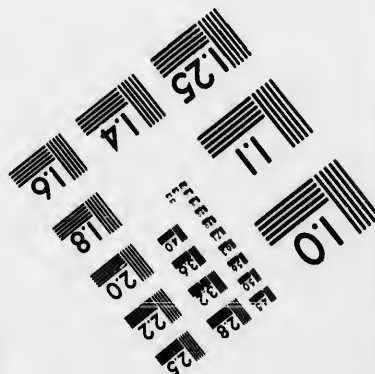
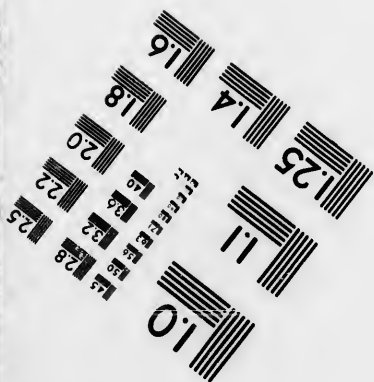
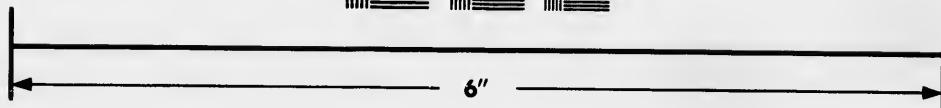
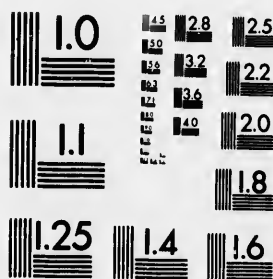


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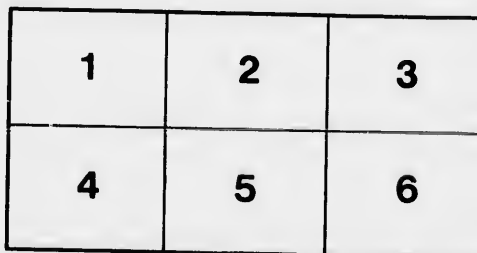
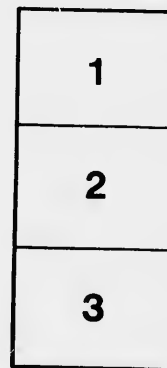
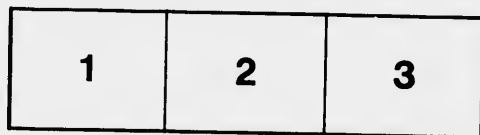
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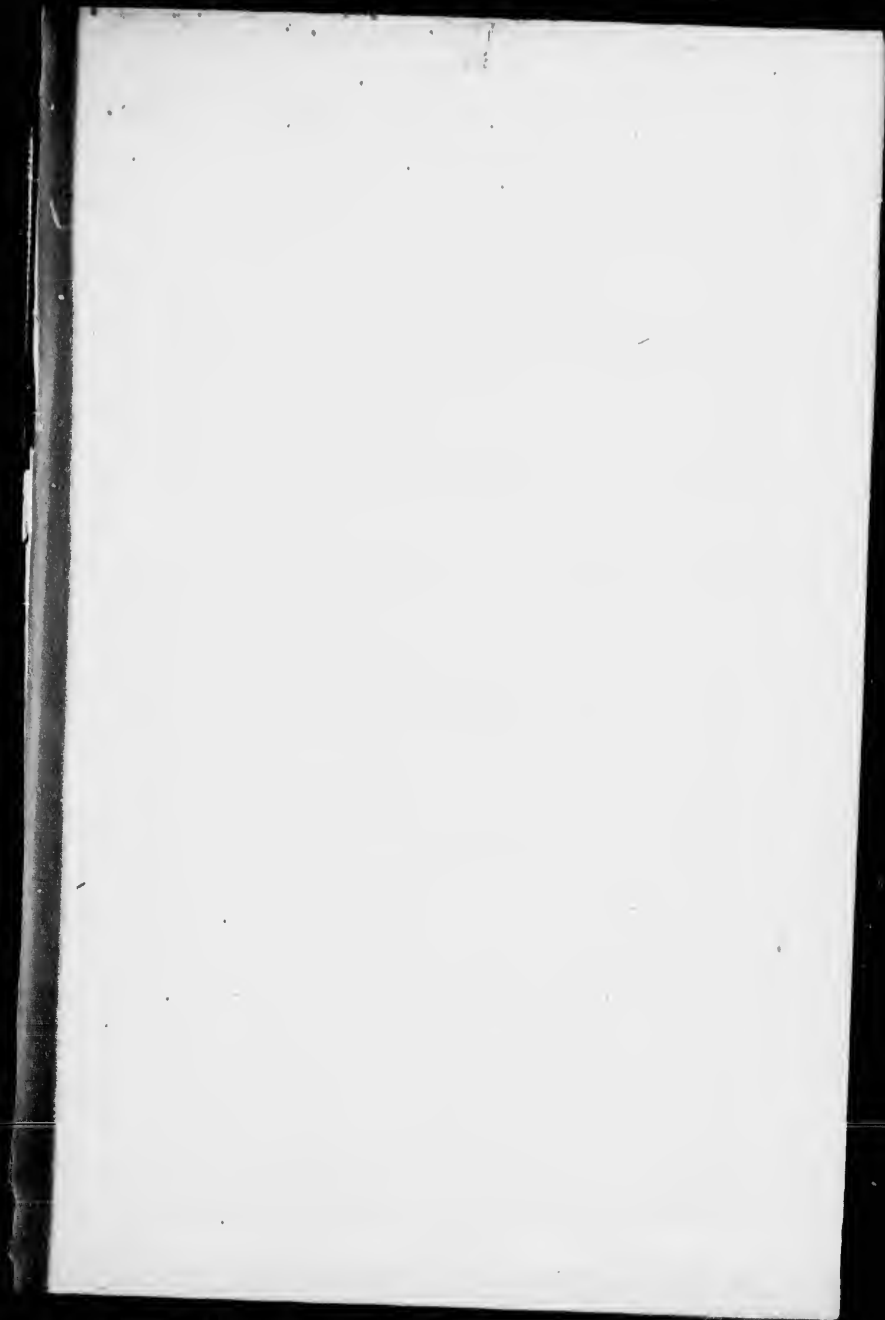
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WITH INTRODUCTION.

"Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season."—2 TIM. iv. 2.

REV. S. G. PHILLIPS, M.A., EDITOR.

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PREFACE.

THIS is the second volume of the Methodist Pulpit published in Canada. It is doing, in its own sphere, the same work that the pulpits of other Christian Churches are doing throughout the world. It has the same origin; it is a link in the same chain of history; it possesses the same spirit and has the same aim and end in view.

When more sermons are being published than were ever before; when the preaching of the Gospel of Christ is doing a greater and a grander work in enlightening the minds of men; in promoting the purest and best principles; in reforming and purifying the lives of millions, and exerting a mighty influence in the spheres of literature, science, philosophy, and the fine arts, we send forth this volume to unite its influence with the multiplied agencies employed for the moral elevation of the race.

AUTHOR.

BILLING'S BRIDGE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE influence of religious teaching has been felt ever since men grouped together for the worship of Jehovah. There have been differences observed in the forms of worship, in the ceremonial of the Church as the ages have advanced; but strange to say that, as the arts and sciences have flourished, and have presented a proud and grand exterior, the worship of God has become more simple and less imposing, but not less impressive. We think there never was a time when the preaching of the gospel went home to the human heart as it does in the present age. The change of the dispensations has not been marked by any great revolutionary movement in religion—the same principles and motives that inspired the former animated the latter; the same doctrinal teachings shine through them all. Under their influence believers of all ages have submitted to the government of God, have observed and kept His law, have received the Word of God as their great text-book, have exercised the same faith which brings salvation to bleeding

hearts; and have received from the same Saviour the healing balm. The same gospel has been preached, and has been employed by God as a mighty moving agency to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and spiritually to subdue the world to Jesus Christ, and to incline men to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and to fill the whole earth with the knowledge and the glory of God. Under its influence the clouds of past ages are breaking away, the light is shining, the barriers are crumbling down, and the discord of sectarian strife is being resolved into perfect harmony throughout the Church of God.

Take a brief glance at the history of this great agency: Enoch, the son of Jared and father of Methuselah, was born A.M. 622. It was said of him in the Holy Scriptures that he "walked with God." "Before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God."* And Jude informs us that he prophesied concerning the second coming of Christ. He preached that Christ should "come with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon all."† The Patriarchs held the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. As kings they governed the people, as priests they offered sacrifices and interceded for them, and as

* Heb. xi. 5.

† Jude 14, 15.

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prophets they preached, setting before the people life and death. Moses having received his commission from God, became a most powerful and useful preacher. Through him came the Moral Law,* which will influence the destinies of men down to the end of time. There are frequent references in his books to his preaching and setting before the people their religious duties and their responsibilities. † During what is termed the Mosaic Economy there seemed to be no settled law for the appointment of agents, times and places of preaching; but men of different classes were sent through the land to preach the Law of God, and to urge upon the attention of the people the importance of the worship of God. Previous to the captivity, preaching was not regular; the people were left without its benefits for weeks and months together; hence, they lapsed into idolatry, and polluted themselves with the sins of the people among whom they lived. Captivity and sorrow followed the nation's sins; and during the seventy years the Jews were captives in Babylon, being deprived almost entirely of this important agency for good, they not only lost their religion, but the very

* John i. 17.

† Deut. vi. 9, xxviii. 8, xxi. 19, xvii. 18, iv. 9; Num. v. 23.

language in which they were taught it, and they spoke a corrupt language, made up of their own and that of the Chaldeans and the other nations with whom they had mixed, showing that a regular standing ministry is necessary to the moral purity and prosperity of any people. After the captivity had ended, and the Jews were restored to their own land, and the temple services were re-established, Ezra the scribe not only collected the sacred books, but re-appointed the service of preaching; and Ezra himself called the people together—a great multitude of forty thousand—and stood in a pulpit of wood, and read out of the Book of the Law, and explained its sacred lessons, and the people understood, and they all felt its power and “lifted up their voices and wept.”* Throughout the Mosaic Economy the prophets preached, presenting to the people the living truths of God’s holy law.

The most powerful preacher next to Enoch, Elijah, and Moses was John the Baptist. His discourses were so moving that multitudes flocked around him to hear the word of life from his lips, and became penitent and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Christ, the great Teacher, now came

* Neh. viii. 1-9.

upon the stage. He spake as never man spake, and presented in His teachings those grand truths which must forever lie at the foundation of the Christian Church, and He ratified the truths He taught to the people by miracles. He sent forth His apostles and evangelists to offer salvation to fallen man throughout the world. These followed the example of their Divine Master, and devoted their time wholly to religion, and spread the cardinal principles of the Christian religion unto the very ends of the earth; they preached freedom of thought and speech, the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, the justification of sinners, and the sanctification and the perfection of believers. Not that freedom of thought and speech which will not be governed by law, or be influenced by facts. Upon the platform of the sceptic we are told that freedom of thought and speech is to think as you like, and speak as you like, and believe, if possible, what no one else believes. The historian does not substitute his own speculations for the characters, dates and facts of history. The true scientist is constantly searching after facts, and upon these alone does he depend. And God's ministers of all ages have been successful only as they have presented to the minds of men the demonstrated truths of God's

Divine revelation. The Divine Scriptures are so rehearsed from the sacred desk as to carry conviction of their Divine authority to the minds and consciences of men, so that it is unnecessary that the preacher should, in connection with his pulpit ministrations, discourse upon the evidences of Christianity; it is only necessary for him to present the Word of God without note or comment and it will carry conviction to any thoughtful mind, and it will be received as "*thus saith the Lord.*"

The justification of a sinner before God has been one of the great pulpit themes of all past ages, and will be through all the ages to come; that in the enjoyment of this blessing the soul has direct access to God, and God has direct access to the soul; that nothing should come between the soul and God, neither doctrine nor tradition, courts or councils; there is in every case of justification direct intercourse between God and the soul.

The pulpit gives forth a certain sound upon the sanctification and perfection of the heart and the life, that the soul might be thoroughly prepared for the immortal life of the future.

In this age thousands of powerful and devoted ministers of Christ are fearlessly preaching the gospel,

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and their message is accompanied by the influence of the Spirit of God, and millions are, through their instrumentality, converted and added to the Christian Church, forming a devoted spiritual brotherhood in every land. To present the names of illustrious preachers, either in the past or present, would be superfluous, as they might be numbered by thousands; and to draw a comparison between the ministers of the cities and of the country would be absurd, as each fills his own sphere of usefulness. Each spreads the same light, moves human hearts in the same manner, and forms the Church of Christendom, and helps to people heaven. The only true and useful ministers of the Church of God are converted, earnest men, who have consecrated their time and their talents to promoting the spiritual welfare and happiness of man and the glory of God. The present volume will be worthy of a place in the best libraries of the land. The Sermons are well written and full of useful matter. Some of the Sermons contain the particular views of the Methodist; in this we are not different to other Church writers. While in heart and life we are one with the true Christians of all denominations, we differ from them upon certain doctrinal subjects; but at the same time we honor them for fearlessly

presenting their views upon those subjects, though these views may be adverse to our own, and we believe that liberal Christians generally hold these sentiments. These Sermons, coming as they do from many authors, contain a rich variety; some are profoundly theological, manifesting depths of thought, extensive research, and strong reasoning powers; some are eminently practical, coming from the heart, as well as the brain, are so employed as to go home to the hearts of others, not only enlightening the understanding, but exciting human sympathy, and producing in the human mind the most sacred emotion. Some are freighted with imagination, presenting thoughts like flashes of light amidst the surrounding darkness. Some are expository, explaining and illustrating with clearness the thoughts contained in the text. In all, the writers keep close to the Bible, while they present their own thoughts in a bold, fearless, and independent manner. Believing that this volume will do good, we send it forth upon its mission of light and love to add to the pleasures of Sabbath reading, and to spiritually fortify and beautify the lives of those who read it.

S. G. PHILLIPS.

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THE METHODIST PULPIT.

SERMON I.

SOUL-FREEDOM.

BY THE REV. E. H. DEWART, D.D.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—*John* viii. 32.

THE character of a teacher largely determines the influence of his lessons. The stream cannot rise higher than the fountain from which it flows. This consideration invests with profound interest and authority the text I have read. These weighty and suggestive words are not the conjecture of vain worldly wisdom, nor the speculation of a shallow and pretentious philosophy. They are a flash of light from the Sun of Righteousness on the deep problems of human life, disclosing the divine knowledge of Him who knew what was in man,—his deep spiritual destitution, and the true remedy for his wants and woes.

This utterance is peculiarly significant, because it

reveals God's method of emancipating fallen humanity from the oppressive and debasing slavery of sin.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE TRUTH?"

The question of Pilate, "What is truth?" is one that has in all ages profoundly agitated the civilized world. In climes and periods most widely separated, it has engaged the earnest attention of the greatest intellects. Not only has this soul-hunger manifested itself in times of light and progress, when the researches of enquiring minds in all departments of human thought have been crowned by results so brilliant, that they stand as waymarks in the history of the world's progress, and monuments of mental achievement; but even in times when ignorance and superstition threw their obscuring shadows over the whole universe of thought, it has throbbed like a smouldering fire in the heart of humanity; and amid the ceaseless clangor of opposing opinions and systems has been heard, at intervals, the stifled wail of hungry and bewildered souls, asking for light and truth—"seeking rest, and finding none." The literature of past ages is mainly a record of the earnest endeavors of the leaders and teachers of men to scatter the blinding shadows of ignorance, and solve the perplexing problems of human thought.

The intense mental activity and earnest research of the present day amply demonstrate that there is no abatement in the eagerness with which men still seek for an answer to Pilate's question. Historians are

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sifting the chronicles of the past with a keen and relentless criticism, in order to separate the facts from the fables. Philosophers are devoting their subtlest powers of analytic thought to solve the profound questions of the world of mind. Geologists and antiquarians are endeavoring, from the dim and doubtful footprints of vanished ages, to account for events that have transpired in the remote periods of the prehistoric past. Naturalists in all fields of enquiry are interrogating nature to reveal the secrets of the wonderful phenomena of the living world, of which we are a part. And yet, whether it be from the imperfection of the human faculties, or from inherent difficulties in the subjects of study, the progress of discovery has been slow, and the results often meagre and unsatisfactory.

I would not for a moment disparage the labors of those bold, enquiring spirits of the past, to whom warm praise and gratitude are due. I honor the men who have loved Truth supremely, and sought her independently; even though I cannot accept their conclusions. The abuse of free enquiry should not induce us to stifle thought or shackle mental freedom, any more than the abuse of political liberty should induce us to prefer a return to personal despotism without free institutions.

