every utterance came welling forth from the depths of an earnest soul.

After all, *this* is what the world, what the Church, wants,—a living *earnestness*. It is the earnest man who alone can stand the test, and shall alone be honoured in his work. Have we not manifold instances in proof of this in our own times? Look at those places where there has been manifested a deep and growing interest in divine things,—and where hundreds, before in a state of utter indifference and death, have been brought to a knowledge of the truth. What is the instrumentality that has been employed? Often the very weakest. Ministers of little intellectual energy,—devoid of all the arts of oratory,—who can clothe their utterance only in the simplest and rudest garb;—but they are men *in earnest*;—men who have their work at heart;—who go to it in the spirit of believing prayer—animated by one predominating motive,—love for souls and the glory of God. And where there is this *earnestness* and heart-work, it is pleasing to see those of cultivated mind, and who may even be called *fastidious* hearers and worshippers,—many among them far superior to their instructors in natural and acquired gifts and knowledge of life,—sitting and listening with docility to the “simplicity of the truth.” It is the old scene witnessed in the Jordan wilderness,—those of strong and vigorous intellect—hard-headed men of the world—polished Pharisees—subtle Sadducees—soldiers with Roman blood in their veins—officers trained in all court etiquette—wily, far-seeing tax-gatherers;—in one word, hundreds skilled in the world’s logic,—shrewd, knowing men of business,—coming and sitting at the feet of this half-savage-looking hermit—a man all unschooled in worldly art and courtly manners and the business of life—and asking him, “*What shall we do?*”

And the same characteristic which gave him access to the hearts of the people, opened his way to the heart of the Tetrarch. When no other power could have reached the polluted soul of Herod Antipas, the earnest *truth* of the wilderness messenger enabled him to confront, face to face, the royal debauchee. He honoured his earnestness, though he hated his piety. “*Herod heard him gladly.*” Why? *because he knew that he was a just man and a holy.*”

God grant us ever an *earnest* ministry! It will be the mighty lever for a *revival* in its noblest sense. Here is the grand theme for the prayers of our people, that among ministers and students there may be the infusion of “the *earnest* life.” It is this alone which will confound the reasoning and surmises of a semi-*infidel* world. The world is keen in scanning

motives;—the world is discerning (severely so, sometimes,) in estimating character; and many draw the conclusion, (alas! too often with good reason!) “These men, preach as they may, are *not* in earnest;—they are only skilful players on an instrument. These pulpit orations are *shams*, ideal pictures, not counter-signed by the life.” Hundreds go away from the house of God with the smile on their face, and Ezekiel’s words on their lips, “*Ah, Lord God, doth he not speak parables?*” Ezek. xx. 49.—*Macduff*.

THE FULNESS OF JESUS.

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in his blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus;—
All fulness dwells in him.
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares—
He from them all releases—
He all my sorrows shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus—
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on his breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes,
His name abroad is poured.

I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, lovely, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father’s holy child.
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints his praises,
To learn the angel’s song.

Rev. Dr. Bonar.

The most dangerous infidelity of the day is the infidelity of rich and orthodox churches.—*Beecher*.

MATERIALISM.**THE POSITIVE ARGUMENT AGAINST IT.**

BY REV. W. B. CLARK, QUEBEC, C.E.

In two former articles we endeavoured to remove the objections which have been brought forward from Scripture, against the immortality of the soul; and now, without further preface, we shall proceed to consider the direct Scriptural arguments in support of that most important and comforting doctrine.

It will generally be admitted by men who are conversant with the subject, that thought is not a property of matter. We know well enough what the properties of matter are; but thought is not one of them. No one will say that flesh and blood, nerves and sinews, bones and marrow can think. But it may be alleged that, though these cannot think separately, just as the parts of a machine cannot move and exercise power when in a state of separation, yet that in combination, when the wonderful machine of the body is set up and put in motion by the infusion of the principle of life, it may think—just as the machine, when set up and put in motion, can communicate power. But the possession of the vital principle, whatever that may be, and still more the possession of intellectual and moral power, removes the human being to an infinitely higher position; so that there is no analogy between any machine, however exquisite its contrivance and great its effects, and the living, intelligent human being. The machine has no power of self-motion, and must be moved by some power from without. It can only collect and concentrate, and apply to some practical purpose, a power which already exists. It has no consciousness, no will, no thought. And these are the properties of mind, which is something altogether distinct from matter; and though it may use it as a convenient

servant to accomplish its purposes, is altogether independent of it and may exist without it.

Many imagine that, because the soul cannot be seen or perceived by any of the senses, that therefore there is no evidence that it exists. A little observation and reflection, however, may convince any one how inconclusive is such reasoning. We cannot see the wind, but how great the effects which it produces! We cannot see electricity when diffused throughout the atmosphere, but it just as certainly exists then, though imperceptible to the senses, as when it explodes in the thunder-cloud, or, in the flash of the lightning, produces the most tremendous effects. You cannot see this subtle substance on the wires of the telegraph, or lingering about the instrument worked with such consummate skill by the practised operator; but what would his skill avail without the influence of that unseen agent, which carries, with the speed of lightning, messages to almost any distance. And just so, though the soul of man is invisible to the eye of sense, its existence is manifested in its powerful thoughts, its skilful contrivances and noble conceptions, by which its affinity to the deity is demonstrated.

What a comfort to think, that the deductions of a sound philosophy are in such beautiful accordance with Scripture, in reference to this matter. For assuredly there is nothing revealed in Scripture with greater clearness and certainty, than the existence of a spirit in man, and its capacity of existing, in a state of conscious activity, when separated from the body. The doctrine is plainly announced in the words prefixed to this article; and the truth becomes still more striking when the words are more literally translated, "Assuredly there is a spirit in frail man." As if he had said, "Frail though man may be, there is a spiritual principle implanted in him by

God; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

This truth is very plainly implied in an expression which repeatedly occurs in the Old Testament, with reference to the death of eminent Hebrew worthies. The expression is, "gathered to thy people." Thus Moses was commanded to go up into Mount Nebo, and die in the mount whither he had gone up, and be gathered unto his people." Now, that this gathering unto his people could not refer to his body is manifest; for we are told that God buried him in a valley, in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. This much is certain, that none of his fathers were buried in the land of Moab, and none of his people in the lonely spot where his body was laid; so that the gathering here mentioned must refer to his spirit and not to his body. So of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and Aaron, it is said that they were gathered to their people. Job makes a distinction between the unhonored burial of a rich and worthless man, and this gathering. "The rich man," it is said, "shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered. He openeth his eyes, and he is not." That is, the rich wicked man shall lie down in his grave, but he shall not be gathered among the assembly of departed saints. He openeth his eyes in the future state and he is not; *i.e.* he is not gathered among the righteous: he finds, to his cost, that he is not. It is remarkable that a distinction is made in the word of God regarding the gathering of Josiah's soul to his fathers, and the gathering of his body to the grave. "Behold," says the Lord God, speaking through the prophetess Huldah, "I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace." This is a very remarkable expression, and appears to me to settle the question. God says, "I will gather thee to

thy fathers." This could not refer to his burial. God did not bury Josiah, but he promises to convey his soul to the assembly of the faithful departed, whilst his body would be honourably buried by his friends in peace.

It was mentioned in our last article that the Hebrew word *nephes*, often translated soul, originally breath, signifies a breathing frame, sometimes a person, sometimes a living creature, and in this sense it is applied not only to cattle, but once even to fish. Sometimes it is applied to a dead body—a thing that has once breathed. It has been alleged that it cannot be clearly demonstrated that it is ever applied to what we understand by the soul. And yet there are cases where I think it is clearly used in this sense. It is so, I think, in Gen. xxxv. 18, where we have an account of the death of Rachel. "And it came to pass," it is said, "as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Benoni." I have no doubt in my own mind, that this passage is here quite correctly interpreted, though it is impossible to demonstrate that the word here translated soul may not signify simply breath. There is another passage of a similar nature, where the same word is I think very properly translated soul, where it cannot perhaps be proved beyond the possibility of doubt that it may not signify breath. You will find it in 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22: "And he (Elijah) stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." I have no doubt that this passage clearly indicates that the soul is a distinct thing from the body, and can live independently of it; and such I believe is the opinion which

every plain, unsophisticated mind will form regarding it.

There are other passages which might be quoted from the Old Testament in support of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; it must be admitted, however, that this doctrine was not revealed with such fullness and clearness in Old Testament times as afterwards, when Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Instead, therefore, of lingering on the less clear and satisfactory revelations of the Old Testament, let me direct your attention to the fuller, clearer, and more satisfactory statements with reference to this subject in the New. And here the difficulty is not so much to obtain suitable passages in support of this doctrine, as to make a judicious selection. I shall direct your attention, in the first place, to some of our Saviour's sayings in reference to this subject.

In Matthew x. 28, you will find these words, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here our Saviour, in the plainest and most unmistakable terms, makes a distinction between the soul and the body. Here he declares that, though cruel persecutors might kill the body, they could not reach the soul. It is evident from this passage, that though the body may pine to death in a dungeon or perish in the flames, or on the cross or the gallows, or by the sword of the executioner, the hand of violence cannot reach the soul. And believers, when called upon to suffer for conscience' sake, are exhorted not to fear those whose power extends only to the body, but who cannot hurt the soul—the nobler part of man; but to fear Him rather who can ruin the soul as well as the body in hell. From these words it appears to me indubitable that, if language can be depended upon for conveying a fixed and

certain meaning, our Saviour meant here to assure us, that man has a soul as well as a body—that the soul is not injured by violence done to the body, and can live in a state of separation from it. "In this passage," says Dr. Fyfe, "the word rendered soul plainly means something different from animal life. When the body is killed, animal life is gone; but we learn from the passage under consideration, and from the parallel passages in the other gospels, that after animal life is extinct, there is something still not killed with the body."

The next passage to which I shall direct your attention, is that in which the Sadducees attempted to puzzle our Saviour by a captious question, arising out of a story which they probably invented, regarding a woman who had had seven husbands. The question was, Whose wife should she be at the resurrection, for the whole seven had her to wife? You will find this story recorded in Matt. xxii. 23–33; Mark xii. 18–27; Luke xx. 27–38. Here I would remark, that the Sadducees denied not only the resurrection of the body, but the future state of existence altogether. They were thorough materialists, and believed "that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." In order to show, therefore, the possibility of the resurrection, our Lord had first to show that death does not destroy the soul of man; that when the body is reduced to dust in the grave, the spirit remains in a state of conscious existence, and that the souls of the righteous still live unto God. The Sadducees held that there is no spirit of man, to exist after death; that, as man is merely a material being, when the body is dissolved by death he ceases to exist; and consequently, that there can be no resurrection. Christ, therefore, had first this grand error of the Sadducees to refute—that there is no future state of existence—and the main objection to the doctrine of the resurrection was removed.

And in order to prove to them the future state of existence from the law of Moses, whose divine authority they recognized, he quotes to them the words which God spoke to Moses in the bush, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and shows to them that, as God is not the God of the dead but of the living, it followed that these worthies were then living, though their bodies had been dead and buried many ages before. Our Saviour's argument is founded on the verb being used in the present tense—I *am* the God of Abraham. It is not I *was*, which it would have been had these worthies ceased to exist—but I *am*, I am still their God; from which it is evident that they were still living. Hence our Saviour says, as his statement is more fully recorded by Luke, "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living. For all live unto Him." The expression "all live unto Him," obviously means, all these departed worthies live unto Him, "All the righteous dead, all the dead of whom it can be said that God is their God, live unto Him, serve Him, live to promote his glory."

Perhaps it may be proper to state that Principal Campbell, of Aberdeen, in his Translation of the Gospels, renders the word *anastasis* (commonly translated resurrection) in Matt. xxii. 23, and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, "future life," or "future state." The same interpretation is put upon the word by the late President Dwight of Yale College. And I may add that these eminent men were as much distinguished for their candour and love of truth, as for their great learning and noble intellectual powers. In his note on the passage, Dr. Campbell says, "Not only is the version here given a juster representation of the Sadducean hypothesis, at the same time that it is entirely conformable to the sense of the word; but it is the only version which makes our Lord's argument

appear pertinent, and levelled against the doctrine he wanted to refute. In the common version they are said to deny the resurrection, that is, that the soul and the body shall hereafter be re-united; and our Lord brings an argument from the Pentateuch to prove—what? not that they shall be re-united (to this it has not even the most distant relation), but that the soul survives the body, and subsists after the body is dissolved. This many would have admitted who denied the resurrection. Yet so evidently did it strike at the root of the scheme of the Sadducees, that they were silenced by it, and, to the conviction of the hearers, confuted. Now this, I will take upon me to say, could not have happened if the fundamental error of the Sadducees had been barely the denial of the resurrection of the body, and not the denial of the immortality of the soul, or rather of its actual subsistence after death. . . .