Yet, it cannot be denied that the weakness and fallibility of the human mind have stamped themselves upon every subject of human investigation. In the various provinces of physical science, theories once

deemed indisputable have given way before more plausible speculations; and many inscrutable mysteries still baffle the keenest sagacity. But when we rise to contemplate the results of the researches of those who reject the light of Divine Revelation, in the higher spheres of thought, in their speculations respecting the existence and character of God, the relations of man to his Creator, his duty and his destiny—as the interest of the subject heightens, the obscurity grows deeper; and we see the acutest minds of the world groping in doubt and darkness, or drifting over a wide sea of unrest and uncertainty, without any fixed guiding star, by which they can steer into a harbor of safety. Amid all the dreams of poetry, the theories of speculative philosophy, and the discoveries of modern science, there is found no satisfying answer to the anxious questionings of the human spirit respecting man's present duty and future destiny. This irrepressible longing for truth can never be fully satisfied, till the soul trustfully turns from the misty shadows of earth to the unclouded light of heaven; and finds in those stars of hope and promise that beam out from the firmament of Divine truth, light for its guilty darkness, consolation for its aching sorrows, and immortal hope for its desolate despair.

You have sometimes seen a little child lost in a crowd, and crying bitterly for its mother. Though strangers may gather round it and speak soothing words to quiet its sobbing grief, yet all is in vain. It cannot be comforted, and there is no peace found till

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the weary little head is once more pillowed on its mother's breast, and the tumult of its childish grief is hushed by the gentle melody of a loving mother's voice. So, my brethren, there is, in the great deeps of the human soul, what David describes as the flesh and the heart crying out for the living God—a gloomy darkness that nothing can scatter but the beams of the Sun of Righteousness—a hunger which only the Bread of Life can satisfy—a sense of weakness and loneliness, that can only be removed by the conscious joy of communion with Christ—a restless, troubled conscience, which can only be calmed and comforted by "the peace of God which passeth understanding."

I know it is frequently alleged by the opponents of Christianity, that the Christian religion has prevented the progress of science, and opposed the diffusion of knowledge. But the apparent conflict between science and religion, which has sometimes been witnessed, has either been between what is a false theory in science and some religious truth, or between some scientific truth and an erroneous human addition to religion. Between religious truths and attested facts of science, there can be no contradiction. The apparent conflict between the representatives of religion and those of science has been the natural antagonism between the old ideas and the new—simply opposition to change. When the disciples of the Copernican system of astronomy were opposed by the adherents of the Ptolemaic theory, this was not religion opposing science; it was the old science battling against being dispossessed by the new

science—just as the adherents of old methods resist new inventions. So the controversy between the authorities of Rome and Galileo, was not between science and religion; but between the old false science and the new true science. Galileo was not an opponent of Christianity; but a devout believer in the Holy Scriptures, who certainly has as much right to be taken as a representative of Christianity as the intolerant ecclesiastics who condemned him.

It is neither fair nor truthful to take the organized antagonism of the tradition-bound Church of Rome to science, political freedom, and everything that rejects her unfounded pretensions, as a proof that the Christian religion, and the Protestant Churches are the enemies of science and progress. In reading some recent works on the conflict of science and religion, you might be led to think that all along the centuries the representatives of faith stood on one side, battling against the knowledge which science offered, and the representatives of unbelief upon the other side, fighting for science. Such a theory is squarely contradicted by the undeniable facts of history. Many of the most distinguished men of science, who have most widely extended the boundaries of knowledge, were devout Christians. Roger Bacon, the father of modern physical science, was a priest. So also was Copernicus, whose name is stamped on our modern system of astronomy. It was the sublime declaration of Kepler that in studying nature he was thinking God's thoughts after Him. Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir

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Humphrey Davy, Sir David Brewster, and Michael Faraday were all as much distinguished for their piety as for their learning and genius.

So far from it being true that the Christian religion has opposed science, or prevented the spread of knowledge, it has quickened and stimulated the intellect, as well as warmed and renewed the heart. Who has not seen cases where those who, up to their conversion, had been steeped in stolid ignorance, gave signs of awakening to a new intellectual life, and grew in knowledge as well as in grace, from that hour forward? The teaching of the truths of the Christian religion has been to many barbarous tribes like the breath of returning spring upon the frozen torpor of winter, giving them a new intellectual life, as well as salvation from sin. The countries where the Bible is most studied and honored are the countries which stand highest in knowledge, liberty, and social progress; and are to-day the vanguard of civilization and the hope of the coming ages.

We divide truths into different classes, such as mathematical, physical, moral, or religious, according to the subjects to which they relate. We may feel assured that "the truth" here spoken of by the Great Teacher is truth relating to God's character, and to man's character, duty, and destiny—in a word, those revelations of truth given by Himself in the gospel of His grace to make men wise unto salvation.

In this holy volume, divine light dispels our darkness, and we learn those great spiritual verities, which

the world by its unaided wisdom could never find out. Here is truth respecting the existence, character, and purpose of that Great Being "with whom we have to do," who is the supreme source of life and happiness. The simple fact that there is a Being, almighty in power, infinite in holiness, wisdom, and love, who is our Father and Sovereign, and to whom we must render an account of our stewardship at last, is a truth that cannot be fully grasped, without giving color and character to all our views of life and duty. The thoughts of the selfish and earthly mind respecting God are false and misleading. A man of low, sordid aims and desires cannot form any just conception of the motives of one who is inspired by noble and unselfish considerations. We constantly hear such men ascribing the good deeds of others to the mean motives with which they are most familiar. How much less can the enslaved human spirit, darkened and depraved by the love of sin, rise to any true conception of the holy and ever blessed God! Oh, how delightful for the weary and bewildered soul to turn from the dark labyrinths of human folly, and the mazy fancies and negations which vain men have substituted for the living and true God, to His written Word, where His character shines forth in all the ineffable beauty of perfect holiness; and yet where He is represented as bending over us with fatherly tenderness, to strengthen our weakness, wipe away our tears, and satisfy our souls with His mercy!

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himself. He finds himself in being, a creature of wonderful capacities, with contrary impulses struggling for mastery within him. He has no wisdom to find out the purpose of his being, or the means by which he may fulfil it. And to add to the difficulty, sin has darkened the light of heaven within him, and perverted his conceptions of himself. But in this book his condition, duty, and destiny are vividly portrayed. Not a partial and misleading picture, keeping out of sight his guilt and danger; but a true portrait of his dignity and degradation. He is a prodigal son, an ungrateful rebel; still there is mercy for him; and though he has sold for naught his title to the inheritance with the saints in light, he may receive it back, without money and without price, the gift of love divine; for "salvation, happiness, and heaven are all in Jesus' name." Here also is truth respecting duty and destiny. In this world, men adopt standards of duty which suit their selfish purposes, and call their cherished and profitable sins by pleasant names, which hide their real meanness and selfishness from their sight. But here is a standard of rectitude, that bends not to the passion and prejudice of a corrupt nature; but brands with divine condemnation every evil deed and thought. You may, by the low logic of the world, persuade yourself that your wrong is right, and your evil good; but "your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place."

Men have in all ages indulged in dreamy speculations respecting a future life; but by the Word of Truth a broad flood of light is shed upon the life beyond the grave. "Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel." The lowliest saint who by faith can read his title clear to mansions in the skies, can say with Paul: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

These inspiring truths are vindicated by the most convincing evidence. They have withstood the fierce storms and battles of centuries. No city has been so often besieged by hostile armies. No rock has been more frequently beaten by angry breakers. No enemies can be more strong and wily than those that have been vanquished in the past. And still these truths are the mightiest moral force in the world. Vast multitudes have tested the truth of the gospel in their own experience; and can say, "I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Its promises are true—they are the words of a covenant-keeping God. Its hopes are true—not like the meteoric flashes of earthly hope which end in despair. Its voices of warning are true—and shall be fulfilled against all who neglect the great salvation. The salvation of the gospel is a true salvation, yielding light for life's darkness, comfort for its sorrows, and victory over every foe.

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which ignores the great facts in the moral history of the world. The history of the Church in the world and the experience of God's people offer a triumphant testimony for the Divine truth of the Bible. Nothing but the power of the living God could have wrought out the deliverances and victories that have been witnessed in the history of the Church in the world. As we survey the victories of the past, we are compelled to say with wonder and gratitude, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.

The Holy Scriptures declare, "for the soul to be without knowledge is not good." All knowledge of truth strengthens the mind and enlarges its range of vision. We must beware of disparaging secular knowledge, even for the sake of exalting that which is sacred. Every province of God's vast empire displays His glory, and is worthy of the thoughtful study of His intelligent creatures. Considering man merely in his lower nature, it is important to know the laws of his physical being. His intellectual nature is still more worthy of study, and demands culture and development. It is, indeed, common to speak of the intellectual achievements of the high-priests of poetry, and the princes of science and philosophy, as the most convincing evidence of the dignity of man. No doubt it is a great step upward, when a mortal rises above the low delights of the senses, till the imagination is inspired by pictures of intellectual beauty; and the

reason wrestles with great questions which sharpen and strengthen the faculties of the mind. But this, grand as it is, is not the highest distinction of humanity. Man has a moral and spiritual side to his nature, and this, as Dr. Bushnell says, is his crowning glory; because through his moral and spiritual nature he apprehends God, has communion with Him, and is capable of being conformed to His moral image.

In these times of an indiscriminate idolatry of mere intellectual power, it is well to remember this,—to bear in mind that those whose lives are undying spiritual forces among men, influence us by their moral manhood, rather than by their endowments or acquirements. As we find what most fully answers to the craving of our human hearts in the moral character of God—in His mercy, righteousness, and truth—so we find the highest greatness of which our nature is capable in those human qualities that reflect the Divine goodness—"the greatness of the purified and regenerated, the enlarged and quickened affections, the steady and secure loyalty to what we ought to do"—in spite of temptation to recreancy and faithlessness. It must be evident, therefore, that the knowledge of truths related to man's higher capacities and spiritual nature is essential to qualify him to fulfil the great end of his being. Side by side with high mental culture there is often a starving of the religious side of the nature, which results in a benumbed conscience and a shrivelled heart. In the great work of preparing the young for the duties and battles of life, this

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thought should never be forgotten. They are not merely to have their physical nature developed, as if they were only beasts of burden. Neither are they to be regarded as simply intellectual machines, who are to be trained to solve mathematical problems or some other form of mental work. They are spiritual and immortal beings, capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying God on earth, and enjoying Him forever; and therefore the education of such beings should be in harmony with the work which God requires of them here, and the immortal destiny to which they are heirs.

Any knowledge, or any system of education which merely sharpens the intellect without improving the heart, is fatally one-sided and defective. The vastest stores of knowledge, and the highest intellectual culture, can give no sure promise of that true greatness of character, which consists in goodness and usefulness—if an enlightened and renewed conscience does not sway the sceptre of the soul, controlling and directing all its mighty and godlike energies to the achievement of what is "holy and just and good." Mere intellectual force, or culture, divorced from godliness and integrity, only gives its possessor greater power for evil. If the character be without truthfulness and moral courage,—benevolence to men and faith in God,—there may be greatness, but it is greatness in moral ruin. There may be energy of character, but it is the lawless energy of ungoverned passion, directing the whole life to false and fatal issues. There may be

brilliancy of genius, but it is the lurid and fitful gleams of an unholy flame, which consumes while it burns, and which will expire in life's greatest need, leaving the desolate spirit overpowered and bewildered with the darkness of a starless and eternal despair.

But what is meant by the knowledge of these truths which gives soul-freedom? First, it implies some just apprehension of the great central doctrines of the gospel. I know it has become very fashionable to disparage creeds and doctrinal beliefs. But if we have not right conceptions of the greatness, holiness, and mercy of God, we cannot cherish towards Him those feelings of reverence, trust, and love, without which we cannot worship Him acceptably. If we have no just views of our guilt and danger through sin, we cannot have a proper sense of our need of forgiveness and regeneration. If we are ignorant of the true character and work of Christ, or if we cherish some perverting misconception of Christ, which robs Him of the attributes which constitute Him an all-sufficient Saviour, we cannot trust in Him as "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

At the present time, when so many sneer at doctrinal preaching, and deny the value of belief in truth, in order that they may without hindrance substitute their fancies for the doctrines they reject, it becomes us as Christian teachers to hold fast the form of sound words: and to "earnestly contend for the faith that

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was once delivered unto the saints." Those who repeat, as if it were an unanswerable argument, Pope's words, "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right," should remember that if men have false notions of their own character and God's character, of their duty and their destiny, their lives cannot be in the right. Good principles are the roots from which good deeds grow. You might just as well expect blossoms and fruits without roots, as a righteous life without true principles and beliefs. Nevertheless, we must guard against assuming that our opinions and interpretations of Scripture are the unquestionable truth of God. It is very common for men to denounce those who cannot accept their particular interpretations of Scripture as rejectors of divine truth. There are many theories about Scripture, and many expositions, which the Scriptures themselves do not warrant.

But it should never be forgotten, either by preacher or people, that intellectual knowledge and belief of truth are but a means to a higher end; and become truly valuable only when instrumental in leading to a saving knowledge of Christ as our Saviour. The knowledge of truth in the head can never safely be substituted for the faith and love of Christ in the heart. To use an illustration from what we see in nature:—We know that the sun has only begun his work when he opens the gates of day, lifts the shadows of night from the hills, and bathes the mountain peaks in his golden radiance, till they rise from the darkness like minarets of fire. His beams must go down into

the misty valleys, and warm and animate the dull, frozen soil, before the earth will throb with life, or yield the rich fruits which reward the toil of the husbandman. So, it is not enough that the knowledge of the truth should enlighten the higher peaks of the mind—as the memory, the imagination, the understanding. It must go down into the dark deeps of the depraved heart, lighting up its spiritual gloom, and warming into a new life its cold and selfish affections, before the fruits of holiness will enrich and beautify the life. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The lives of thousands prove conclusively that the main facts, doctrines, and precepts of Christianity may receive the assent of the understanding, without transforming the life and character. It is only when these truths are implicitly received by a living faith, and applied to the heart by a power of the Holy Spirit, that they become the power of God unto salvation to those who receive them.

This difference between mere knowledge and saving faith cannot be better illustrated than by the different results they produce. A nominal Christian may be acquainted with the doctrine of human depravity all his life, and admit it as an article of his creed that all men are sinners; and yet it may never disturb his carnal security, nor change the selfish current of his life, no more than if he had never heard of it. Such a one may be familiar with what the gospel teaches respecting the work, character, and mission of Christ;

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and yet it may yield him neither peace nor consolation, because he has no true sense of his guilt and need of such a Saviour. But, let one who feels the sinfulness of his sin, and trembles at the condign penalties of God's broken law, believe with all his heart the blessed truth of justification by faith in Christ; and as he grasps the glorious fact that Christ is willing and "able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by Him," it thrills his soul like a new revelation from heaven, filling his whole being "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." An unsaved man may know what the Bible teaches respecting God, and yet He may seem afar off, and this knowledge yield neither strength nor consolation. But when God reveals Himself to a believing soul as a shield in danger and a light in darkness—when the trusting child of adoption apprehends by a living faith all that is meant by the Fatherhood of God—it is like the opening of a fountain in the desert to a fainting pilgrim. The weakest believer can say, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

No doubt, each one of us can remember when some truth, which in words was long familiar to us, became enriched with a profounder meaning, making a change as great as when a dry channel becomes a river of living, sparkling water. There are precious treasures of truth and love in God's word, that you can never appreciate till your eyes are unsealed, and your heart brought into living sympathy with the Spirit of Christ.

O, my friends, let me entreat you, rest not in the mere intellectual knowledge of the truth, without a personal experience of its power to renew and sanctify the soul. The very fact that you have been surrounded with Christian influences all your life increases your danger on this point. Of what value is the form without the power of godliness? What does it avail that you are familiar with the teaching of the gospel, if you have never been made the personal subject of the salvation which it offers? What does it avail that you know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, as long as you feel that He has not saved you from your sins?" What does it avail that you have read of heaven, and sung about heaven, with its triumphant songs and immortal joys, if you have no scriptural hope of eternal life, and no meetness for its holy companionship? If you do not know the truth in its sanctifying power on heart and life, your familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures and theology will only deepen your guilt, and sharpen the stings of guilty remorse, when you stand on the desolate shore of a hopeless eternity, compelled to wail out the doleful complaint: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"

III. THE FREEDOM WHICH THIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH BESTOWS.

No word has a more wonderful charm for men than liberty. Even when its meaning has been but imperfectly understood, it has thrilled the heart with a

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mysterious power, which proves that man was made for freedom, and not for any form of slavery. Dr. Guthrie, in one of his sermons, tells this touching incident:—One who had been a great traveller and had seen all the wonders of Europe, told him that near Niagara Falls he had seen the finest sight he had ever beheld. He was crossing from the American to the Canadian shore. The same boat carried a fugitive slave. The slave had burst his chain and fled. Guided northward by the polar star he threaded his way through tangled forests and poisonous swamps, outstripping the bloodhounds that bayed behind him. Now about to realize his long-cherished and fondest hopes, the swarthy negro stood in the bow of the boat, his large, black eyes intently fixed upon the shore. The boat nears the landing; but before she touches the shore, impatient to be free, he gathers up all his strength, bends for the spring, and vaulting into the air, by one glorious leap for liberty, he bounds upon the shore, and stands erect upon Canadian soil—a free man. We honor the men of all times who have laid down their lives fighting for civil and religious liberty. The names of the battle-fields, where patriots battled and bled rather than submit to some tyrant oppressor, are watchwords which retain undying power to stir the hearts of men to deeds of patriotic daring. The story of Britain's liberation of the slaves held in bondage in her colonies, will be told with pride when her Blenheims and Waterloos are forgotten. But, as the slavery from which the know-

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ledge of the truth gives freedom is worse than bodily or physical slavery, because it is the slavery of the divinest part of our nature, so this freedom which a saving knowledge of the truth bestows is a grander and more precious thing than bodily freedom, because it is soul-freedom—the freedom of the man's higher nature from the thralldom and the yoke of sin. We can only truly understand this liberty in the light of the slavery from which it delivers; as only he who has been immured in the dungeon knows the preciousness of liberty. From the slavery of ignorance of God, we are delivered by the Divine light which reveals the mercy of God in Christ. From the slavery of guilty fear the trusting penitent is made free, when by faith in Christ the joy of forgiveness scatters his desponding apprehensions of wrath to come, and fills his soul with holy peace. "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that by this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

From the slavery of covetousness, that binds so many in its iron fetters, there is deliverance by the knowledge of riches above what earth can grant, soul-satisfying, eternal, reserved in heaven for those who, like Moses, esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of earth. From the slavery of sinful habits Christ gives freedom, by imparting strength to resist and vanquish all the serpents of lust that have so long coiled around the

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enslaved spirit of the servants of Satan.* Many are abject slaves of worldly opinion. From this we are delivered by a truer knowledge of our obligations to God, in whose immediate sight all our work is done. From the slavery of sinful pleasure by the knowledge of higher, purer, and more enduring joys.