If possible, the words in Luke xx. 38, "*all live unto Him*," make it still more evident that our Lord considered this as all that was incumbent on one who would confute the Sadducees to prove, namely, that the soul still continued to live after the person's natural death. . . It may be objected, that in Matthew xxi. 28, there is a clear reference to what is specially called the resurrection, which, by the way, is still clearer from the manner in which it is expressed in Mark xii. 23, "In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be?" This mode of expression, so like a tautology, appears to me to have been adopted by that Evangelist, on purpose to show that he used the word *resurrection* here in a more confined sense than he had done in the preceding part of the story. The Sadducee, as is common with disputants, thinks it sufficient for supporting his own doctrine, to show some absurdity in that of his antagonist; and he considers it as furnishing him with

a better handle for doing this, to introduce upon the scene the woman and the seven claimants all at once, who are no sooner raised than they engage in contests about their property in her. But this is no reason why we should not interpret our Lord's words and the words of the historian, relating to the opinions of the sect, in all the latitude which the nature of the subject and the context evidently show to belong to them.

(To be continued.)

IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY.

Even in this world, where there is much of God, how sweet to the Christian is the sense of His presence, and friendship, and love! What will it be in that world, where it is all of God? The foretaste is blessed—what must be the *fruitful*! The rays of the Divine glory are gladdening—what must be the full blaze of that sun itself!

My soul! dost thou often delight to pause in thy journey?—does faith love to ascend its Pisgah-Mount and get a prospect of this Land of Promise? What is the grand feature and element which swallows up all the circumstances in thy future bliss? Let Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles answer—It is "*Thy Presence*." "*In my flesh, I shall see God!*" says one. "*I shall be satisfied, says another, when I awake, with Thy likeness.*" "*They shall see His face,*" says a third. Amid all the glowing visions of a coming Heaven vouchsafed to John in Patmos, there is One all-glorious object that has ever a peerless and and distinctive pre-eminence—God himself. There is no candle—Why? "*For the Lord God giveth them light!*" There is no temple—Why? "*For the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof!*" The Saints dwell in holy brotherhood; but what is the mighty bond of their union—their "chiefest joy?" "*He that sitteth on the Throne dwells among them!*" They have no longer the intervention of ordinances and means—Why? Because "*the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water!*" They no longer draw on the storehouse of the Promises—And why? Because "*God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!*" "*No napkin,*" says a holy man, "*but His own immediate hand, shall wipe my sinful face!*"

My soul! here is the true "*Peniel*"—where you will "see God face to face!" Here is the

true "*Mahanaim*"—where "*the Angels of God meet you!*" Here is the true Communion of Saints—"The glorious fellowship of the Prophets—the goodly fellowship of the Apostles—the noble army of Martyrs!" Yet all these latter will be subservient and subordinate to the first—the vision and fruition of God! Even the recognition of the death-divided (that sweet element in the Believer's prospect of bliss) will pale in comparison into a taper-light before this "*Glory that excelleth!*"

Reader! art thou among these "pure in heart," who are to "see God"? Remember the Bible's solemn interdict—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord!" Remember its solemn admonition—"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure!" To "see God!" Oh! what preparation needed for so august a contemplation! Infinite unworthiness and nothingness to stand in the presence of Infinite Majesty, Purity, and Glory!

Can I wonder at the much discipline required ere I can be thus "presented faultless before the presence of His glory"? How will these needed furnace fires be dimmed into nothing when viewed from the Sapphire throne!—*Macduff*.

THE INFIDEL'S RETORT.

A preacher perceiving, on one occasion, among his hearers, an individual who was known in the neighbourhood as a ringleader of infidelity, was induced to hope that some alteration had taken place in his views.

To ascertain whether such was the fact, he called upon him the next day, and told him how happy he had been to see him at the preaching the previous evening, the more so, as he had been given to understand that he did not believe the gospel.

"Nor you either," said the unceremonious sceptic.

"What!" he exclaimed, "do you mean sir, to call me a hypocrite?"

"I call you no ill names, sir," he coolly replied, "but what I mean to say is this, you have known of my infidelity for years, and though I have lived all the while within a short distance of your dwelling, you have never before attempted to enlighten me as to these matters, a thing which, to do you justice, I must believe you would have done, had you thought them as important as your creed would make them; indeed, I can hardly fancy that you would see me going to hell, and never try to save my soul."

ROMANCE IN PRAYER.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—Ps. lxxvi. 18.

We often affront God by offering prayers which we are not *willing* to have answered. Theoretical piety is never more deceptive than in acts of devotion. We pray for blessings which we know to be accordant with God's will, and we persuade ourselves that we desire those blessings.—In the abstract, we do desire them. A sane mind must be far gone in sympathy with devils, if it can help desiring all virtue in the abstract.

The *dialect* of prayer established in Christian usage, wins our trust; we sympathize with its theoretical significance; we find no fault with its intensity of spiritual life. It commends itself to our conscience and good sense, as being what the phraseology of devout affection should be. Ancient forms of prayer are beautiful exceedingly. Their hallowed associations fascinate us like old songs. In certain imaginative moods we fall into delicious reverie over them. Yet down deep in our heart of hearts we may detect more of poetry than of piety in this fashion of joy. We are troubled, therefore, and our countenance is changed.

Many of the prime objects of prayer enchant us only in the distance. Brought near to us, and in concrete forms, and made to grow life-like in our conceptions, they very sensibly abate the pulse of our longing to possess them, because we cannot but discover that, to realize them in our lives, certain other darling objects must be sacrificed, which we are not yet willing to part with. The paradox is true to the life, that a man may even *fear* an answer to his prayers.

A very good *devotee* may be a very dishonest suppliant. When he leaves the height of meditative abstraction, and as we very significantly say in our Saxon phrase, *comes to himself*, he may find that his true character, his *real* self, is that of no petitioner at all. His devotions have been dramatic. The sublimities of the closet have been but illusions. He has been acting a pantomime. He has not really desired that God would give need to him, for any other purpose than to

give him an hour of pleasurable devotional excitement. That his objects of prayer should actually be wrought into his character, and should live in his own consciousness, is by no means the thing he has been thinking of, and is the last thing he is ready just now to wish for. If he has a Christian heart buried up anywhere beneath this heap of pietism, it is very probable that the discovery of the burlesque of prayer of which he has been guilty, will transform his fit of romance into some sort of hypochondriacal suffering. Despondency is the natural offspring of theatrical devotion.

Let us observe this paradox of Christian life in two or three illustrations.

An *envious* Christian—we must tolerate the contradiction; to be true to the facts of life we must join strange opposites—an envious Christian prays, with becoming devoutness, that God will impart to him a generous, loving spirit, and a conscience void of offence to all men. His mind is in a solemn state, his heart is not insensible to the beauty of the virtues which he seeks. His posture is lowly, his tones sincere, and self-delusion is one of those processes of weakness which are facilitated by the deception of bodily habitude. His prayer goes on glibly, till conscience grows impatient, and reminds him of certain of his equals, whose prosperity stirs up within him that "envy which is the rottenness of the bones."

What then? Very probably he quits that *subject* of prayer, and passes to another, on which his conscience is not so eagle-eyed. But after that glimpse of a hidden sin, how do the clouds of estrangement from God seem to shut him in, dark and damp and chill, and his prayer become like a dismal pattering of ruin!

An *ambitious* Christian prays that God will bestow upon him a humble spirit.—He volunteers to take a low place because of his unworthiness. He asks that he may be delivered from pride and self-seeking. He repeats the prayer of the publican, and the benediction upon the poor in spirit.—The whole group of the virtues kindred to humility seems to him as radiant as the Graces with loveliness. He is sensible of no check in the fluency of his emotions, till, *his* conscience, too, becomes angry, and

dashes the little eddy of goodness which is just now covering up the undertow of selfishness that imperils his soul. If then he is not melted into tears at the disclosure of his heartlessness, that prayer probably ends in a clouded brow, and a feverish, querulous self-conflict.

A *revengeful* Christian prays that he may have a meek spirit; that he may be harmless as doves; that the synonymous graces of forbearance, long-suffering, patience, may adorn his life; that he may put away bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; that that mind may be found in him which was also in Christ. At the moment of this devotional episode in his experience, he feels, as Rousseau did, the abstract grandeur of a magnanimity like that of Jesus, 'There is no doubt about the fervour of his theoretic love of such an ideal of character; and he is about to take courage from his rapture, when his conscience becomes impertinent, and mocks him, by thrusting upon his lips the words which are death to his conceit—"Forgive me as I forgive." If then he is not shocked into self-abhorrence at the ghostliness of his guilt, he probably exhausts that hour of prayer in palliations and compromises, or in reckless impositions upon the forbearance of God.

A *luxurious* Christian prays, in the good set phrases of devotion, for a spirit of self-denial; that he may endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ; that he may take up the cross and follow Christ; that he may be ready to forsake all that he hath, and be Christ's disciple; that he may not live unto himself; that he may imitate Him who went about doing good,—who became poor that we might be rich, and who wept over lost souls. In such a prayer there may be, consciously, no insincerity, but a pleasurable sympathy, rather, with the grand thoughts and the grander feeling which the language portrays. The heart is buoyant with its gaseous distension to the bounds of its great swelling words.

This lover of the pride of life does not discover his self-inflation, till conscience pricks him with such goods as these: "Are you living for the things you are praying for?"—"What one thing are you

doing for Christ which costs you self-denial?"—"Are you *seeking* for opportunities to deny yourself, to save souls?"—"Are you willing to be *like* Him who had not where to lay his head?"—"Can ye be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with?" If, then, this effeminate one is not roused to a more Christ-like life by the uncovering of his hypocrisy, what a sickly murmuring of self-reproach fills his heart at the collapse of that prayer?

Such is human nature; such, but by the grace of God, are we all. We must be dull inspectors of our own hearts, if we have never discerned there, *lurking beneath* the level at which sin breaks out into overt crime, some single offence—an offence of feeling, an offence of habit in thought, which for a time has spread its infection over the whole character of our devotions. We have been self-convicted of falsehood in prayer; for, though praying in the full dress of sound words, we did not desire that our supplications should be heard at the expense of that one idol.

Perhaps that single sin has woven itself like a web over large spaces of our life. It may have run like a shuttle to and fro in the texture of some plan of life, on which our conscience has not glared fiercely as upon a crime, because the usage of the world has blindfolded conscience by the respectability of such sin. Yet it has been all the while tightening its folds around us, repressing our liberty in prayer, stopping the life-blood and stiffening the fibre of our moral being, till we are like kneeling corpses in our worship.

That is a deceptive notion which attributes the want of unction in prayer to an arbitrary, or even inexplicable, withdrawal of God from the soul. Aside from the operation of physical causes, where is the warrant, in reason or revelation, for ascribing joylessness in prayer to *any* other cause than some wrong in the soul itself? What says an old prophet? "Behold, the Lord's ear is *not* heavy that it cannot hear; but your *iniquities* have separated between you and your God. Your *sins* have hid his face from you. *Therefore*, we wait for light, but

behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." Could words describe more truthfully, or explain more philosophically, that phenomenon of religious experience which we call the "hiding of God's countenance?"

It does not require what the world pronounces a *great* sin, to break up the serenity of the soul in its devotional hours. The experience of prayer has delicate complications. A little thing, secreted there, may dislocate its mechanism and arrest its movement. The spirit of prayer is to the soul what the eye is to the body,—the eye, so limpid in its nature, of such fine finish and such intricate convolution in its structure, and of so sensitive nerve, that the point of a needle may excruciate it, and make it weep itself away.

Even a *doubtful* principle of life, harboured in the heart, is perilous to the peacefulness of devotion. May not many of us find the cause of our joylessness in prayer, in the fact that we are living upon some *unsettled principles* of conduct? We are assuming the rectitude of courses of life with which we are not ourselves honestly satisfied. I apprehend that there is very much of *suspense* of conscience among Christians upon subjects of practical life, on which there is no suspense of *action*. Is there not a pretty large cloud-land covered by the usages of Christian society? And may not some of us find *there* the sin which infects our devotions with nauseous incense?

Possibly our hearts are shockingly deceitful in such iniquity. Are we strangers to an experience like this—that when we mourn over cold prayers as a misfortune, we evade a search of that disputed territory for the cause of them, through fear that we shall find it there, and we struggle to satisfy ourselves with an increase of spiritual duties which shall cost us no sacrifice? Are we never sensible of resisting the *hints* which the Holy Spirit gives us in parables, by refusing to *look that way* for the secret of our deadness—saying, "Nct

that! Oh no, not that! But let us *pray* more?"