“ As by the light of opening day,
The stars are all concealed,
So earthly pleasures fade away.
When Jesus is revealed.”

And from the slavery of every form of selfishness God's freemen are delivered, by the love of God shed abroad in the heart, giving sympathy for suffering, and breaking the bonds of selfishness by “the expulsive power of a new affection.” If there are any present who have not a personal experience of this soul-freedom, it is not because there is any want of power or adaptation in the religion of Christ; but because you have neglected this great salvation.

Curran, the Irish orator, speaking of the power of British liberty on the slave who came to Britain's shores, says: “No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced;—no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom an Indian or an African sun may have burned upon him;—no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down;—no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery;—the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his

* Rom. viii. 2.

soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of the chains that burst from around him; he stands—redeemed and disenthralled by the genius of British liberty.”

We can utter a nobler boast to the honor of Christ our Redeemer. No matter by what falsehoods the mind may have been bewildered—no matter from what depths of guilt and misery the enslaved sinner may come—no matter how far he may have wandered from his Father’s house—no matter how dark his turpitude or how galling and heavy his chains—as soon as he comes with true contrition and trusting faith, to the cross of Christ, he receives forgiveness of sin, blessed freedom from its cruel bondage, communion with the Father and the Son, and the inspiring hope of a glorious immortality.

Brethren, in these times of prevailing worldliness, formalism, priestly ritualism, and bold infidelity, we require an intelligent piety, based upon close and reverent study of Divine truth—nobler illustrations of a Christian life—a larger measure of the freedom of those whom the truth makes free; that we may more fitly show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The vows of God are upon you. “Quit ye like men; be strong.” Be “valiant for the truth upon the earth.”

“ We for Christ our Master stand,
Lights in a benighted land;
We our dying Lord confess,
We are Jesus’ witnesses.”

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SERMON II.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE—A GUARANTEE TO CHRIS-
TIAN OF PERFECT SAFETY, AND A CAUSE
TO THEM FOR GRATEFUL AND
TRIUMPHANT JOY.

BY REV. GEORGE S. MILLIGAN, LL.D.,
Superintendent of Schools, St. John's, Newfoundland.

—
"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—*Matt. x. 30.*

THE subject of Divine Providence is both interest-
ing and important; but it is also wonderfully
profound and often deeply mysterious. Hence it is
utterly disregarded by some, and grievously misinter-
preted by others. As a doctrine it stands opposed to
Atheism, which, denying the existence of God, cannot,
of course, recognize His sovereign rule or paternal
supervision. It is equally opposed to every type and
form of Fatalism and Materialism, whether presented
in the stern garb of the Stoics and Epicureans or of
Buddhists. It is equally opposed to the less re-
pulsive and pretentious teachings of certain schools
of modern thought, boasting of some names emi-
nent in science, but of no authority on matters of
religion, as by confession they are "without Christ,"

having never consented to submit to actual experiment, to "taste and see that the Lord is good," and, as a consequence, are without the personal experience of a holy life, which afford convincing testimony to all who have believed unto righteousness, that in cordially embracing Christianity, they have not followed cunningly-devised fables—for "if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." By all holding materialistic views, whether positively denying the Bible to be a divine revelation, or accepting of it in an accommodated sense, whereby they eliminate all notions of the supernatural and miraculous, our world is but as a great clock wound up by its Creator so soon as made, and left to run its course without care or hindrance; or it is as a complex mechanism or system of involution, holding within itself numberless germs or possibilities of change, which by some necessary but unexplained process of evolution are developing in succession higher conditions of things and superior orders of beings. Such theories of philosophy, falsely so called, detract greatly from the true glory of that infinitely wise and good Being that upholdeth "all things by the word of His power;" for do they not in effect say, that the mind that originated this marvellous universe is incapable of superintending its details, that the arm that launched an infinite number of orbs into space lacks nerve to control them—nay, more, that the great Father of us all, who has implanted beyond doubt in the human breast parental love, is Himself

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devoid of *paternal* attributes, and has therefore con-
signed creatures, who are His offspring, to helpless
and remediless orphanage? Thanks be to God for the
Bible—the sure word of prophecy which, based and
communicated in accord with the idea of Divine Pro-
vidence, teaches and illustrates by numerous striking
examples this encouraging and consolatory doctrine.
To state the case in general terms, I remark, if study-
ing it in the light of that “lamp” which mercy took
down from off the everlasting throne, we shall find it
impossible to be blind fatalists, looking upon every-
thing falling out by chance, seeing “the lot is cast
into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the
Lord,”* and yet, while recognizing the divine element
as extending to most minute objects as truly as to the
most exalted orders of beings, and in human affairs as
comprehending things apparently trivial as truly as
those deemed of great importance, we shall not fail to
see that God reigns in Providence without destroying
man’s moral accountability, and how, while specially
caring for the righteous, many may be those afflictions
for disciplinary purposes of which He gives a sanctified
use for a season, and respecting which He promises
He will in due course deliver them out of them all.
Enthroned above all, where none can effectually say,
What doest thou? comprehending all conditions and
all possibilities, and having at His command an infini-
tude of resources for justice or mercy, or for wisdom
or love to apply, He *so* acts in the moral government

* Prov. xvi. 33.

of the world that He may uphold virtue and counteract vice. Therefore, "happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."

My brethren, if we can but catch the full inspiration of the text and context, so as to realize God to be the refuge of His people, our song shall be as jubilant and assuring as when the inspired penman, voicing an experience of enraptured joy and unqualified confidence, exclaimed, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." In the further pursuance of our subject, we may more carefully consider the nature and extent of Divine Providence, and, by way of application, some of the lessons suggested for our instruction and consolation. The term Providence literally means foresight; but practically it is timely care, implying the use of necessary measures to effect a result foreseen as both possible and desirable, or the hand anticipating what the eye foresees to be requisite. Hence, by Divine Providence may be understood that gracious provision which God makes, without interruption or exception, to secure His own glory and the good of all His creatures. It is sometimes described as general, when represented by the wonderfully diversified but regularly recurring operations of nature, so called. It

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is sometimes described as special, when exercised to meet some apparent exigency occurring in the experience of any of His people. This distinction is of little practical value, as a general Providence must embrace numberless details to meet the ordinary needs of the world, while what may be regarded as a special Providence is neither more nor less than a manifestation of the same wisdom, love, and power, evinced in the maintenance of what is regular and apparently constant. Hence, discarding this distinction as unimportant, I remark :

I. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS BOTH COMPREHENSIVE AND MINUTE.

It is perfect in its operations, being universal in its range, and adapted to every state and condition of His creatures. This I take to be the idea set forth by the text and its connection. Said the Master, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are numbered." Arguing from the less to the greater, and confining His argument mainly to living objects, by universal consent of more consequence than the inanimate, He starts with very insignificant things as types of the most significant, and by a simple and conclusive train of argument He showed that, as God cared for what was but trivial in worth, *much* more would He care for what was of real importance in the scale of being, and *still* more would He have due

regard for His disciples or followers. We may do well to catch the full force of the convincing and inexorable logic of the Great Teacher, in the passage immediately before us. Mark then, beloved brethren, it is as if He had said, that if these irrational and insignificant creatures, two of which bring a mere trifle in the market, cannot pass the boundaries of life without your Father, how much more in the case of *you*—even the hairs of whose head are numbered—are *ye* not to be reckoned as of very great account with God? and, therefore, *ye* need not fear them who, when permitted, can at most kill the body, "but are not able to kill the soul." Observe, not only are *ye*, as human beings, of more value than many sparrows, but as My disciples and witnesses—nay, more, My friends and brethren, *ye* are more precious than all other human beings. Seeing that, in your particular case, not only the *head*, representing life, is precious, but everything connected with its comfort or ornamentation—every single hair of the head—is under His preservation and according to His appointment. Now, if we bear in mind that a hair of the head is a very insignificant part of the human system, without any nerves of sensation, so that one may cut, or bruise, or burn it without pain, and that yet even to this God's superintending care extends, and, if to this, then by inference to everything of greater consequence or more directly affecting human life, how fraught with comfort are these words of the blessed Jesus, which inculcate that the Providence of God

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is so comprehensive as to extend to the very minutiae of experience! In like manner the Apostle James, while reasoning against the folly and presumption of dependent creatures, who live by mere sufferance, and yet ignore God in their calculations and plans, describes His Providence as not only supplying all the power of human action, but as determining the sphere and extent in which it shall be possible. In other words, Divine Providence extends to the entirety of human life, and comprises within its range human possibilities, whether they be small or great, or whatever may be their character or mutual relations. Hear his striking remonstrance and testimony in his Epistle, fourth chapter, thirteenth to fifteenth verses: "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even as a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say," recognizing God in Providence as the Spirit within all the wheels, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Let the following, from many similar passages, confirm the particularity as well as universality of His Providence: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."* "For of Him, and through Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."†

* Psa. cxxvii. 1.

† Rom. xi. 36.

Hence the inference that Divine Providence comprehends everything, and omits nothing, and is therefore both comprehensive and minute.

II. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS CONDUCTED, IN THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, UPON A PLAN THAT FULLY RECOGNIZES MAN'S FREE AGENCY, WITHOUT DESTROYING OR INTERRUPTING THE DIVINE CONTROL.

The study of this profound subject on this head will often be wrapped in deep mystery. I may not always be able to reconcile results in Providence, as following the free exercise of the human and divine forces; but, nevertheless, I may have ample ground on which to rest an intelligent and unwavering faith. As in the management of a ship, I may find sails set in different positions and directions, all of which are regulated according to the behests of the master, by a crew well acquainted with their duties, but who to a novice in these matters appear to be tugging in all, *even* opposite directions, and may see that the vessel, amid some clamor on board and the roar of elements around her, moves steadily on her course, true to the action of her helm, which is controlled by the will of the commanding officer; or as in the control of some novel and complex piece of mechanism, about whose action, in its several parts, I may know very little, and yet that little reveal to me wheels or cogs running in all directions, some horizontally and some vertically, and a great variety of rods and pistons, of straps and

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belts, giving somehow, to me unknown, a connection of the whole, which I may further discover is acted upon by a motive power, applied and controlled by the hand of a single engineer, for the accomplishment of what seems at last a simple object,—even so, in Divine Providence, I may discover divine power exerted everywhere around me, and yet see ample room for human purpose and effort, or man's moral freedom of action, without which divine power would sink to absolute fate. Knowing *but* in part, I may discern certain points of contact at which these separate and independent forces meet and act; and yet, seeing through a glass darkly, there may be numberless connections which I cannot trace between the human and divine elements, that reduce them to a harmonious whole, so that without degrading man by taking from him moral freedom or the essentials of true manhood, or robbing God by representing Him as incapable of directing and governing moral creatures, in accordance with principles of moral law, I gladly accept of a mode of divine government far higher and more glorious than what involves physical law only,—one which bears sway over intelligent and accountable creatures. Scripture clearly recognizes the existence of both elements, and the *human*, both in thought and action, as affording the very materials, so to speak, on which divine power lays hold. Thus saith the Preacher, "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps,"* where human devising

* Prov. xvi. 9.

is combined with divine direction. Again, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths,"* where we have a most encouraging promise of full Providential direction upon the exercise of submission and faith, and the practice of cheerful obedience. While, then, some may in effect say, "Who is the Almighty that we should serve him, or what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?" and while at times poor, weak, faint-hearted, doubting Christians may be ready to ask, what possible effect their feeble prayers or tiny efforts can have upon the apparently regular order of things, whether in the maintenance of human life or the securing of success in the varied pursuits of business, or the promotion of the divine glory in the earth, I answer, whatever human reasoning may teach in this matter, it is in accord with divine philosophy not only to take into account the laws of temperance and industry, but as *truly* the prayer of faith. Hence it is written, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."† As forcibly illustrated by St. James, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It is quite conceivable, that without disturbing in the smallest degree the harmony of natural forces, which, be it remembered, however, are completely subservient to the divine will, that could as readily suspend or undo them as at first create them, the great God and our Father may honor

* Prov. iii. 6.

† Phil. iv. 6.

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the prayer of faith by answering it as truly without recourse to miracle as with it. By an interposition at a point unseen, He may start a long train of natural sequences, which, separately or in combination, may lead up to a result which may be quite as satisfactory and as truly divine as if brought about by direct or immediate miracle. Dr. Chalmers has well said: "For aught we know, there is a chain of causes, reverting from the sphere of our immediate observation up to the invisible throne, and the Almighty might strike any one of the links removed from human sight, and thereby operate through every intervening link to accomplish any particular purpose within the range of our experience, and there be no knowledge of His interference but by His blessed results." Illustrations of divine interposition, without interference with human free agency, abound in the sacred Scriptures. Take the case of Joseph and his brethren. A time of famine is approaching, and Jacob's family will require to be fed, and indeed the whole population in Egypt. God in Providence determines it shall be done—but how? Shall He rain down manna, or give them the bread of heaven to eat? He could have done so as readily *then* as afterwards, when He fed Israel in the desert. But He does not usually work by miracles—ordinary sequences He will make suffice, and so He permits human possibilities to have free course. Deep-rooted jealousy fires the breasts of brethren with minds *small* enough to be envious of their father's love, and *mean* enough, as

the selfish are prone to be, not to admire the purposes of Heaven, unless their own ends are to be answered. Was God responsible for this human free action? Certainly not. He can never be the author nor an accomplice in such wickedness. He is *too* good to sanction any other feelings among brethren than those of love; *too* noble to be leagued with men whose hearts breathed the malice of hell. Nevertheless, "He that sitteth in the heavens and laughs while the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing"—the Lord who holds in derision the kings of the earth setting themselves, and the rulers taking "counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed"—undertook, without interfering with man's free agency, to glorify Himself in Providence. You know the sequel. Certain results followed, which, to shortsighted mortals who cannot penetrate the veil, look like necessary links in the chain to effect the divine purpose, such as Joseph's being sold into Egypt and his unjust imprisonment there, with which God could have neither sympathy nor part, yet such cruel and base conduct is foreseen and overruled, so that by being sold into Egypt, Joseph was sent by God "to preserve life," and by stepping down into a prison he was in *the way* to be exalted to a position of honor, only second to that of Pharaoh, in all Egypt, where he became a mighty factor for good on behalf of God's covenant people, and in fulfilment of God's mercy to the world at large.