Many a doubtful principle in a Christian mind, if once set in the focus of a conscience illumined by the Holy Spirit, would resolve itself into a sin, for which that Christian would turn and look up guiltily to the Master, and then go out and weep bitterly.—*Still Hour.*

ADDRESS TO CHILDREN.

Now your cheeks are young and blooming,
Light your footsteps, light your hearts;
Gladsome hope of goodness coming,
Cheering thoughts to you imparts.
But, in life's spring-time, remember
All will not true joy afford,
And, while yet your hearts are tender,
Seek, O children, seek the Lord.

Life is not devoid of pleasure—
We have felt it, so have all;
Dealt out with impartial measure,
It is shared by great and small.
But, amid its sweetest blossoms,
O! how many thorns are stored,
That give trouble to our bosoms;
Seek, then, children, seek the Lord.

Now your bright eyes beam with gladness,
Few your cares, and few your fears,
Yet shall many days of sadness
Meet you in this vale of tears.
Trials will come and sickness ail you,
From which friends no help afford;
But one Friend will never fail you:
Seek, O children, seek the Lord.

Love not earth's uncertain riches,
Oft they vex us when they're gained,
Nor the folly that bewitches,
But brings ruin in the end.
Seek for treasures more enduring—
Treasures in God's Holy Word—
Which Christ suffered, in procuring;
Seek, O children, seek the Lord.

He will grant you His salvation,
He will make your joys abound,
Keep you here from sore temptation,
Lead your souls to heaven beyond.
More than parents, sisters, brothers,
Let this Friend be loved, adored;
He's the Friend above all others,
Seek, then, children, seek the Lord.

NOT AT HOME IN HEAVEN.

What were the most tempting banquet to one without appetite, sick, loathing the very sight and smell of food?

To a man stone-deaf, what the boldest blast of trumpet, the roll of drums, stirring the soldier's soul to deeds of daring valour, or the finest music that ever fell on charmed ear, and seemed to bear the spirit on its waves of sound up to the gates of heaven?

What to one entirely blind, a scene to which beauty has lent its charms, and sublimity its grandeur—the valley clad in a many-coloured robe of flowers, the gleaming lake, the flashing cascade, the foaming torrent, the dark-climbing forest, the brave trees that cling to the frowning crags, the rocky pinnacles, and, high over all hoary winter looking down on summer from his throne, on the Alps' untrodden snows?

Just what heaven would be to man with his ruined nature, his low passions, and his dark guilty conscience. Incapable of appreciating its holy beauties, of enjoying its holy happiness, he would find nothing there to delight his senses. How he would wonder in what its pleasures lay; and supposing him once there, were there a place of safety out of it, how he would long to be away, and keep his eye on the gate to watch its opening, and escape as from a doleful prison!

Such an inheritance were to such a man like the gift of a noble library to a plumed, painted savage. As, ignorant of letters, he stalked from hall to hall, amid the wisdom of bygone ages, and rolled his restless eyes over the unappreciated treasures, how he would sigh to be back to his native forests, where he might sit among his tribe at the council fire, or raise his war whoop, or hunt down the deer!

People talk strangely of going to heaven when they die; but what gratification could it possibly afford a man whose enjoyments are of a sensuous or sensual nature—whose only pleasure lies in the acquisition of worldly objects, or the gratification of brutal appetites?

You hope to go to heaven. I hope you will. But, unless your heart is sanctified and renewed, what were heaven to you?

An abhorrent vacuum. The day that took you there would end all enjoyment, and throw you, a castaway, upon a solitude

more lonely than a desert island. Neither angels nor saints would seek your company, nor would you seek theirs. Unable to join in their hallowed employments, to sympathise with, or even to understand their holy joys, you would feel more desolate in heaven than we have done in the heart of a great city, without one friend, jostled by crowds, but crowds who spoke a language we did not understand, and were aliens alike in dress and manners, in language, blood, and faith.—*Guthrie.*

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORAL SENSE OF LIFE.

We are prone to imagine that our temptations are peculiar;—that other hearts are free from secret burdens that oppress our energies, and cast a cloud upon our joy; that *Luc* has for others a freer movement, and a less embarrassed way. But in no one has God made the human heart to carol its thoughtless song of joy; and the shadow of our moral being rests darkly on us all. We cannot take the world as it comes, enjoying what it offers, and passing by its sufferings and its burdens with our lightest touch;—we get involved in the deep questions of Conscience and Duty, and the sense of Responsibility stills the carol of the spirit, and suffers no man to repose without a trouble on the bosom of life.

Infinite are the ways in which the devices and aims of the Moral Nature break the instinctive happiness that lives for the day, and forgets the morrow; but effectually this awakening of deeper and sadder life takes place in all; and struggle, fear, disappointment, the partial feeling of an unfilled Destiny, the restless wavings of uncertain Hopes, are in the heart of every man who has risen but a step above the animal life. The more we know of what passes in the minds of others, the more our friends disclose to us their secret consciousness, the more do we learn that no man is peculiar in his moral experience—that beneath the smoothest surface of outward life lie deep cares of the heart—and that if we fall under our burdens, we fall beneath the temptations that are common to man, the existence of which others as little suspect in us as we do in them. We have but the trials that are incident of humanity;—there is nothing peculiar in our case—and we must take up our burdens in faith of heart that, if we are earnest, and trifle not with temptations, God will support us, as, in the past fidelity of his Providence, he has supported others as heavily laden as ourselves.—*J. H. Thom.*

MARY MAGDALENE ;

OR, THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

In Joseph's garden, and at Joseph's sepulchre, a woman is crouching in grief. She came to weep, but she did not expect to find an empty tomb. Her heart is heaving, big with sorrow, as her tear-bedimmed eyes are attempting to gaze into the vacant vault. But as she stoops to look through the grey morning light, the sight startles her, for there in the rock-hewn tomb she sees two angels sitting in solemn contemplation. Her sobs arrest their attention, for a woman's tears melt even the hearts of angels. "Woman, why weepest thou?" is their sympathizing enquiry. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," is her heart's reply. How few Marys are there in the world! How few there are who weep for a lost Saviour! Would that there were more, for he ever draws nigh to such sorrowing ones with sweet words of comfort. And here he comes to Mary, for the sound of the approaching footstep which turns her attention round, is that of Jesus, who has come to surprise her, and to give her beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" are his soothing words. She, taking him to be the gardener, pleads with beseeching tenderness. "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus listens in silence, and stands for a moment beholding, for he loves to look upon such tears as those which trickled down her cheeks. It was to him a better sight than that of hosts of angels, with golden harps ranked up to do him honour. He gazes with delight, because in her he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Then in his gentle,

well known and heavenly accents, he says "*Mary*." It is enough. There was more than magic in his voice. That one word brightens up her eyes with joy. She neither asks for a sight of the nail-pierced hands, nor of the spear-thrust side. "*Rabboni!*" "*Master!*" she exclaims, while she casts herself a worshipper at his feet. That familiar voice had, before now, sent sunbeams of gladness into her dark, despairing soul. Jesus, however, tells her to reserve her adoration until he had entered on his celestial glory. Her duty now is, not to lie a worshipper at his feet, but to go and tell his brethren that he was soon to ascend to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God. Mary, elated with gladness, quickly bears the tidings to his disconsolate followers—the tidings that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, and that she had seen and talked with Him. She had gone to the grave weeping; now she returns rejoicing, for that Saviour who had dethroned the idols of her heart is alive again, and is still the same loving one he had ever been! "O! what am I," she would reason with herself, "that my Lord hath appeared thus unto me?" But it was so like Jesus to do as he did then, and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Any who will come weeping to contemplate a crucified Saviour in the tomb, even though viler than Mary Magdalene ever was, shall soon know of a truth that Christ is risen indeed, that they are risen with Him, and that soon, where he now is there shall they also be."

X. Y. Z.

SATAN.—If Satan doth fetter us, 'tis indifferent to him whether it be by a cable, or a hair; nay, perhaps the smallest sias are his greatest stratagems.—*Fuller*.

SELF.—Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? Your looking-glass will give you a fair likeness of his face.—*Whately*.

PILGRIM STANDFAST.

A staunch old pilgrim he was, as ever set out for the celestial city. No persecutions, nor any allurements of pleasure, could turn him aside from the right way. Such a pilgrim was sturdy John Knox, who, when the lords of Queen Mary's court bade him stop his preaching, giving him but one alternative—"silence, or the gallows"—would make answer:—"My lords, you are mistaken if you think you can intimidate me by threats to do what conscience and God tell me I never shall do. Be it known to you that it is a matter of no importance to me, when I have finished my work, whether my bones shall bleach in the winds of heaven, or rot in the bosom of the earth."

The same Standfast blood beat strong in the heart of the martyr Hooper, when he went with a firm step to the fatal stake. "I am come hither to end this life," he said, "because I will not gainsay the truth I have formerly taught you." And when a pardon from the Queen was set before him, he cried out with a determined voice, "If you love my soul, take it away; take it away." The price of that pardon, he well knew, must be a denial of the faith. So Bishop Latimer, when summoned before "the bloody Mary," said, "I go as willingly to London, to give an account of my faith, as ever I went to any place in my life." As he rode through Smithfield—that spot which had such a baptism of martyr's blood—he said, "Smithfield has groined for me a long time."

Perhaps it is quite as hard for Standfast to pursue his integrity amidst the temptations and pleasures of the world, as in the fires of persecution. Where persecution has slain its thousands, worldliness has slain its tens of thousands.

A poor woman in India, who had embraced Christianity, was offered back the jewels and money which had been taken from her, on condition that she would return to her old religion; but she replied: "Oh no, I would rather be a poor Christian than a rich heathen."

And still another Mr. Judson tells us of, who was very fond of her jewelry, yet

desired to follow Christ. When he asked her if she was willing to sacrifice them for His sake, she was for a time much disturbed; but at length, taking off the gay necklace, which was her especial pride, she said with sweet and touching simplicity: "I love Christ more than this."

Can we all, when the world holds out its glittering baits to us, lay them aside with the same steadfast spirit, and say with her, "I love Christ more than these?"—*Christian Chronicle.*

MOTHER.

When she changed worlds, and before that time, what was she to others? A small, old, delicate woman. *What was she to us?* A radiant, smiling angel, upon whose brow the sunshine of the eternal world had fallen. We looked into her large, tender eyes, and saw not as others did, that her mortal garment had waxed old and feeble; or if we saw this, it was no symbol of decay, for beyond and within, we recognized her in all her beauty. Old how heavy and bitter would have been her long and slow decline, if we had seen her grow old instead of young. The days that hastened to give her birth into eternity, grew brighter and brighter, until when memory wandered back, it had no experience so sweet as those through which she was passing. The long life, with its youthful romance, its prosaic cares, its quiet sunshine, and deep tragedies, was culminating to its earthly close; and like some blessed story that appeals to the heart in its great pathos, the end was drawing near, all clouds were rolling away, and she was stepping forth into the brilliancy of prosperity. Selfishness ceased to weep under the light of her cheerful glance, and grew to be congratulation. Beside her couch we sat, and traced with loving fancy the new life soon to open before her; with tears and smiles we traced it. Doubts never mingled, for from earliest childhood we had no memories of her inconsistent with the expectations of a Christian. Deep in our souls there lay gratitude that her morning drew near; beautiful and amazing it seemed that she would never more bow to the stroke of the chastener; fresh courage descended from on high, as we realized

that there was an end to suffering; it was difficult to credit that her discipline was nearly over; how brief it had been compared with the glorious existence it had won her. How passing sweet were her assurances that she should leave us a while longer on earth with childlike trust, knowing that our own souls needed to stay, and that the destiny of others needed it. But the future seemed very near to her, and she saw us gathered around her in her everlasting home. She grew weaker, and said her last words to us. Throughout the last day she said but little, but often her tender eyes were riveted upon us; they said, "Farewell! farewell!" In the hush of the chamber, a faint Æolian-like strain came from her dying lips; it sounded as if it came from afar; then the angels were taking her to their companionship. She softly fell asleep, resigning her worn-out body to us, and she entered Heaven.

Ah! do we apprehend what a glorious event it is for the "pure in heart" to die? We look upon the bride's beauty, and see in the vista before her anguish and tears, and but transient sunshine. The beauty fades, the splendour of life declines to the worldly eyes that gaze upon her. Deaf and blind are such gazers, for the bride may daily be winning imperishable beauty, yet it is not for this world. A most sad, a melancholy thing it seems when children of a larger growth judge their parents by their frail and decaying bodies, rather than by their spirits. And more deeply sad still is it, when the aged learn through the young to feel that the freshness of existence has gone by with them. Gone by? when they are waiting to be born into a new and vast existence that shall roll on in increasing majesty, and never reach an end! Gone by? when they have just entered life, as it were! The glory and sweetness of living is *going by* only with those who are turning away their faces from the Prince of Peace. Sweet mother! she is breathing vernal airs now, and with every breath a spring-like life and joy are wafted through her being. Mother, beautiful and beloved! some sweet, embryo joy fills the chambers of my heart as I contemplate the scenes with which she is becoming familiar. Dead and dreary Winter robes the earth, and autumn leaves lie

under the snow like past hopes; but what of them? I see only the smile of God's sunshine. I see in the advancing future, love and peace—only infinite peace!