Again, in studying the life of Moses we shall find a

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rare illustration of Divine Providence. Take the first episode in his illustrious career. God's people are feeling sorely the hand of oppression, and the day of their deliverance draweth nigh. Human possibilities are permitted to take their ordinary course: and here we shall see that Satan sometimes "overleaps the mark," and that "evil is often kept within bounds by exceeding all bounds." You know the occasion and fact of an unnatural edict, respecting all the male children born of the Hebrews; how its cruelty was too great for the midwives to execute, and, especially, that it proved too hard for the womanly heart of the daughter of the despot, when appealed to by the helplessness and beauty of the "goodly child," whose simple eloquence became overpowering, as "the babe wept," and led her to be the saviour of the infant, but, unconsciously, in the Providence of God, to help forward those gracious purposes which the stern practice of her royal father had striven to overthrow. It is not difficult to trace the human thread through the whole of the divine coil. A mother's love, rich in human expedients, has chosen the fitting time, and means to co-operate with the divine, and at the call of the princess by the sister-guard, makes haste to engage her services to be the nurse of her own boy, and, probably, through like prudential strategy, in future years to be the means of communicating to him the knowledge of the true God, and of the promises made to the fathers, the learning of which sanctified his subsequent acquisition of all the learning of the Egyptians, and prepared him in due

time for his manifold office of Leader, Legislator, and Reformer of Israel. Look at the operations of Providence later on in his history, and particularly in connection with his great life-work. Moses has now come to years, and chooses to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Eager to avenge the oppressor, he smote the Egyptian; but soon he discovers his people are not ripe for emancipation, and, though zealously affected, he is himself without that maturity of character which his great mission will require. Hence, compelled to flee from the presence of Pharaoh, God leads him away into the wilderness, that by devout meditation and communion with Him, he might become meet, as the chief instrument employed, not only to bring Israel out of Egypt, but also to give to the world a religious system, infinitely superior to anything preceding it, because of the sublimity of its doctrines, the purity of its morals, and the spirituality and grandeur of its worship, and only second to Christianity, to which it was to be as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. At length the goodly child, by the tyrant death-doomed, but by the concurrence of the human and divine elements, saved, educated, and fully trained, gets ready for his life-work, breaks the oppressor's rod, and sets Israel free; bringing about, in the Providence of God, the marvellous facts of the Exodus, which is the best possible illustration that God, while pleased, when there is *a needs be*, to make use of the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, disdains not to avail Him-

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self of human instrumentality, and so leads His flock by the hands of Moses and Aaron.

III. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS MORALLY DISCRIMINATIVE IN ITS ISSUES, BUT THROUGHOUT ITS ADMINISTRATION GRACIOUS AND PARENTAL.

Virtue is usually its own, and often its immediate, reward; and vice is frequently followed by its direct penalty. That men may be led to say, "Verily there is a God that judgeth on the earth," in His Providence He often deals out rewards to them that please Him, and retribution to them that sin against Him. Because the Egyptian midwives feared God, He "dealt well with them," and "made them houses;" because of the hospitality of the Shunamite to the prophet, God rewarded her with a son, and subsequently restored him to life. Some, like Abraham, have entertained angels unawares, and thereby secured great blessings. On the other hand, Haman erected a gallows for Mordecai, and he himself and ten sons were hanged on it. To Ahab it was said, "Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine;" and, as we know, the threat was literally executed. We do not claim that in this life God finally discriminates between the righteous and the wicked, else there would be no need of a general judgment; but that He interposes sufficiently to show that the Judge of all the earth shall do right, and that when the affairs of this world shall be wound up, "it shall be well with the righteous,"

whereas, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished."

Meantime the administration of His Providence is gracious and paternal. Every dispensation of it to individuals, or the world at large, is identified with the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in some way is designed to subserve the interests of His Church. This important and comforting truth underlies all Scripture teaching. Let us try to apprehend the fulness of its meaning. Just as sometimes we have looked into the nursery and various apartments of a well-appointed home, by the invitation of friends, to see the preparations of paternal affection for the happiness and welfare of the family circle; or as we have at other times, with deep interest, examined the departments of a high-class boarding school, and observed the ample means of accommodation, and particularly the arrangements and facilities for imparting a sound and liberal education, so let us give heed to what holy men of God, who spoke as moved by the Holy Ghost, reveal to us respecting Divine Providence, and our conclusion must be that it is both gracious and paternal. I will cite but a few passages: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours: and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."* No words, methinks, could represent a more dignified or enviable condition than that which is here declared to belong to the children

* 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

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of God. Is importance to be attached to any particular agency, or any privilege associated with any distinct leadership? Observe, dear Christian friends, all agents are yours, and all operations which they conduct are going on for your sake; not only so, the *world* is yours—preserved on your account and directed, through all the varied orders of things in it, to serve His gracious purposes for His people—a vast theatre for the display of Divine wisdom, power, and love, in which even in the inorganic, and still more in the organic, there is so much to admire in the countless arrangements, made in evident anticipation of the necessities or comforts of the human race, and a grand exhibition building, in which the great Creator exposes to the admiring eye of every student of nature wondrous machinery, running with utmost regularity, so simple and yet so perfect in all its adaptations, that the rarest productions of human mechanism, when brought into comparison, are at best poor imitations that have no glory because of the glory that excelleth. Hear it, ye that are Christ's, life with its fullest possibilities and influences—in all its aspects and experiences—is yours; death, too—whenever or however it comes, with its sting, which is sin, already taken away—its terror has been abolished, and *now* it is yours, as the avenue through which you will pass to the rest remaining for the people of God, and as the medium or process through which the light of mortal life shall melt away, to be immediately followed by the glory of eternal life, that saying shall come to pass, "Death is

swallowed up in victory." Moreover, "things present or things to come" are yours—everything existing or transpiring that comes within your cognizance or conception, or that transcends your knowledge and imagination; everything affecting the prosperity or adversity of communities, great and small alike, through all the spheres of industry or channels of trade and commerce; everything bearing directly or indirectly upon the political destiny of empires or states, through the ambition of men, the agitations of society, or the plots of revolutionists, with wars and rumours of wars; everything that is now classed among the facts of history, or shall be among the events of prophecy. How grand the climax! All are yours, animate and inanimate—whatever the relation they may seem to bear to us—all are identified with the manifestation of God's grace, and subserve the best interests of His children. Take but one text more: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."* Grasp, my brethren, this passage, as far as possible, that ye may see its fulness; and while learning that it not only confirms all things as yours, but declares that all things are working together for your good, let a deep sense of your obligation fire your hearts with eternal gratitude. Men do often many things for their harm, through their ignorance or perverseness; mark, however, that in this worldwide estate, provided and bequeathed by our Father to His Church, there is not one thing in the entire

* Rom. viii. 28.

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catalogue but, in its proper connection, is working good for them that love God. All may be labelled *for good*; nevertheless, as in an extensive laboratory, there may not be one thing without its appropriate use, or that is really harmful or dangerous to the skilled scientist, and yet, for the sake of preserving from risk and accident the ignorant or unwary, many bottles need to be labelled poisons, and, when some of the curious machines are in motion, visitors and the uninitiated require to be told to stand clear and keep hands off, so Christians must use things as not abusing them; loving God they will be guided by His counsel, and, whatever may be the present aspect, all things shall bring about the Divine glory and their supreme good. Heavy personal affliction, and a weight of trial and sorrow may befall us, and yet we should strive to be patient, and even learn to rejoice in tribulation; seeing that by an overruling Providence, as in the case of Job, all our trouble and sorrow shall work together for our good, and, like him, the Lord may turn our captivity and, through His presence as our portion, bless "the latter end more than the beginning." Evil may be permitted to betide the Church for a season, for her humiliation and discipline, but God will never leave her nor forsake her. As the Book of Esther teaches, actions, when prompted by men for their own selfish ends, shall in due course be turned to the profit of His people; for He has written, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My

peace be removed." Study your own lives, my brethren, and you will readily see yourselves children of Providence, and your individual experience a sermon and commentary of unequalled power; or, if you prefer, investigate the history of your own Methodist Church, and, as you trace its progress from the day of small and feeble things to the present, you will be ready to exclaim: What hath God wrought! and from the lowest depths of your heart you will add, How gracious and parental is Divine Providence!

To apply the subject, let us learn the following lessons:

- (1) *We should beware of all harsh and hasty conclusions respecting the dispensations of Divine Providence.*

Some persons, overlooking the clear evidence which is presented in both nature and revelation, or, through prejudice, being blinded to both, openly deny or practically discern not that the Lord reigneth, and shall reign in His Providence until He hath put all enemies under His feet. Others from rash interpretation of God's dealings towards them or theirs have been ready to cry out, "all these things are against me," or in the time of severe temptation, when thick darkness has been around them, have been disposed to curse God and die. Let us remember that our conceptions may be erroneous, because at most but partial, and that it becomes us therefore to be slow to challenge His wisdom, seeing that "unsearchable are His

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judgments and His ways past finding out," and to be ready in the depths of humility to confess after the most rigid and prolonged investigations of His works, "Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?" Still less should we doubt His faithfulness or love. Life is probationary and designed to test our faith and develop all the graces of a pure, noble Christian character. Now, as the child's judgment would often be at fault if left to choose for himself, and the parent must cross the inclination of the child he loves by administering wholesome discipline, or by insisting upon needful self-restraint, or the taking of wholesome exercise, or as the wise instructor must lead forward gradually to the abstruse and difficult, and not forever confine the attention of his pupils to elements requiring little exercise of mind, remembering what costs little is usually worth little, or as the safe physician must prescribe in accordance with the necessities of his patients rather than their tastes, so in leading us up to perfect vigor of spiritual health, in training us for heavenly places on earth and fellowship with the redeemed in heaven, in preparing us, in a word, for a high and noble destiny above, the good Physician, the great Teacher, and our Father deserves and demands at all times our prompt and unswerving faith in His unchanging love. His Providence will be intelligible when in eternity read backwards. "What I do, *thou* knowest not *now*," is His loving assurance to you troubled, sorrowing, dis-

tressed Christian, "but thou shalt know hereafter.' Let us then, if needs be, in patience wait for the glad-some revelation of what now is veiled in mystery.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

- (2) *The review of the entire subject should fill Christians with strong consolation, and inspire them with indomitable courage.*

How comforting to the husbandman if he could be assured that he may plough, and harrow, and sow his fields, and though the crops of others fail and famine to many follow, that his returns would be abundant, and he should have bread enough and to spare. Toiling Christian! struggling hard, it may be, by honest industry and frugality to provide for a numerous and dependent offspring, "Trust in the Lord and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Consider the ravens, and behold the lilies, and from these learn to take no *anxious* thought for your life what ye shall eat; neither for the body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat and the body more than raiment. He whose granary never fails, and whose resources are infinite, says the very hairs of your head are all numbered. How consoling to the soldier when entering upon a campaign, if he could be assured that he should go unharmed from battlefield to battlefield, and no missile of death reach

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him, though mingling in the hot strife of war, where he should hear the cannons' deafening roar and feel the very ground on which he stands rock to and fro like a drunken man, while the bullets whiz around him in every direction, and heaps of slain testify that thousands have fallen at his side. Heroic Christian, battling for God and truth, fear not to obey the voice that calls you to arms; for though in view of the great and stalwart enemies you must face and conquer, you may be tempted to ask who will bring you into the strong city, let thy motto be, "Duty first, consequences next," and in all things you will be more than conqueror. So far as the successful accomplishment of that probation which makes life important, is concerned, the working out of your salvation through grace, with fear and trembling, and the following after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, you may say, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." Your times are in His hand. Life, in any case, whether longer or shorter, will be yours, and you will be immortal till your work be done; then, having fought a good fight, and proved that greater is He that is with you than all that can be against you, death will be yours, and then yours will be to wear a crown of life forever. How comforting to the sailor if, when called to go out on a perilous voyage, he could be insured against all damage and loss, not merely of property but of life; if he could be informed that though the winds should blow in wildest fury and lash the sea into boiling

foam, and in the commotion of tempest many gallant ships go down, his little barque would travel unharmed in all weather and under all skies. Dear fellow-voyagers to the haven of eternal rest, crossing the tempestuous sea of life, on which multitudes have made shipwreck, we shall sail safely in the good old ship of the gospel; with Jesus our captain and our Father at the helm we shall be wafted onward by the breezes of grace until we make the eternal shore. Fear not, only believe—let your faith be such as worketh by love—let love be perfect. Then perfect love will cast out fear, and with heaven begun below, or God your portion now and forever, you will rejoice evermore that the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

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SERMON III.

THE NATURE AND DUTY OF GIVING.

BY THE REV. G. WEBBER,

Late of the Bible Christian Church.

“Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”—*Phil. iv. 17.*

A DISINTERESTED spirit enters far more largely into the work of the Christian ministry than many persons suppose. And when the minister has to deal with the most uncongenial subjects, it is often the most prominently displayed; though we are aware that some entertain a contrary view of the ministerial work and spirit, regarding it as selfish and self-loving, and thus rob its appeals of their point and power and persuasiveness, and so by disbelief ward off what by argument they could never gainsay. Still we claim that every true gospel minister may honestly adopt the motto of the Apostle, “Not because I desire a gift.” Perhaps a sermon on the nature and duty of giving is about the last where many will recognize the presence of a disinterested soul, and yet it is possibly the one in which the minister will truly manifest the most of that feeling. I cannot conceive of a faithful minister

of Christ Jesus standing in the sacred desk to talk and plead for self, but rather to declare what he believes to be "the whole counsel of God," and what he judges to be calculated to instruct and profit and bless those who hear him. The subject before us is not the most popular, because the Churches of this day have not an enlarged measure of that feeling which animated the Apostolic Church, when believers sold their possessions and laid them at the apostles' feet. But notwithstanding its unpopularity, let us spend a little time together considering the plan, and duty, and motives of Christian giving. We will not indulge in eulogistic descriptions or pauperizing appeals by setting forth instances of magnificent generosity, or portraying scenes of privation and poverty. Setting aside all individual considerations, let us look at the broad and inclusive principle presented in this singularly appropriate text of Scripture.

I. LET US LOOK AT THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

We are pained to believe that the Church of Christ is very deficient on this point of duty, probably arising either from error or ignorance or both combined, and in consequence the cause of the gospel suffers materially. I know this remark could be met by the enumeration of a noble host whose contributions are on a large scale, and of the equally noble generosity of many whose smaller gifts are the cheerful fruit of privation and self-denial. But we speak not now of an individual or a Church, but to the whole Church,

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and therefore look at the evil in principle and in its widest possible application. I need scarcely say that we repudiate State endowments, and fervently hope that the day is not distant when this vestige of the dark ages—this unholy compromise—shall be swept away from every part of the earth before an enlightened public opinion, and a free and growing state of spirituality and power in the Churches, so that religion may stand forth as free and unfettered as when her Divine Master ushered her into the world under apostolic preaching and precept. For there is, or at least should be, always sufficient vitality and grace in the Christian Church for self-independent support.

(1) *Christian giving should be done systematically.*

There is, perhaps, nothing which man is capable of doing which could not be done better by conforming to some system. There is a sort of person who has a detestation of all method and rule and laxity, but you seldom find him to prosper. He who insists so strongly on the spontaneousness of devotion that he will not attend public worship because of its weekly occurrence, nor establish a family altar because it prescribes duties to be observed every day, nor sanction grace before meals because it formalizes gratitude, is apt to have very little devotion or reverence of any kind. Method is good, even in the modes of the mind and the habits of daily intercourse. No doubt rule and method may be carried too far. There is a wild, inimitable sweetness in changefulness and spontaneousness. The rill,

so tiny in June, would lose its interest if it did not swell into a torrent in the spring, and the morning bird, if it sang all the year round at the same hour, would have little more melody than the cry of a sweep. Spontaneousness is good, order is good, and the two are most exquisitely combined throughout nature, and their union, if rightly managed, is productive of efficiency and pleasantness in human affairs. At first sight it might appear that benevolence is one of those things from which all manner and method should be eliminated. We grant that the motive of benevolence should always be spontaneous—an unconstrained delight in doing good, a generous impulse from an unselfish heart; but the manner of giving may be most advantageously systematized, and there is no province of human activity into which it is more necessary to introduce system than into that of Christian giving. If you consider the vast interests and agencies which depend upon the liberality of the Christian community, you will see the force of our remark. We do not dwell upon the importance, which eternity alone can measure, of maintaining the agents and ordinances of religion in every land, but take the matter on its manward, every-day side. How many thousands of ministers, of missionaries, of true Christian workers are now dependent for subsistence upon the benevolence of the Churches. And there is a terrible regularity in the daily recurrence of the wants of these multitudes which cannot be effectually met by occasional and spasmodic liberality. The wants can be adequately, honor-

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ably, safely supplied only in one way—by systematic giving. But the support of evangelistic agencies is only one of many demands made upon Christian benevolence in this day. Hospitals, asylums, orphanages, which constitute the glory of our age and humanity, are dependent upon public liberality, and it is essential that all these institutions should obtain their supplies with regularity, because, by possessing an ample, assured, calculable income, the operations and activity of these institutions may be more successfully promoted. If the supplies are irregular, the cause is placed in a position of uncertainty and anxiety. And in addition to the immense advantage that would accrue to the aggregate Christian agencies from systematic contribution, we conceive that giving after that manner, being more calm, rational, and Scriptural, is more acceptable to God and honorable to the giver. Then, we urge you, have a distinct, well-defined system, and to it strictly and everywhere adhere.