THE USE OF MAN.

The world was made to be inhabited by beasts, but studied and contemplated by man; 'tis the debt of our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts. Without this, the world is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive, or say there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honor from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works. Those highly magnify Him whose judicious inquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration.

Every essence, created or uncreated, hath its final cause, and some positive end, both of its essence and operation. This is the cause I grope after in the works of nature. On this hangs the providence of God. To raise so beauteous a structure as the world and the creatures thereof was but his act; but their sundry and divided operations, with their predestinated ends, are from the treasury of His wisdom . . .

There are no grotesques in nature; not anything framed to fill up empty cantons and unnecessary spaces . . . What reason may not go to school to the wisdom of bees, ants, and spiders? What wise hand teacheth them to do what reason cannot teach us? Ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of nature, whales, elephants, dromedaries, and camels. These, I confess, are the colossuses and majestic pieces of His hand. But in these narrow engines there is more curious mathematics; and the civility of these little citizens more neatly sets forth the wisdom of their Maker. I could never content my contemplation with those general pieces of wonder, the flux and reflux of the sea, the increase of the Nile, the con- version of the needle to the north; and have studied to match and parallel those

in the more obvious and neglected pieces of nature, which, without further travel, I can do, in the cosmography of myself.—We carry with us the wonders we seek without us. There is all Africa and her prodigies in us. We are that bold and adventurous piece of nature, which he that studies wisely learns in a compendium what others labor at in a divided piece and endless volume.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

SLAVERY TO HABIT.

The following horrible illustration of the force with which the habit of intemperance clings to its victims, was given by Mr. Gough at a late temperance meeting, and vouched for by Mr. Gough as having come within his own observation:—A young man had broken the heart of his wife by his intemperate habits, and she was lying on her bed of death. He was kneeling by her, watching the breath which was fast fleeing away, as she besought him with impassioned agony to indulge no longer in that intoxicating draught which had killed her, and was fast hurrying him to the drunkard's grave. His heart was melted by her entreaties, and he promised that he would drink no more till he received the cup from her hand. She died, but scarcely had the breath departed, when the maddening desire for liquor returned. He poured out the draught, but the thought of the oath so solemnly pledged flitted across his mind, and he desisted. But the habit was too strong to be overcome. He returned to the chamber of death, filled a cup with the liquid fire, raised the inanimate arm of his wife, clasped her cold fingers around the cup and drained its contents to the very dregs.

If this man was not a slave where shall we find one? No thralldom of man to man can be compared with this. For such a victim there is but one cure—Regeneration! "Ye must be born again."

TONGUE.—Give not thy tongue too great liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken, is like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—*Quarles.*

Sabbath School Lessons.

April 24th, 1864.

SAMSON'S BIRTH.

Read Judges xiii. 8-25.

(*Connection.*—While Israel's sin brought on them the chastisement of the Ammonites in the east of their country, the western tribes were exposed to the tyranny of the Philistines. The tribe of Ephraim supplied a deliverer in Jephthah against the former enemy, and now from the tribe of Dan a leader arises against the Philistines. Samson's government began about B.C. 1141; Jephthah's twenty years earlier.)

I. The Angel's Visit.

Ver. 8-14. The angel had already visited Manoah's wife while alone, and foretold Samson's birth. Her husband prayed for another visit, and it was granted. It had been told that this child was to deliver Israel, and Manoah seems to have sincerely wished direction. The angel told nothing additional to his previous message regarding the Nazarite vow. Manoah required no angel to teach him the duties of a parent.

A Nazarite. "One separated," see Num. vi. Their vows bound them to abstain from all produce of the vine—from all ceremonial defilement—and from cutting the hair of the head. This is the only instance of God imposing such an obligation.

II. The Sacrifice.

Verses 15-21. Hospitality and wonder prompted the request for the messenger's stay. He was evidently taken for some prophet of God sent from a distant part of the country. Even his refusal to tell his name did not lead to the suspicion that he was more than man. See Gen. xxxii. 29; Isa. ix. 6.

Offered it upon a rock. No hewn stone was permitted to form God's altar.

The ascent of the angel was similar to that shewn Gideon. Manoah knew the rank of his guest when he was gone. So it is often. Probably this visit was intended to confirm the faith of Manoah.

III. Samson's Birth.

Ver. 22-25. *We shall surely die.* This idea of death following such visions may be traced to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 30; and gains plausibility from Ex. xxxiii. 20. Manoah's wife, who seems to have been stronger in faith and in mind than her husband, urged against his conclusion God's present kindness and his promise for the future.

God blessed him. We know he conquered, and was saved by faith, Heb. xi. 32; though he fell grievously into sin. *The Spirit moved him.* In early life, among the warriors of his tribe, he showed his prowess.

APPLICATION.

1. *Those who honestly desire God's guidance will get it.* Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12; Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 15; Psal. xxxvii. 23. So Manoah, ver. 8.

2. *None are too young to be God's.* Samson was so from his birth. God can give a new heart and prepare for his service while very young. So Samuel—John the Baptist—Timothy. You should be God's already. We serve Satan too long, 1 Pet. iv. 3. None ever repent of beginning too soon.

3. *God alone can make men either great or good.* God knows what each child will be before it is born—Jacob and Esau. So God sent Moses—Jeremiah, Jer. i. 5; Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 1; John Baptist, Luke i. 15-17, into the world—to do a great work for Him, Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 10. You have your work—your duty—do it.

4. *What the child is, the man will be.* Grown larger, but still the same, like a young plant. A foolish, a lazy, a wicked boy, will generally be a foolish, lazy, or wicked man.

(1.) What are you now? Samson early was in the camp, ver. 25—Samuel early at the temple—Christ early about His Father's work. Try and pray, to be wise and good now, and you will be wiser and better when old.

(2.) How important right training, especially a mother's! Samson's mother was, for her child's sake, to be very careful what she did—Timothy's mother. Remember how much may depend on any one child.