(2) *Christian giving should be proportionate.*

That there are great defects in the charity of the Christian Church, notwithstanding the indications of improvement which appear, is too manifest. It waits for impulse and appeal; it lacks plan and principle and self-denial and proportion. It is by no means equal to the demands of the gospel, or the wealth of the Christian Church. The great current of Christian property is not yet withdrawn from its worldly channels. The scanty rills of benevolence which at present

water the garden of the Lord, and the ingenuity and effort employed to bring them there, compared with the tide of selfish expenditure which holds on its original course, reminds one of the slender rivulets which the inhabitants of the East raise from a river by mechanical force to irrigate their thirsty gardens, while the mighty current, without any sensible diminution of its waters, goes sweeping on to the ocean. By unwearied diligence the art of acquiring money is well-nigh perfect. Nor can we think of the many ways in which it is squandered or consumed upon artificial wants, without deploring that the art of wasting money should be so complete. But the art of *using* it so as to make it produce the greatest amount of good still remains to be practised. This, indeed, the gospel alone can teach. In the early ages of the Church the heavenly art of embalming property was both known and practised; but, like the process of another embalming, it has long been practically lost. Not that its principles have been unknown; these have always presented themselves on the pages of truth in lines of living light. Consequently, now, when the applications of its principle are pointed out, and the urgent necessity for their practical expression enforced, we begin to feel how far the Church has drifted from the course of duty, and how difficult it will be to effect a return. And, indeed, return never will be accomplished until we go back to the oracles of God and conform thereto, renouncing the godless idea of many that property is irresponsibly our own,

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and feel that we hold our possessions as subordinate agents for God, and that we are bound to consult His will in the use of it. That as He is the supreme owner of both it and us, we are as bound to mark the Divine directions in the use of our money as in the salvation of our souls; and the moment we consult the Divine word, a plan is presented to us at once clear, simple, perfect: "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by in store, and give as God has prospered." In this beautiful rule of Christian finance you see that there should be *a proper proportion between income and gift*. Upon the *first day* (God's own day), with undeviating regularity, all should give *as God hath prospered them*. The Lord sits over against the treasury, and giving is a sacred matter between Him and you. Determine on the proportion before God and as in the sight of God, which should never be less in principle than what is inferable from the standard and examples of Holy Scripture, *which would be at least one-tenth*. And having determined the proportion, pay it regularly and cheerfully over to God. The beauty of this rule of proportion is, that it burdens none and puts the same honor upon all; for all give, and no one, in God's eye, gives more than another; for each one consecrates to God an amount in exact proportion to what God has sent him. Giving, too, in proportion to benefits received, secures the operation on sound, religious principles. The giver is not excited by the unhealthy stimulus of worldly rivalry by giving so much that he may not appear a worse man

than his neighbor, but, called to listen to the voice of truth, he gives as in the sight of God, and the deed is, therefore, an act of Christian service, springing from Scriptural motive, and taking its position on the same holy ground as prayer and praise. When this rule (which is as applicable to the widow's mite as the rich man's thousands) is uniformly adopted by the Christian Church, there will be no more complaining in our streets or pause in the great work of Christian aggression, for all that is needed for every Christian purpose will be readily forthcoming.

(3) *Christian giving should be regarded as a plain and prescribed duty.*

The fewest thoughts will render this duty obvious to all. Just think who it is enables you to give. Moses very correctly expressed it: "The Lord thy God, He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth." God gives us all things; strictly and truly *He is the only donor in the universe.* He gives us possessions, or the opportunities to get them. It is He who gives us health, and success, and comforts, and makes our ventures successful and our business prosperous. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above." If God did not give, and continue to give, the brooks would soon dry, and the rain soon cease, and the sunshine soon fail, and the flowers soon fade, and the forest soon decay, and the earth soon be barren, and want and ruin become universal. Now, He who hath loaded you with benefits commands you to

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give *freely* of your substance to Him. The possessions which He hath given you in stewardship, and for the right use of which He holds you responsible, you are to consecrate to His work and cause, and you cannot withhold from God what He hath instructed you to give, without contempt of duty, and sin.

(4) *Christian giving is an honored privilege.*

Giving is a work most people perform as economically as possible, and too many regret the necessity of having to give at all. They rarely think that each should do something, and all do what they can, and having done their utmost, it should be considered a privilege. Is it not a privilege rather than an irksome toil to feed a starving man, or to rescue a drowning man, or to reclaim a fallen man, or to befriend a destitute man, or to bless a ruined man, or to save a dying man? And is it not a privilege, surpassing war, to aid the cause of truth, swell the trophies of the cross, accelerate the spread of the gospel, feed famishing millions, heal the world's curse, and raise the withered arm of paralyzed humanity to its healing Saviour? Such being the object of Christian benevolence, to give to it should be regarded as a precious privilege; not an opportunity to be allowed to pass by giving the barest trifle in a grudging spirit, but an opportunity we should eagerly embrace and always improve. And such should be our conviction of privilege that if no appeal was made to us we should voluntarily present our offerings to

the Lord, and, if necessary, seek out the most worthy and deserving objects to relieve and assist. Giving in this way should be regarded as it was by the Macedonian believers when they besought Paul, with much entreaty, to accept their gifts.

II. THE FRUIT OR REWARD OF CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY.

(1) *The Divine approval and promise.*

The eye of God marks intently our gifts for Him. He it is who sends the applicant to you. He notices with what feelings you receive the application, and He observes the motives and rules by which you contribute. He who had His eye on the poor widow, casting in her mite into the treasury of the temple, has His eye on your heart, your property, your gifts today. And it is no wonder if that eye flashes with displeasure when some of His professed followers cast in their donations, seeing that there is such a disproportion between the profession and the gift. And in giving there has been a wilful forgetfulness of the fact that they are accountable for all they possess and how they possessed it; for all they spend and how they spend it; for all they give and how they give it; for all they keep and why they keep it. And the Lord wishes all His children to be like Himself, to give to him that needeth. He hates covetousness, He despises the niggardly, He abhors the selfish; therefore He cannot approve of the illiberal man. But it is stated: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," "The liberal soul

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shall be made fat," "The liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand;" "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over;" "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward." It is because we sow sparingly that we reap sparingly; it is because we give so little that we have so little enjoyment over what we keep back. The Lord not only blesses what we give, when given aright, but He blesses what we keep also, and everything is to us just what God makes it. If, therefore, we withhold what we ought to give, we shall find that he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth gold with increase. The love of money will pierce its possessor with many sorrows. If you lay by what you ought to lay out, God's curse must be upon it. And it may be as fuel for your children's lusts, a temptation to allure them into paths of sin and ruin; it is better to give to God's needy ones, and live under the smile of God, than to withhold with the barn full but the soul empty; with wealth increasing, and the soul starving, until at last it shall be said: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

(2) *Soul satisfaction.*

It is universally true that it is more blessed to give than to receive. There is a felt satisfaction at the consciousness of duty performed, whilst there is a corresponding misanthropy felt by those who evade God's

tribute money ; and there is not only an individual satisfaction, but also the enjoyment of doing good and the reciprocity of feeling which generosity always evokes. Wherever we have given, there will be a return of benefits conferred ; wherever we have blessed others, we shall be blessed also ; wherever we have rayed out joy and sunshine, a reflected sunbeam will rest upon us ; wherever we have made the desert to rejoice or the barren waste fruitful or the thirsty land pools of water, we shall reap a glorious return. If we have fed the hungry or clothed the naked or delivered the poor and needy when he crieth, the blessing of him that was ready to perish will come upon us. There is a subdued and hallowed pleasure in helping and blessing men, and in furthering the cause of God and the objects of Christian benevolence throughout the world.

(3) *There will be eternal fruit in the world to come.*

How vast and varied and full the fruit will be in the gathering times of heaven ! How abundant the harvest will be in the grand harvest-home, we cannot say ; but we are assured that not a cup of cold water shall lose its reward. Oh, what sublime reminiscences will be those of the man who nobly and generously used his stewardship for the Divine glory ! Rich visions of rescued souls, of reared churches, of ministerial helpings, of timely deliverances ! A widow's heart gladdened, an orphan clothed and comforted, a school sustained, a missionary assisted, Bibles circu-

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lated, tracts scattered broadcast, nations enlightened, despoticisms dethroned, iniquities brought to a perpetual end, perishing ones plucked as a brand from the burning, fainting ones cheered on their way, beggars made to sit at the bridal banquet, polluted ones made whiter than snow, the street arab made a king and priest to God forever;—all, all will mount up to swell the soul with rapture and fill eternity with gladness. Then the privilege of adding one jewel to the Saviour's crown, of winning the poorest soul on earth, will enhance and enlarge the joys of heaven; for, while every saint shall have one heaven, some shall have more. Those who have helped to fill its mansions shall possess many heavens in one, and in proportion to the good they have done, and the help they have rendered, shall their crowns shine and their cup overflow. I beseech you, think of the fruit that shall abound to your account, and then plant that you may gather, sow that you may reap, toil that you may rest, and give that you may lay up treasures in heaven that shall abound and be forever abounding to your account.

I beseech you to weigh well the duty of Christian liberality, and give to the full amount of your means as Christian men. Is it honest to lay up what we ought to lay out? Is it faithful to appropriate another's property to our own uses? Ask these questions to your consciences in the light of eternity, and if you wish to please Christ, or check the spread of evil, or cheer the sick-room, or encourage God's ministers, and secure your own final salvation, attend to the injunc-

tion, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Rise above the meanness of parsimony or the prodigality of waste. Spare your indulgences, and, if need be, make sacrifices, that the Lord's house may be built, remembering that he that gives not lives not.

"The sun gives ever, so the earth :
 What it can give, so much 'tis worth ;
 The ocean gives in many ways,
 Gives paths, gives fishes, rivers, bays ;
 So, too, the air—it gives us breath—
 When it stops giving, in comes death.
 Give, give, be always giving ;
 Who gives not, is not living ;
 The more we give,
 The more we live.
 God's love hath in us wealth upheaped—
 Only by giving it is reaped ;
 The body withers, and the mind,
 If pent in by selfish rind.
 Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give pelf,
 Give love, give tears, and give thyself.
 Give, give, be always giving ;
 Who gives not, is not living ;
 The more we give,
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SERMON IV.

A MISSIONARY SERMON ON GOSPEL ASPECTS OF
THE UNITY OF THE RACE.—ACTS vii. 26.

BY REV. WILLIAM HANSFORD,
Ex-President of the Montreal Conference.

THE Christian Church is a spiritual army, engaged in a grand crusade against sin, and even "the Man of Sin." Commissioned and commanded by "the Captain of our salvation," it is the animating purpose of this army and the chief design of the campaign, to effect the spiritual conquest of the world; so that its kingdoms may all "become kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." A marvellous enterprize! the very expression of Divine philanthropy! Worthy, indeed, of its heavenly Commander, and therefore most worthy of the consecrated ambition and prowess of every "good soldier of Jesus Christ!"

Let it also be remembered that the Holy Bible is the Church's armory, containing the very weapons and ammunition required in this holy war! "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual." The glorious truths of the gospel, when properly

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wielded, are well known to be mighty through God for assaulting and demolishing the strongholds of Satan—those monstrous and malignant systems of falsehood through which the prince of darkness has deceived and oppressed the nations for ages!

Just observe, in passing, a specimen or two of these peculiar weapons, and the special purpose they are made to serve. Here we have, first, the sublime doctrine of the Unity of God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." This is the grand eternal truth which constitutes the foundation of all religion. It is also the mighty and suitable weapon employed in smiting to destruction all the old Polytheistic idolatries of the world, together with the manifold and debasing forms of Fetichism now reigning among all the barbarous races. In like manner the pernicious errors of priestcraft, of demon-worship and saint-worship, are being successfully assailed in various lands by proclaiming the all-sufficient high-priesthood of the Divine Redeemer, the Scriptures declaring that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."*

But this armory of the Church also contains some weapons specially designed for attacking and destroying those systems of social and political despotism whose accursed chains are still fettering and galling so many tribes and nations. We refer, of course, to those oppressive and barbarizing systems of caste and

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slavery which have flourished in all ages and among all nations, and which are exerting a terrific and cruel sway even yet; although they are now evidently doomed, if not dying. Like Alpine barriers to the progress of an army, these world-wide forms of fraud and exclusiveness have obstructed, and are even now obstructing, both the religious and social regeneration of mankind.

Now, the one special weapon employed in smiting and shivering these colossal forms of delusion and oppression is the great emancipating and elevating truth which the text proclaims, viz., that "God hath made of one all nations of men." For this grand announcement signifies that Christianity avowedly aims, not only at the spiritual salvation of the slaves of sin, but also at the social uplifting and civilization of the whole human race. In fact, you here have the true principle of human equality and fraternity! And nowhere except in our Christian Scriptures is the brotherhood of man clearly taught and enforced.

This precious article in the Charter of Redemption was most appropriately proclaimed by the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and in that celebrated sermon on Mars' Hill, in which he explained and vindicated those "strange things" which had just reached the ears of the polished idolaters of Athens. According to Paul's teaching, therefore, the doctrine of the text is really an integral part of that same blessed gospel which exhibits "Jesus and the Resurrection"—that wondrous philosophy of salvation which explains the fall

of man through "the first Adam," and the redemption of man by "the second Adam, the Lord from heaven."

In this remarkable passage we have three topics suggested, very closely related to each other, and well adapted to expand our thoughts and excite our holiest sympathies.

Here we have—

I. THE NATURAL UNITY OF OUR RACE.

By this we mean sameness of nature resulting from sameness of origin; that Patagonians and Esquimaux, Whites and Negroes, Chinese and Indians, are not distinct races, but branches of the same original stock, and equally the descendants of Adam and Eve. Now, this doctrine has been extensively ridiculed, at least practically repudiated, by all the advocates and upholders of slavery and caste. In ancient times the popular creed directly encouraged the traffic in human beings; so that not only insolvent debtors and captives taken in war, but even the toiling classes generally in most countries were enthralled as serfs or slaves, and thus treated as if they belonged to a different and inferior race. Even in the latter part of this boastful nineteenth century the twin evils of caste and slavery are zealously cherished in many parts of the world, especially among the Hindoos, the Mohammedans, and the barbarous tribes of Africa. As if society could not otherwise be safely and naturally organized! Nor ought it to be forgotten that there are professedly Christian statesmen yet living who

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but a few years ago announced to the world their determination to set up a new confederation of Christian States for the avowed purpose of making their "peculiar institution" the *corner-stone* of the Confederacy! What marvel that these modern Babel-builders were more than thwarted and confounded in their audacious attempt.

In opposing these monstrous forms of oppression, and in demolishing their ancient stronghold, the old gospel weapons must be relied on still. For the rights of man will never be completely secured until the teachers and rulers of the nations shall practically acknowledge the doctrine of our text, viz., that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." But what are the proofs that ought to satisfy all men of the soundness of this doctrine?

1. *We appeal to the Holy Scriptures*, whose testimony in reference to the unity of our race is most clear and satisfactory. Here we learn that the antediluvians were descendants of the first human pair, to whom the Creator had said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." The fanciful hypothesis concerning a supposed pre-Adamic race as lingering on the earth and mingling with the posterity of Adam, we can regard only as "the baseless fabric of a vision." Besides, we are assured in the 9th of Genesis, verses 18 and 19, that "the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and of them was the whole earth overspread." Again, in chapter tenth, verse thirty-two, it is said: "These are

the *families* of the sons of Noah, and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the Flood." And with these statements agree many other explicit testimonies, too numerous for quotation, in other books of the Bible; while not even a single clear hint is given anywhere in these Sacred Oracles at variance with the passages I have cited. So that on this subject the testimony of the inspired writers is emphatically unanimous.

2. *It is a well-known fact that this doctrine is corroborated by the unanimous voice of tradition.*—All nations, *e.g.*, possess traditions of the Deluge. Memories of that terrible event were mystically enshrined in the elaborate systems of "initiation" and religious rites which were practised by all the ancient Pagan nations, including even the Mexicans and the Peruvians! Our North American Indians also have traditions respecting a great ancestor of their own, who escaped a watery grave by means of an immense canoe, while all his cotemporaries were drowned.

Now, just as the Christian sacraments and traditions, enshrined in the usages and literatures of the Christian Churches, imply and prove the common origin and substantial unity of all the various types of Christianity, so also do the Pagan symbolism and traditions referred to imply the common origin of all these various tribes and nations.

3. *This doctrine is further elucidated and confirmed by some well-established scientific facts.*—Anatomy, physiology, and psychology have all been forced into

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the discussion of this question, and their testimonies are now widely published. But instead of proving the fundamental reality of caste distinctions, and thus serving the cause of skepticism and slavery, these sciences reveal such well-marked resemblances between the so-called different races of men, that it seems utterly irrational for even scientists to doubt their sameness of nature and origin. Take, *e.g.*, the peculiar composition of human blood. How easily and convincingly a modern chemist can explain and prove, in a court of justice, when required, the difference between human and mere animal blood; while no such difference has been shown between the vital fluid of the fair Caucasian and that which circulates in the veins of his African brother. Variations in form and complexion have indeed been taken as proofs that Ethiopian, and Indian, and Caucasian cannot have descended from the same original stock. Yet now the counter-proofs are seen and felt to be so overwhelmingly strong and convincing, that the doctrine of the text is admitted by all our leading naturalists.

Nor ought we to overlook the manifest affinity and original unity of languages. Philologists have long since been able to reduce the multitudinous languages of earth into a few orderly classes, and these classes including especially the so-called Indo-European family of languages, they are now able to trace up to some common Aryan tongue; and thus they reach the conclusion, that in the distant past "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech;" the *whole earth*

then consisting of a single community, and that community speaking as its mother-tongue the antediluvian language preserved in the family of the patriarch Noah.

Now, while such scientific evidences as we have barely indicated, sufficiently prove the doctrine in question, it must be admitted that this doctrine alone will account for the facts!—the dictates of reason agreeing in this case with the facts of experience. And, moreover, this doctrine offers the true and only solution of two other great problems which have perplexed so many serious thinkers: (1) It explains the origin of that universal state of moral depravity in which all nations are alike involved, with its attendant universal consciousness of guilt. (2) It points out the true origin of sacrificial worship, which men have always and everywhere practised. So amazingly clear and helpful is the light with which this one grand truth illumines the moral and religious history of man.

The text will now suggest—

II. THE COMMON INTEREST OF OUR RACE IN THE PROVISIONS OF REDEMPTION.

There are two facts strikingly obvious:

1. *That unity of race implies our common need of redemption*, as well as a common capacity for receiving and enjoying its benefits. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." "For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Thus "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men, to con-

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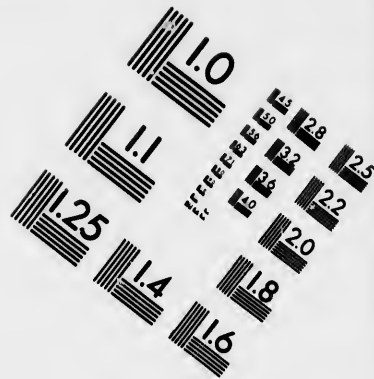
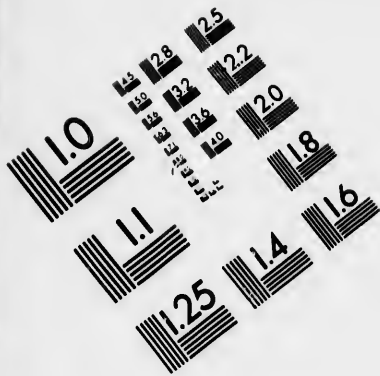
demnation"—*i.e.*, all the descendants of Adam have inherited the loathsome taint of sin, with all its sad concomitants of suffering and death. But as the moral state and history of mankind show us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that "through the offence of one many are dead"—*i.e.*, "dead in trespasses and sin;" so also it is evident—

2. *That salvation for Adam and his fallen posterity* must have been provided for all men. In the light of Scripture, as explained by science, we see that all human beings are included in the race, and that the race existed potentially in "the first man Adam." The same light shows us that redeeming grace, experienced and enjoyed by our first parents, must have been intended and adapted to benefit their offspring—the provisions of redemption being thus co-extensive with the evils inherited through the Fall.

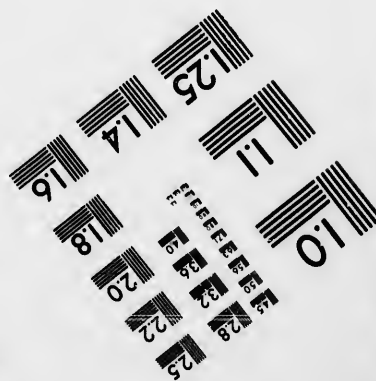
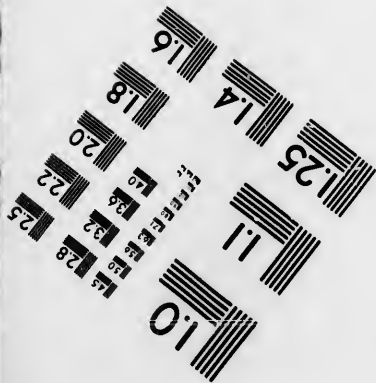
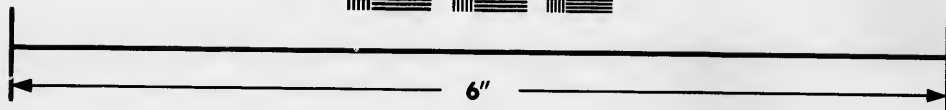
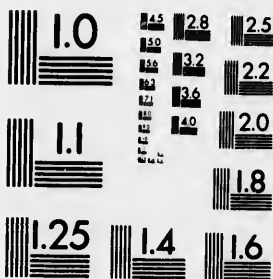
But as the redemption of our race through the incarnation, the atonement, and the royal high-priesthood of the Father's only-begotten Son, is a matter of divine revelation exclusively, let us never forget that He who "hath made of one blood all nations of men," and who willeth not the death of a sinner," has verily made our Redeemer a "ransom for all"—"laying upon him the iniquity of us all." Oh, blessed tidings! "God spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all;" "Made him to be a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." But if in supreme mercy and wisdom salvation has thus been provided







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for all, to be freely and lovingly offered to all, then, surely, this must signify that all types and classes of men are capable of realizing and enjoying its spiritual and everlasting benefits. Indeed, this rational inference is satisfactorily illustrated and confirmed by actual experience; for the marvellous successes of Christian missions are so triumphantly fulfilling the sublime prophecy exhibited in the apocalyptic vision, that the Churches of Christ even now include a vast multitude of precious, blood-washed ones "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Study the reports of our Missionary Societies—the records of which contain many things that even angels may desire to look into. Glance over the yearly-extending field of gospel aggression and victory, and mark the corresponding additions to the trophies of grace, and you will not only enrich your own experience as Christians, but you are sure to feel more clearly and be more deeply impressed by the grand thrilling truth, that all the various tribes and nations possess a common *interest* in the provisions of the gospel redemption, and the same general capacity for enjoying its manifold blessings.

Thus we are conducted to the practically important topic which yet remains to be considered, *i.e.* :

III. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE RACE.

Observe closely the speech and bearing of St. Paul while addressing the learned men of Athens, and you

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must realize that the very faithfulness of the Apostle expresses the responsibility of the inspired ambassador. He is evidently conscious of his Divine commission, and utters himself as one who must give an account.

Now, this consciousness of responsibility ought to pervade and animate the entire Christian Church. All who possess the precious truth of Christ, especially all who experience its saving power, are obligated to impart it to others. This duty, indeed, becomes a privilege to all intelligent Christians. Like Andrew and Philip, when they discovered Jesus to be the Christ, they are eager to communicate the rapturous tidings. But the Redeemer's disciples are not only to be moved by their sympathies—by Christ-like yearnings for the salvation of the world—they ought also to feel constrained by a strong commanding conviction of duty and accountability. Saul of Tarsus, *e. g.*, was no sooner converted to the faith he had so desperately striven to destroy, than he at once began to preach Christ in the synagogues of his countrymen, forever afterwards exulting and glorying in his apostolic commission as a life-long honor and joy! Yet this same great-hearted man was wont, on suitable occasions, to utter his sense of responsibility in the strongest forms of speech—avowing himself a "debtor to all men," and exclaiming, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." And it is this union of conscious obligation with sympathy that constitutes the grand force now impelling the Church to pray and give and toil for the world's evangelization.

The Missionary cause, of course, appeals to our love of enterprize and our denominational ambition, as well as our grateful love for the Redeemer and our pity for the perishing. Yet we question whether any or all of these considerations would prove sufficient to sustain an Evangelistic campaign, world-wide in its aims, and continuing for centuries, if the Church militant were not, at the same time, inspired and nerved for heroic endeavor by an overmastering sense of responsibility.

Now, these yearnings and endeavors to christianize the whole world are such as to exhibit the Christian Church in contrast with every other religious organization. The apostles of Buddhism limited their sympathies and endeavors to the southern and eastern parts of the Asiatic continent. Even Mahometanism seems to have forgotten its ancient dream of universal conquest! The earnest disciples of Jesus, however, have been for ages regarding "the world as their parish," and carrying the tidings of redemption to "all the ends of the earth!" Why this contrast? Whence arises this imperative feeling of duty to preach Christ to the world and to convert the world to Christ? The answer suggested by our text is a threefold one:

1. *This Christian sense of responsibility springs out of the conscious brotherhood of man.*—We cannot intelligently hold the doctrine that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men," without realizing that all varieties of men are brothers. It is the very nature and design of this doctrine to beget in men a feeling of common kinship and mutual interest. Indeed, as

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Christians, with the gospel according to Paul set before us, we not only believe that all nations of men are related to the first Adam by natural descent, and that our common origin explains our common depravity and universal need of salvation; we believe just as firmly that all men are related to the second Adam through His amazing and condescending grace in becoming a man, an actual member of the human family, in order that He might procure and offer us a "common salvation." But if we fully believe that all men are brothers—that we all share in the common evils of the Fall, and likewise in that compassionating, incarnate Love which bore the iniquities of us all—how can any of us experience "so great salvation" and yet avoid all effort and all sense of obligation to help and save others? Do not the very instincts of our common nature, and the laws and usages of nations, constrain and oblige us to share our food with the starving, and to save the imperilled lives of our fellows at the risk of our own? Again,

2. The responsibility of the Church in relation to the world is most positively and authoritatively set forth in the special instructions of our risen Lord. These oft-quoted instructions cannot be too seriously pondered. His apostles and messengers are commanded to preach the gospel of "repentance and remission of sins in his name unto all the nations." "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations," says the Master, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teach-

ing them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Such is the great commission. And to prosecute it successfully the Church needs to experience incessantly repeated baptisms of the Holy Ghost! For all efforts at soul-saving and christianizing mankind ought to be put forth in the very spirit of the Divine Philanthropist Himself, "who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Nor must we close without reminding you—

3. That the successive opening of new fields for Missionary enterprise, and the constantly growing resources of Christian nations, are really a succession of Providential and earnest appeals to the sympathy and conscience of the Church, and intended to quicken and intensify its sense of responsibility. Paul in a vision heard "the Macedonian cry," and eagerly responded. Never were such calls so numerous as now, and never more imperative. The enslaved and wretched population of heathendom are looking towards us with beseeching eyes! The Church's opportunities, therefore, for spreading the glad tidings are greater now than ever before. It is gloriously true that already seventy Protestant Missionary Societies are annually expending about seven millions of dollars in sustaining thousands of missionaries to the heathen world. Yet such a supply must seem painfully inadequate and stinted when compared with the vast demand! If the existence of distress is in itself an appeal for help; if the great Chicago fire, *e.g.*, could

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instantly arouse the practical sympathy of other American cities, and even of cities beyond the seas; and the terrible famines in Ireland could call forth the pity and charity of the whole English-speaking race, oh, with what unstinting generosity and ever-swelling tide of liberality ought the Christians of Britain and America to pour forth their treasures and multiply their agencies for the moral and political emancipation and uplifting of the world! To His privileged followers the Master is now saying, "Freely ye have received: freely give." To retain and enjoy their rich heritage of freedom and fellowship, His people must lovingly and jealously share it with others.

Fellow-Christians! Fellow-soldiers! let us realize as we ought the grandeur of our mission. The enslaved nations and tribes of mankind are invoking our aid! Not only the vast empires of China, India, and Japan, but the rude tribes of Africa, of the South Sea Islands, and even of the wilds of America. For Providence is now placing the Chinese, as well as Africans and Indians at our very doors! And though we call them by foreign names, yet are we bound to regard them all as our own brothers and sisters, all redeemed by the same "precious blood," and all capable of experiencing the same gospel grace. Is it "masterly inactivity" that is demanded of us? No! no! Our Divine Captain commands us to advance—to press forward "into all the world," offering "liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that

are bound." O be it our joy as well as our duty to obey this command! Let us prosecute this holy war! Instead of faltering in the presence of discouragements, let the heroic words and examples of fallen comrades inspire to deeds of faith and self-sacrifice. By the wants and woes of our great human brotherhood, and by the gracious commands of our Divine Redeemer and Captain, let us hold aloft the red-cross banner! And remembering that the conflict of ages must yet issue in a glorious and eternal triumph, let us all acquit ourselves as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

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SERMON V.

DIVINE REVELATION OF THE CREATION.

REV. NATHANIEL BURWASH, S. T. D.,

*Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Professor of Biblical and
Systematic Theology.*

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—*Gen. i. 1.*

THE treatise from which these short and simple, yet most sublime words are taken is, without doubt, the first-born of literature. It is short, consisting of forty-six couplets of Hebrew poetry, divided into seven strophes by the refrain: "There was an evening, there was a morning, a first," "a second," etc., "day." As to the nature of this treatise, it cannot be a history, *i.e.*, a record of events as the result of human observation, inasmuch as there was no human eye-witness to record the events to which he refers. It must, therefore, be either a Divine Revelation, unfolding to man the past as prophecy unfolds to him the future, and therefore subject to laws of interpretation similar to those which guide us in the interpretation of prophecy; or else it is the result of the lost scientific research of a past age; or it is a work of fiction—call it a myth, allegory, or poem, as you will. We can conceive of no alternative other than these. The last is excluded by the wonderful harmony which exists

between this document and all that we are able to glean of the world's origin elsewhere. To suppose that a man, guided simply by the flight of imagination, would light upon a scheme of the order and progress of the world's origin, so true to all our ascertained facts, is to indulge in the most improbable of all theories. But was there any lost science, a geology of pre-historic ages, which may have guided some early sage to conclusions so nearly akin to those of modern science? We cannot, of course, say that such a thing was impossible. But, certainly, the probabilities are altogether against it. And only men who are determined to object to the possibility of Divine Revelation, at all hazards, have been bold enough to propose such an account. Presently we shall see reason to believe that this ancient poem of Creation passed from the lips of Adam himself, through the line of patriarchs down to the time of Moses, and that by him it was incorporated in his Book of Genesis, or Origins. If so, then certainly the theory of a lost geology belonging to pre-historic man is excluded; for at this early period the world-wide investigations necessary for such a science were not yet possible. We are driven back, then, to the first alternative. This document comes to us as a God-given knowledge of the world's origin. The Bible opens with a chapter which bears on its very face the most certain marks of Divine origin.

A Divine Revelation: To whom was it made?—Either to Moses, or to Adam, or to one of the line of patriarchs between. Let us see if there is any light to be had

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on this question. The concluding verses of the poem describe the institution of the Sabbath, the seventh day of rest. They describe this institution as the sequel of the work of creation; and they sanction the institution by the high example of God Himself, whom they describe as resting on a seventh day, after six great days of work. Evidently, then, this revelation and the institution of the Sabbath are contemporaneous, for one manifest object of the form of this revelation is to enforce the Sabbath by the highest of all sanctions. Is the Sabbath Mosaic or Adamic? If the latter, there is every probability that this revelation was given to Adam at the institution of the Sabbath. Passing by the facts, that in the Decalogue the Sabbath is a "remember," not a new command; that immediately on leaving Egypt the Sabbath was observed prior to the laws of Sinai, and that the Sabbath appears to be referred to in the history of Jacob, and again of Noah, we have in this old document itself evidence that the Sabbath was instituted immediately at man's creation. If the Sabbath and the composition of this document were of Mosaic origin, the concluding verses should read thus: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And now God hath blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." But not so reads the Hebrew. It is not "And now," *i.e.*, in our time, "God hath blessed," etc., but "And then," *i.e.*, at

the time of creation, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." The tense is not the present-perfect, referring to a thing which has just taken place, but the historical-consecutive tense, implying that the sanctifying of the Sabbath took place in immediate historical connection with the work of creation. And, if the Sabbath was sanctified and blessed immediately after the creation of man, then would it appear that this revelation of the world's origin, one prominent object of which is to enforce that sanctity by the highest of all sanctions, was made at this same time; and, if so, to Father Adam himself, and by him thrown into this poetic form, and transmitted as a sacred hymn from generation to generation of his descendants. For this reason I have ventured to call it the first-born of all literature.

A Divine Revelation to Adam—How was it given?
—The revelations both of the Old Testament and the New, resolve themselves into two forms, the *word* and the *vision*. They are addressed to the representative faculty as a picture of events, an inward panorama passing before the mind of the prophet, or to the logical faculties in the form of consecutive discourse. In the one case, the things are revealed which the prophet describes in his own language. In the other case, the revelation comes clothed in the very words which give it utterance. Let us look at two examples. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake

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all nations, and the desire," etc.* (Compare with this, Rev. xvi. 1. etc.) Now, the characteristic distinction of these two forms of revelation is this, that the vision clothes itself in the form of a narrative—a description of the things seen—whereas the word speaks directly in the form of exhortation, command, etc. Judged by this criterion, this revelation was given in vision, and the words before us are the form in which the human intellect, perhaps, years afterward, clothed the things once seen in vision, and indelibly stamped on the memory. The vision may have been given as almost the first conscious experience of the new-made man in answer to the questionings of his spirit, What am I? whence came I? But the language in which it is clothed manifests a somewhat extended observation of nature, and corresponding development of human language; and hence the composition of the poem in which the vision of creation is described and has been transmitted to us may have taken place long subsequent to the vision itself.