5. *God's visits now are in mercy.* He is willing to accept of Christ's sacrifice for you and fulfil all his promises. O! seek to know him—to see him now! If you do not see him while on earth, you will die for ever! It will be death to the wicked to see God at judgment! Rev. vi. 16.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

May 1st, 1864.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Read Luke xvi. 1-12.

Soon after the parable of the prodigal son, that contained in the present lesson was spoken to those who gladly listened to the Saviour. Its general purpose was to show the difficulties and temptations which wealth often occasions; the necessity of using it aright; and that if we would serve God we must be honest and upright in the use of whatever may be entrusted to us. Care must be taken in explaining this parable, as in explaining other parables, against spiritualizing everything it contains.

Ver. 1. *Disciples*—not the twelve, but all who listened to the Saviour's instructions.

Steward—the superintendent of a rich man's household and business. See chap. xii. 42. Eliezer and Joseph were such stewards, Gen. xxiv. 2-12; xxxix. 4.

Wasted his goods—allowed their rents to run on without being collected at the proper time.

Ver. 3. *I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed*—The man had lived so as not to be able to work, and he would not demean himself so much as to beg.

Ver. 6. *Bill*—a writing by which the debtors acknowledged their obligations, and promised to discharge them. The reduction which the steward directed in what was owing was probably a reduction in annual-rent, so that the steward reckoned on the tenants feeling continually obliged by what he did for them.

Ver. 8. *The lord*—See also ver. 3, 5—The rich man, ver. 1. The words translated *wisely* and *wiser* indicate worldly prudence or forethought. It was this which the steward's master commended. The latter half of the verse relates to the prudence which worldly men display towards one another, as compared with that of God's servants.

Ver. 9. *Mammon of unrighteousness*—worldly wealth, uncertain and often mixed up closely with what is morally wrong, so as to be justly called "mammon of unrighteousness."

Ye fail—ye die. Some think the expression should be, when it (the mammon) fails or falls off. *Everlasting* is in contrast with the failing, and means permanent or enduring.

Ver. 10-12. These verses contain reflections designed to prevent an abuse of what Christ had said. Faithfulness in little things is essential to obtaining the greater trust or spiritual blessings.

Ver. 14. *Derided*—laughed at and mocked. They made merry, and spoke contemptuously at the teaching of Jesus.

Ver. 16. *Fresseth into it*—is eager to enter. In these words Jesus described what had actually taken place during John's ministry, and what was still taking place among the publicans and sinners.

Ver. 17. *One tittle*—the smallest thing.

EXPOSITORY.—*First, THE STEWARD AND HIS DISHONESTY.*

This steward occupied a place of trust. His master left everything in his hands, and never seems to have suspected him of doing wrong.

He was wasting his master's property. This was dishonest. That property was left in his hands to improve for his master's benefit.

It is not said that he stole. He plundered it. Dishonesty often manifests itself in

this manner. When he ought to have done the best he could with everything belonging to his master, he was careless. He did not give his mind to his duty. He suffered others to rob his master.

Honesty requires that care should be taken of whatever we may be entrusted with. The greater the confidence reposed in us, the more should we aim to be honest.

The master heard that his steward did not act faithfully, and called him to account. The steward had nothing to say, and was deservedly dismissed, losing both his character and his livelihood.

If dishonesty escape detection for a time, it is almost sure to be found out and punished. If it never be found out, it is none the less sinful.

Observe what this steward did to mitigate his penalty. He falsified his accounts, and thought so to make friends. This was adding one act of dishonesty to another. There was, however, what the world often regards as prudence or forethought in what he did. Creditors were directed to alter their bills, so that the owner might not be able to recover what they owed. The thing somehow came to be known, and the master looked upon the conduct of the steward as an ingenious device, Psalm xlix. 18. Would that Christians had an equally strong regard for their spiritual interests! ver. 8.

Secondly. THE STEWARD, AND THE LESSONS HIS CONDUCT TEACHES.

We may be quite sure that the Saviour did not intend the steward's dishonesty to be imitated. This is plainly the meaning of ver. 10-12. Fidelity in little things will create confidence as to great things, ver. 10. Dishonesty will bring with it its own punishment, ver. 11. A dishonest servant seldom thrives. God does not give His blessing to a dishonest man. And if we do not use faithfully what God entrusts us with, the happiness which His favour secures, and the blessedness of heaven, which only deserves to be called true riches, never can be ours.

Thus the Saviour guards the parable from being misapplied. There are three practical points in the parable.

1. The steward's forethought. When he was in difficulty he employed ingeniously what was within his power. He made provision for the future while he could. He did this dishonestly, and was therefore utterly wrong. Still his master, or lord, looked upon him as a shrewd, cunning, forethinking man.

Prudence and forethought are right always. Never act dishonestly.

The lesson in ver. 9 has often been interpreted as if it had relation to such a use of

the things we possess in this world as may provide for us happiness in the world to come,—an interpretation to which the teaching of Christ, and indeed of the whole New Testament, is opposed. Heaven is not to be purchased by what we do on earth. But we may lessen sorrow by a judicious and kind use of what we have.

2. The steward's folly, in thinking to serve his employer and himself at the same time, ver. 13. Had he given faithful attention to his lord's interests, his own would have followed, but by thinking to serve both he lost all, Matt. vi. 24.

True as this is in every-day matters, it is especially true in respect to religion. We cannot serve the world and God. We cannot care supremely for the things of time and the things of eternity. The two are opposed.

3. The steward's conduct was hateful in God's sight, ver. 15. He can never approve of dishonesty. He requires benevolence, but that we should be benevolent with our own. And what is the good of men's approving if God disapprove? We may think to do well for ourselves, and those about us may think we are doing so, but the time will soon come when our mistake will be found out.

Use faithfully and benevolently all that God may trust you with. Choose His service before that of self or of the world. Remember in every situation that honesty is the best policy.—*Sunday School Union Scheme of Lessons.*

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

In a recent address the Rev. William Arthur remarked: "There was one line of James Montgomery's glorious hymn on 'Prayer' which he always disputed—

'Prayer, the sublimest strains which reach
The majesty on high.'

"No, no. 'He that offereth praise glorifieth God.' Praise was sublimest strain which went up to heaven, and when it was educed from human hearts by the love of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit, of all things rich and happy, that praise was the highest and the most acceptable to the Redeemer."

SIN.—The only disturber of men, of families, cities, kingdoms, worlds, is sin: there is no such troubler, no such traitor to any state, as the wilfully wicked man; no such enemy to the public as the enemy of God.—*Wogan.*