A Divine Revelation to Adam in vision, and by him cast into poetic form and transmitted to his posterity.—Now it might be very entertaining to follow this most ancient seer in this primal vision, seen in the morning twilight of human history, but this we shall not attempt. You will find the vision sketched in modern geological terms, and by a master-hand, in Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks*, and there you can read and enjoy it at your leisure. But we wish

principally, this evening, to ask the all-important question concerning this revelation, What is its object? what does it *teach*? It has spoken its simple and sublime words in the ears of at least two hundred generations of Adam's posterity. It inspired in the mind of Seth the religion which made his children the sons of God. It taught Enoch to walk with the God who created heaven and earth. It sustained the faith of Noah when the earth seemed to be returning to its primeval chaos. It taught Abraham to see God beyond the stars of the firmament, whence he heard the word of promise, "So shall thy seed be," and David's psalm of creation, and Isaiah's lofty poem of the universe, and Job's sublime investigation of the footsteps of the Almighty, and Dante's and Milton's sublimest strains have all alike been borrowed from the primeval poem of Father Adam. All have gone up to this fountain-well, on the very summit of the hill of truth, to drink, and have perfectly or imperfectly imbibed its lessons. What are they? and, not less important, What are they not? For in our day, if we would give the pure knowledge to be derived from this original revelation of God to man, we must, first of all, divest ourselves of a thousand misconceptions which human fancy has added to this vision of God.

Then let us look at the negative first.

I. WHAT THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT TEACH.

It does not teach science. Science seeks three things: facts, their order, and their relations, as cause

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and effect. Now this chapter refers to some great facts concerning the world's origin. It outlines a grand historical order in the progress of these facts. It seems to glance at some natural agencies or causes in occurrence of these facts. Now in all these we may look for a *harmony* of science with revelation. But the grand mistake of men in every age has been to mistake the object of this revelation to be the gratification of intellectual curiosity; and hence it has been tortured, on the one hand, into teaching the crudest and most vulgar of magical cosmogonies, and, on the other hand, into an awkward presentation of the most modern geological theories. John Milton made this mistake, and has led the whole English-speaking Protestant world into a pragmatic conception of the world's creation, utterly at variance with all modern science. And many modern harmonizers of science and revelation have made the same mistake, and have found in each day's work the most minute counterpart of some particular epoch or period of modern geology.

What, then, is the relation of this vision to science? Here we have presented the orderly progress of the world's formation as the plan and work of God, and in its relation to Him. Science presents the orderly progress of the world's formation in relation to second causes. Now, according to the teaching of the Bible, these two relations are perfectly consistent with each other. God does not disdain to use second causes. They are but the mode in which His power works. And

second causes do not exclude God ; in fact, they derive all their efficiency from Him. The Bible, for instance, says that God "maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust;" and yet in other parts of the Bible we find surprisingly clear conceptions of the second causes and laws by which these ordinary phenomena of nature are effected and governed. There is no conflict between science and the Bible arising from the diversity of standpoint from which they view the world's origin. The higher point of view is the relation to God, the lower is the second cause, but the second cause is but the *second* cause—is but the hand of God. So far from the position of Genesis being in conflict with that of science in this respect, we find even here unmistakable references to the fact that second causes were employed in the world's formation: "Let the earth cause to be green," "Let the waters swarm," etc. But the Bible only incidentally glances at the second causes. The entire field of second causes it leaves to the investigations of science. They do not interfere with its point of view, but their presentation is not necessary for it.

But there is one common ground covered by science and Genesis, and there, if anywhere, we must look for conflict or harmony. They both refer to *an order* of successive steps in the world's formation. Now, it is evident that whether we view this order as the plan of God, or as the evolution of second causes, the *order* remains the same—with, however, this single differ-

ence, the order is nearer, visible, in relation to the question in Genesis or is it the thro is, "The or responds record i sophical It is bot authorsh page of does not divine or II. Bu man's des answer, th *foundatio* manifeste natural o Him, and closely th the elemen tions to th universal

ence, that the higher point of view will behold the order in its *grand outlines*, the lower, and in that sense nearer, in its *more minute details*. But, with this proviso, we put the question at the only point where the relations of science and Genesis to each other render the question pertinent, Is the general order of creation in Genesis the same with that presented by science, or is it at variance? And the answer from at least the three most eminent authorities on this continent is, "The order is the same." Says Prof. Dana, "The order of events in the Scripture cosmogony corresponds essentially with that given by geology." "The record in the Bible is therefore profoundly philosophical in the scheme of creation which it presents. It is both true and divine. It is a declaration of authorship, both of creation and the Bible, on the first page of the sacred volume." The record before us does not teach science, but amazes us, and proves its divine origin by its harmony with science.

II. But if this revelation is not given to satisfy man's desire for intelligence, what is its purpose? We answer, the same as that of all revelation, *to lay the foundation of religion*. For this purpose hath God manifested Himself in both the natural and the supernatural order, that man might know Him, worship Him, and enjoy His favor. Now, if we examine closely the document before us, we shall find all the elements of such knowledge of God, of His relations to the universe and to man, as should serve for a universal key for the interpretation of nature and

providence, as they, to the daily life of man, shewed forth His handiwork and declared His glory. Let us suppose the newly-created man rising up in the consciousness of that inbreathed life which made him the son and image of the Most High, and opening his eyes upon the world before him. At first, it may be, like a little child, his thoughts might be entirely taken up with the wonders around him—the glorious sun, the refreshing breeze, the blue firmament, the twinkling stars and moon, the rolling sea, the shifting clouds, and the distant hills and mountains—and then, that most wondrous of all wonders, himself, turning his thoughts from the outward and objective world to look within. But his gathering and multiplying experiences would soon develop that wondrous inward faculty which seeks the causes of all these things. The little child, three years old, will ask you already the most profound questions in philosophy and religion. How long, then, would it be ere the first man, rejoicing in a more perfect nature than any of his posterity, would ask the same great questions?—"What am I?" "Whence came I?" "Whence came all this beautiful world?" But then there was no earthly parent to answer, no elder brother to teach him the story of creation. God was his Father, and angels his elder brothers; and from God Himself, I prefer to think, the answering revelation came—and here it is. Perhaps it was as he wended his way from the treeless, verdureless, mist-watered plain, where he first found himself after the inspiration of the Almighty had given him life—as he

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was wending his way thence, under the impulse of a divine leading which as yet he understood not, to the garden of delights which God had prepared for him—that his eye may have fallen upon a tiny violet, springing from the soft mud of the plain, and he asks, "What made that come up?" And presently Eden breaks upon his view, and he asks again, "What made this?" And as he sits down to rest and refresh himself under the shadow of its beauteous and fruit-laden trees, the sun goes down, and the shades of evening creep over the earth, and the twinkling stars peep forth, and the silver moon arises in the east, and, filled with worshipful awe, the question of his spiritual nature repeats itself, with a praying, pleading intensity which cannot be denied; and the great Father hears and answers the cry of His spirit-child for light out of the primeval darkness which still rests upon himself and all the universe about him. And the answer is, "*At first God.*" I know not what word it was by which Adam expressed it; whether it were the old Hebrew *Elohim*, "*the awful ones,*" or some other name long since forgotten among the babbling tongues of earth; but the first *idea* which the divine, revealing Spirit awakened in his mind was the *idea of God*. Perhaps he had then as yet no word to express it, but a Spirit-presence comes before him, in vision, such as you, child of God, have felt in the still hour of prayer—a presence in which he finds something *akin to himself*, such as exists not in all earthly nature, but *above, beyond him, infinitely greater than himself*. And I

know not what moments, perhaps hours, of worshipping reverence passed before this grandest of all ideas entered in all its fulness into the mind of the grandest of all men. "At first GOD." Then follows the predicate, *created, i.e., caused.* The spiritual intuition had already awakened the cry for cause, and now the cry is satisfied, answered. And the answer is wide as the universe—the heavens above, the earth all around: "At first God created the heavens and the earth." Words, perhaps, were not yet invented, but the Divine Presence was revealed, and linked to the heavens above and the earth beneath by the innate idea of cause. O what a moment was that when this grandest of all conceptions was revealed in the mind of Adam! Philosophers have waxed eloquent over the sublimity of that moment when to Newton there came the wondrous conception of the law of gravitation; when, from the falling of an apple, there came an idea of power, which flashed out instantly to the moon, thence, taking its stand upon the sun, it hastened with keener than lightning wing to glance at each circling planet till, in its mighty grasp, it held and ordered the universe in the unity of one universal law. That was a glorious moment, and it is given to few men to conceive of the thrilling joy that answered to the birth of such a thought as that. But when we look at Adam, with a mind just wakened in consciousness, only a little lower than the angels; and when we see the revealing Spirit unfolding to his mind the three grand concepts of this first sentence of the Bible—"God—

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created—the heavens and the earth”—it seems to me that, by the side of this, all flights of poets, all discoveries of philosophers, all the grandest thoughts ever born into the human intelligence, grow pale and vanish like stars before the noonday sun. And this conception, you will see, is the foundation of all religion, and its birth, perhaps, the primeval act of religious worship by the new-created humanity.

But, perhaps, you are ready to say, “Was not this enough?” What need to add to such a wondrous thought as this? Not so. God is revealed as the Author of the universe. But in order that man may grasp the full significance of this primitive revelation, the ascending steps of the great work must pass before him; and *they shall tell him*, as the heavens to the Psalmist in after days, *the glory of this God, and the varied attributes by which He stands related to the universe and to man*. It is not necessary to trace these steps as they were presented to man in those six wonderful visions of creative work. Suffice it to say that, as Paul says, they made “the eternal power” of God distinctly known, and, as the Psalmist in after days interpreted the same truth, so must they have filled the mind of Adam with the same rapture of praise, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all!” But these expanded visions did far more than this. They unfolded the *Godhead*, as well as the Divine power; and the *moral attributes* of God, as well as the infinite wisdom.

First of all, in the vision of chaos there was revealed

the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the deep—the same Spirit who, as Adam shortly afterward learned, by “His inspiration gave *him* life and understanding,” as well motion to the commingled elements of the universe. And if the revelation of God, the eternal cause, filled the mind of man with worshipping reverence, may we not say surely this first inward view of the Spirit must have inspired him with that holy joy which it hath been the providence of the Divine Spirit in all ages to impart? The second verse of this creation hymn presents to man the vision of chaos, and reveals the universally operative *Spirit of God*.

But the third verse begins with the manifestation of the Word of God. What was the Word of God which Adam heard in vision, and to whom did it speak? Was it merely the vibration of the atmosphere, falling upon his ear, and conveying to his sense the sound of the two little Hebrew words *Y'hi Aon*? Not so thought John, when the Spirit, which taught Adam this heavenly understanding, taught him to write, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *to* God and the *Word* was *God*. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” And this same Word Adam heard in the beginning speaking *to* God, “Let light be.” Well

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might Paul say that ever since the creation of the world the eternal Godhead as well as "the eternal power" are known. Here is the universal Father, the Word, and the Spirit all revealed from the very beginning. And will any one suppose that the conceptions given by this primal revelation to man, still pure and perfect, whose powers were little less than angelic, were less perfect as to the triune nature of Deity than those which man has slowly regained in these later days of error and sin?

But the revealing vision proceeds, and with each new step in advance comes another great thought bursting in upon the mind of man. "And God saw the light." Here is God distinguished from His works. The personally intelligent God—the all-seeing God. No vague pantheistic conception, confounding God with His works, but God and the creature clearly distinguished—God beholding the creature. God is clearly defined as a personal and omniscient God, one who knows and sees.

And God saw the light that it was good—good because beautiful—good because productive of happiness; and when man was made, "very good," because *holy, upright*. Here is presented to the mind of man, in the simplest, grandest, and most comprehensive form possible, *the universal moral relations of God* to the universe; to put it in the language of our modern philosophy, this good includes the æsthetic perceptions, the benevolent affections, the ethical distinctions. It presents them all *in God*, as the very first experience

of outward things must have already awakened them in man. And next in successive visions this triune God of power and wisdom and all the goodnesses is seen ordering the whole course of nature : spreading out the sky, lifting the earth and the mountains, bounding the sea, clothing the earth with verdure, appointing sun, moon, and stars to their course, and filling the sea, and air, and earth with life, and all by His Word, for without the Word was not anything made that was made, and "Behold it was all very good." It was this same Word of God that in after ages Solomon beheld, rejoicing in the goodness of His works, when he says : "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth : While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there ; when he set a compass upon the face of the deep ; when he established the clouds above ; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep ; when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment ; when he appointed the foundations of the earth : Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight ; rejoicing always before him : Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my

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delights with the sons of men." "The Word spake!" and "God saw, and, behold, it was very good."

But man must know himself, and hence the vision adds yet one thing more. "And God said" ("the Word of God to God"), "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." What was this image and likeness? What idea of his own nature did it convey to Adam? Was it some outward form presented to the eye of sense? as if God assumed material shape. Then, too, some of the lower animals were created in this image, for the type of their anatomical structure approximates to that of man. No, not so. The image of God is spiritual, and what it is the revealing Spirit taught Paul when he tells us that "Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first begotten before every creature." And again the Epistle to the Hebrews—"The Son by whom also he made the worlds is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person." The eternal Word is the image of God. And this Word said to God, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Here, then, brethren, is the sum of this revelation. We have often been accustomed to read it as the unfolding of the mystery of creation. But that is a mere accident, so to speak. It is rather the unfolding of the mysteries of religion. The mystery of God, the eternal power, the universal cause. The mystery of the Word, which was God. The mystery of the operation and indwelling Spirit. The mystery of the personal God, the God of the threefold Good. The mys-

tery of man, the image of God and His work, and like that Word the Son of God. And when to this revelation of the mysteries of religion was added the Sabbath of rest, in which, surrounded by the Eden of delights, the holy Adam dwelt in the Spirit upon these mysteries, or in converse unfolded them to his God-given companion, or, together with her, bowed down to worship this triune God, then we have some faint idea of religion in the golden age, ere man fell.

But what bearing, you say, has all this upon religion in our day, so far removed from the innocence and light of Eden. Much every way. Behold the harmony of the dispensations. Man fell. The indwelling Spirit left him. The image of God, the Sonship was obliterated. The knowledge of the triune God was obscured, and the knowledge of the threefold God was converted into the knowledge of evil. And then again the Word of God came forth from the bosom of the Father to create man anew in Christ Jesus, that "to as many as received Him He might give power to become once more the sons of God." Again the eternal Spirit proceeded from the Father, that once more by His inspiration the image of God might be implanted in man; and when that image is fully restored, God will once more take the new-created race and place them, cause them to rest, in the Eden above, and give them the tree of life, and in the joy of an eternal Sabbath "they shall be like *Him*, for they shall see Him as He is."

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SERMON VI.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR.

BY THE REV. D. V. LUCAS, M.A.

“Is not this the carpenter?”—*Mark vi. 3.*

I SAW an old man breaking stones in the middle of the road on a hot day, with the dust flying all about him. I said to my companion, “They tell me that every human being has a soul capable of soaring up to God, and of dwelling and communing with God, and of studying and revelling in the wonderful works of God for ever and ever. Yet here is one of these beings compelled to sit all day long in the scorching sun breaking stones; here is another obliged to cobble shoes for a little bread, and another to sweep streets, and another to beg his bread from door to door.”

I began to be indignant for my brethren's sake, and my spirit revolted against the decree which laid men under such a yoke. My mind for a little dropped into a kind of sceptical or infidel rut, and, like a cart-wheel, it ran along in this rut till it was lifted out by the text before us, “Is not this the carpenter?”

We may draw some useful lessons from the subject.

I. MY INDIGNATION COULD NOT ALTER THE FACT.

Men must labor at humble employments, and you cannot make it otherwise by finding fault. Was I indignant because a soul with such capabilities is com-

pelled to dwell in a body which is forced by its surroundings and its wants to break stones to procure bread to keep soul and body together for a few years? The fact is, I was arguing backwards, as infidels often do. Let me rather wonder with gratitude that one who now must needs follow some very humble occupation, often tired of it, and oftener tired in it, may, by-and-bye, if he will, soar up to God and glory to sing with the angels of God and His redeemed forever. We have in this life instances to illustrate this. I have known some and read of others who have, by suddenly coming by inheritance into possession of a large patrimony, been raised from almost abject poverty, or positions of servitude, to the highest respectability. If men can, by any process here, be raised as in a moment from the very low position of poor servants to the lofty positions of wealthy masters, may we not see in it the faint foreshadowing of what may be hereafter? "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

II. WHILE THE NECESSITY IS LAID UPON US, IT IS A COMFORT TO SEE THAT THE DIVINE BEING RECOGNIZES US IN THESE OCCUPATIONS. WE ASK NO BETTER EVIDENCE OF THIS THAN IS FOUND IN THE HISTORY OF JESUS.

One of the most common delusions to which we are subject lies just here. We think if we had to work

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less, if we had more wealth, if we were higher in the social scale, we should be able to serve God more faithfully, and more easily. It is all a "delusion and a snare." Satan is using it to prevent you from doing your duty, or from enjoying the blessedness of religion. Dear reader, if there is anything of an earthly kind which can procure for you the sympathy of the Saviour, it is the fact that your occupation is of that humble sort such as He followed Himself while He dwelt among men.

III. WE HAVE HERE EXEMPLIFIED THAT RULE AMONG THE JEWS WHICH REQUIRED THAT EVERY YOUTH SHOULD BE TAUGHT SOME USEFUL TRADE OR OCCUPATION, THAT HE MIGHT NOT BE A BURDEN UPON OTHERS, OR UPON THE STATE, BUT A USEFUL CITIZEN.

Paul was a tent-maker; Peter, James, and John were fishermen; Luke was a tanner, and Jesus was a carpenter.

Jesus, by conforming to the wise rule of His people, not only confirmed it, giving it his sanction and approbation, but He dignified and sanctified labor. Let no one think that it is degrading to work even at the humblest occupation so long as it is necessary work. Have you thought it low and vulgar to work? The most vulgar thing is to be idle, and there is nothing more true than the old couplet—

"The devil finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

Bring up your sons and your daughters to work, or at least to some useful calling. I have known parents to toil and sweat, forgetful of their own comfort, and of their eternal welfare, to leave their children a rich patrimony, while every day's observation shows that a patrimony, more frequently proves a curse than a blessing. A good schooling in honest industry is the best patrimony any parent can leave his child.

IV. WE ARE REMINDED BY THE TEXT OF THE WONDERFUL
CONDESCENSION OF JESUS.

Is it something to awaken our astonishment that a poor mechanic may drop his kit of tools and go up to God and glory eternal? How much more so is it that One who dwelt in glory from all eternity should lay His glory by, and come down to earth and take up the tools of the humble artizan, and yet this is what Christ did. "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." "He took upon Him the form of a servant."

V. WE ARE REMINDED AGAIN BY THE SUBJECT UNDER
CONSIDERATION THAT OUR CONDITION IN THIS
LIFE IS NO CRITERION BY WHICH WE CAN TELL
WHAT OUR CONDITION OR POSITION SHALL BE IN
THE WORLD TO COME.

Men judge by the outward appearance. They said, "Is not this the carpenter?" and "they were offended in Him."

These men about Him could not see the Majesty which lay concealed beneath that plain exterior. "When we shall see Him," says the prophet, "there is

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no beauty that we should desire Him." So it is to-day. Men often count as low and unworthy those who are ranked by the King eternal among Heaven's nobility.

Diogenes with a lamp in broad daylight seeks a man, who, when he is found, is a Greek slave. As it was with the old philosopher, so is it with the Bible; principles,—not money, kid-gloves, or perfumery—principles and moral worth make the man.

VI. GOD HAS ESPECIALLY HONORED CARPENTERS.

1. *By mentioning them in His Word.**—They were needed to build David's royal house and the temple of the Lord.

2. *By speaking of their work as illustrative of the establishment of Christianity.*

3. *Above all, by ordaining that His Son as a man, and our elder Brother, should follow while on earth this particular occupation.*

O ye carpenters! claim Him! O ye artizans! He is yours; ranked among the lowly, classed with the toilers, call Him yours. Don't be ashamed of your fellow-craftsman, who comes to you as a humble mechanic, but who is, in reality, the Great Architect and Master Builder of the universe. He is building a great temple which is to stand for ever and ever. He asks you to join Him in this great work.

He shows you, moreover, how you are to build for yourself so that your house may stand. If you build not on this foundation, His Word, His sayings, your house will surely fall.

* 1 Chron. xiv. 1. Ezra iii. 7.

SERMON VII.

GOD GLORIFIED IN A FRUITFUL CHURCH.

BY THE REV. W. C. BROWN, GRAND PRE, N.S.

“Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.”—*John xv. 8.*

“ISRAEL is an empty vine” was the reproach uttered by Hosea concerning the ancient people of God. The rebuke, though severe, was not undeserved. The Jewish nation had yielded to God no adequate return for the great care which He had lavished upon it. Instead of being a noble pattern to the heathen it had been a base imitator of them. Instead of industriously teaching the lofty truths which God had revealed, it had seldom done more than to pride itself in the possession of them. No great nation had been won from idolatry by Jewish influence. The centuries which had elapsed since Moses, at the Divine dictation, wrote the law had not been fruitful of converts. Our Lord's-day was no exception. The Jewish Church was doing a little to spread the truth. In this respect it had glorified God so little as to resemble the barren fig-tree met by Christ near Jerusalem, and to merit the rebuke conveyed by Him in the curse which had withered it into perpetual death.

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JESUS DESIGNED FOR HIS CHURCH A FAR DIFFERENT CAREER. Through it the ends of the earth were to see the salvation of God; and He was now framing it for the glorious purpose which He intended to accomplish through its agency, and creating the very genius, so to speak, which was to determine its operations in the coming ages. That genius was benevolent and aggressive. The love of Christ was to constrain. The great purpose which moved the Son of God to come into this sad world, He bequeathed as a perpetual legacy to His Church when He returned to the glory which He had "with the Father before the world was," and He had this before Him, evidently, as He delivered the impressive discourse found in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel by St. John. The discourses of the Saviour had hitherto been chiefly with respect to the moral duties of life or the doctrine of His own person and work. The time had now come to give His people that special charge which was necessary if His doctrine was to be spread over all lands. The time had come to teach His followers that they must not be content with knowing the truth and living consistently with their knowledge, but must seek to propagate it. They were to "go and bring forth fruit," He said, using a figure which He had once used in reference to the results of His own death,* and hinting at the grand and solemn commission which He intended to give them after His resurrection from the dead: "Go ye into all the world and preach the

* John xii. 24.

gospel to every creature."* The mission of the Church in the world is like the mission of Christ Himself, to bless.

All this is evidently couched in the beautiful and expressive allegory with which this chapter opens. Under the figure of a vine and its branches Jesus points out union between His people and Himself, their necessary dependence upon Him, and the great result which ought to follow such a union. That union is close and vital like that of the branches of a plant to the root and stem. They depend upon Christ for their nourishment and strength. Every virtuous principle in them, every holy and noble purpose, every generous disposition is nourished by His teaching, His life, and His death. They derive their very life from Him, and He in turn derives His glory in the world from them. As the vine is glorified by the fruit which its branches bear, so is Christ by the fruitful lives of His disciples, and the great increase and prosperity of His Church. "The true vine" is fruitful through His fruitful branches, and in this God is glorified.

The language of Jesus in this place, though in some respects precise, is in others indefinite. He has not explained what He means by fruit, whether the fruit of holy living or that of usefulness leading to steady increase of His followers in the world. We are therefore left to inference in regard to this point, and inference would lead us to decide that He included both, and used a general term that His disciples might

* Mark xvi. 15.

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not limit His meaning to either. And yet it would seem that, at this particular time, Jesus was thinking chiefly of the growth of His Church through the labors of His people, and that though He never for a moment lost sight of the holy living which, as a divine requirement, is not peculiar to any age, yet in this discourse He has reference chiefly to their usefulness. This is the more probable as He says not, "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear good fruits," but "that ye bear much fruit." Had He referred chiefly to their moral conduct He would have spoken in a manner which would indicate the *quality* of their actions, but instead of that He lays the stress upon the matter of *productiveness*. Nor is this inconsistent with the cutting off mentioned in the second verse. Spiritual indolence is a vice, and is treated as such in the Divine administration. Excision follows worthlessness. He who will not do something for God has no claim to a place amongst those who will.

FRUITFULNESS, THEN, IN THIS HIGH SENSE, IS THE LAW OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM, and is a law which applies both to the individual members and the collective Church. There are, as far as we have any knowledge, no exceptions. There is no line drawn by the Divine hand within which men are to use the talents for the extension of Christ's kingdom, and beyond which they are at liberty to feel satisfied with their own salvation. Every person on entering the Church of Christ, accepts, not only the blessing of salvation, but the responsibility of service. "No man liveth unto himself."

It is not possible he should; and when he attempts it all his best manhood dies. Yet, even if it were possible, it is not permitted. Christ requires an active interest in His cause from every disciple.

Persons do find their way into the Church of Christ who seem never to have seriously considered this. Their purpose does not appear to extend farther than their own salvation, and they settle down to this. They refuse to take any official position; they take no part in social meetings; they never speak to another on the subject of personal religion; refuse even to hold family worship; contribute little to the support of the Church, and still less to its enterprises; and yet, all the while, entertain the hope of bliss beyond the grave. Time does not enlarge their views or deepen their sympathies. On the contrary, their selfishness grows. Their views become more narrow, and at length their mind becomes altogether dark and their heart heavy and dead. They pride themselves, perhaps, upon their integrity, forgetting that their whole debt to Christ is left unpaid, and there is no vestige in their life of that generous response which God has a right to look for from those upon whom He has lavished His love. Such a branch, to revert to Christ's figure, is a worthless thing and in peril of excision; perhaps, in the mind of God, already cut off. We may not mark where the Divine pruning-knife has gone, but we have great reason to fear that in such cases the connection with the "true vine" is merely external and nominal, and that it will soon cease to be even

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that, for "every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

Nor is this Divine severity unjust, for the result of such apathy and neglect marks the whole difference between the accomplishment and the defeat of a Divine wish; between men brought to Christ and men kept from Him; between God glorified and God dishonored. Were the interest of the Church entirely in the hands of such selfish, slothful servants, it would quickly become a proverb of imbecility. Vice and unbelief would spread without opposition, and the world sweep on to speedy ruin. But, besides this, such indifference can only result from the persistent repression of those generous feelings kindled in us at the moment of conversion. With the dawning of the new life an impulse is given to the soul in the direction of faithful service to God and man, and the privilege is offered of consecrating our faculties to the very highest of objects. It is no light matter to have this privilege thrust upon us—to be brought face to face with the grandest of opportunities; to have Jesus calling us to a work so hallowed and so noble; and when sloth or some other base feeling prevails over this generous impulse, and sinks into a wretched inertia those to whom the grandest possibilities of activity and usefulness were opening, it becomes a sin of no ordinary magnitude, and meriting no ordinary degree of the Divine displeasure; and we are not surprised that those who fall into it are threatened with being cut off from Christ and cast away as worthless.

BUT IT SEEMS STILL FURTHER THAT CHRIST USED THE WORD "YE" AS INDICATING HIS WHOLE CHURCH IN ITS COLLECTIVE CAPACITY. These disciples were, at that time, the representatives of the great and widespread community that was yet to be. It was in this sense embodied in them. What they were to be after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them, it was to be a witness for Christ, a laborious toiler for Christ, and grandly successful in its toil. We may regard the Saviour as addressing His Church and saying: "Herein is my Father glorified that, among all nations, thou bear the fruit of many converts. I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Nothing could more aptly illustrate this feature of the Church's life than the figure which Christ uses in this place—a healthy, vigorous vine with many branches; Himself is the vine, His Churches the branches, and all taken together forming one complete organization. Nothing, perhaps, in all the teaching of Jesus more fully portrays the Church throughout its history. The vine is grand and strong from age to age. The branches are sometimes vigorous and fruitful, sometimes luxuriant and showy, but barren; sometimes withered and dead. Every branch can trace its origin right up to Christ, and, though they stand widely apart from each other in their separate life, all are fed from Him and nourished with the same food. But if we look back along the centuries we see here a dead branch and there a dying one; here

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one bringing "forth much fruit," and there one whose days of fruitfulness are past, and which seems merely waiting the hand of mercy or judgment which shall consign it to oblivion. Some of the earliest Churches we read of have utterly perished; some virtually so. Churches which in the apostolic age were prosperous and strong have left us only their name. Ephesus and Smyrna, Antioch and Thessalonica, Sardis and Laodicea once gave their names to flourishing communities of saints, whilst a host of Churches rose around them. To each of these the opportunity of usefulness and the prospect of permanence were offered, whilst the pruning-knife of persecution would only make them bear more fruit. But they lost their opportunity and became first lukewarm, then unfruitful, then corrupt, until at length the pruning-knife became to them an instrument of judgment.

We have sometimes wondered that Divine providence allowed the wholesale destruction of the Asiatic Churches by the successors of Mohammed. Larger knowledge leads us to bow to the judgment of heaven and acknowledge both its justice and its wisdom. They had trifled with the Divine gift which God had placed in their hands to dispense, and had become unfit to be either the depositaries of truth or its disseminators. Ignorant and indolent, consumed by dissensions and animosities, corrupted by heresies, robbed of manly strength by opinions which drove into monasteries men who ought to have gone forth as missionaries, they ceased to be the all-conquering host which

had been victorious by its patience in the fiercest persecutions, and began to resemble an army against which the tide of battle has already turned. Unfit now to be the moral and religious regenerators of the world, these Churches were given over to destruction. It was no longer possible that good should come to the world through them. They might corrupt; they could not save.

And how many Churches have passed out of existence since the day that the kingdom of God was first preached? Churches which God intended should be fruitful and multiply and fill the land with spiritual influence. They rose fair and promised to last; but the promise failed. Indolence succeeded their early activity. Destruction followed indolence; and they have gone so completely out of existence that their circumstances are little more than guessed at. A few lines of dubious history, a suspicious monument, or a vague tradition are all that tell us of their unworthy life. We study the scanty records which suggest their history, rather than reveal it, with a feeling of disappointment. We had thought that Divine providence would preserve from ruin those who were even the *possessors* of the truth, and that wherever the Christian faith had gained a foothold it would remain in spite of foes; but God has taught us this solemn lesson, that the same providence which preserves the valuable, destroys the worthless; that if a Church would be perpetuated it must give way to no inglori-

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ous ease; and that nothing can certainly ensure its permanence except that it bear much fruit.

THE CHURCH HAS A GRAND AND AWFUL MISSION,

so grand as to dwarf into insignificance the greatest human enterprise. Made of that noble nature which is capable of doing great things, it has great things given it to do. Its mission is to bless humanity, and in doing this to glorify God. It was appointed to spread the truth throughout the world, and to lead mankind, through Christ, up to God. By its instrumentality did God design to dispel the ignorance, and to root out the vices of mankind; to destroy the gloomy superstitions which had long brooded over the world by making Himself known—the one living, loving God, and His Son, Jesus Christ—the world's Saviour; to bring to an end all tyranny; to sow the seeds of brotherly love; to shed peace everywhere; in a word, to overturn the kingdom of darkness, and to brighten the future of the human race. All this rich fruit was the Church to bear, carrying in her heart the spirit of Christ, and moved by its Divine force.

In entrusting His Church with a mission so grand, it was no scanty result that God looked for. He did not intend that His people should trifle with their majestic employment, or be content to exhibit in themselves the passive virtues. He designed that they should be grandly aggressive, reaching out a hand of power on every side. It was not enough that they should preserve uncorrupted the great doctrines which had been

revealed, and guard with sacred care the books which contained it. The doctrine was to be *disseminated*—sown over all lands. It was not enough that the Christian people should be spiritual and devout; they must be enterprising also. The firm and lofty spirit which should excite the amazement of the world was to be accompanied by a zeal which knew no bounds. Their love to Christ was to reveal itself by an interest in His cause, and a persistent endeavor to spread everywhere a knowledge of His salvation.

Nothing, except actual sin, is farther from the spirit of the Gospel than an indolent, dreamy mysticism. The mind "which was in Christ Jesus" has nothing slothful in it. No Christian life is perfect which does not combine activity with devoutness, and blend zeal with holiness. Though the creed be without a flaw, the morals without a stain, and the piety deep and fervent, yet all this will form but an imperfect Christian, or an imperfect Church, if there be wanting the "labor which proceedeth of love." A religion which takes, but never gives, is ever inferior, though it take all the truth, purity, and heavenly-mindedness which Christ has to offer, and God is not honored in this way as He designs to be. "*Herein* is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples"—disciples in *reality* of Him who gave His life that He might produce the richest fruit for a hunger-stricken world.

In speaking thus, we would not be understood to teach that the fruits of righteousness are of secondary

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importance. We had no such intention. On the contrary, we do not see how it is possible to be a Christian at all without these. The fruits of the Spirit must be found wherever the Spirit really dwells. An unholy Christian is an anomaly if not a monstrosity. But we did intend to teach, and are sure that the Divine Word bears us out in the teaching, that the Christian life is complete only when usefulness is united with purity, whilst a Church without missionary enterprise utterly fails in the great work for which it was appointed. It may fail through ignorance of its duty or through wilful neglect, through not having understood the voice of Christ, or because it would fain gratify some slothful or some mercenary feeling; but in either case the result is the same. It is an army organized and trained, but inefficient. It is a body of servants well cared for, but leaving their master's work half done; it is the branch which drinks up the sap from the great strong stem, but shows no return of goodly clusters; and such God did not design it to be. We lay stress, therefore, and feel that we cannot lay too much stress, upon that consecrated activity which, with ceaseless effort, seeks to glorify God by advancing His cause in this sad world of folly and sin.

We have sometimes heard it said that the Church, in modern times, is attempting too much, and that its enterprises are becoming a burden. We have no doubt that they seem so to the selfish and worldly, but viewed in the light of Christ's requirement, and Christ's sacrifice, and Christ's grand purpose, they are pitiful

and mean. Fault is found with the time consumed in this work and the money spent upon it, as if there was no higher use for time than making money, and no higher use for money than squandering it upon our pleasures, and, as if it were not written, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Sometimes the more subtle objection is made that we have too much public religious work to do. With many, it is said, the whole Sabbath and the leisure hours of the week-days are so fully occupied that there is little time for retirement and meditation—little time for the careful cultivation of our inner life. This is plausible but specious, but false, and too often it is only the voice of sloth attempting to lull the conscience under pretext of greater sanctity. Alas, for the deceitfulness of the human heart! But all these and every other objection of every kind is swept away by the plain and emphatic statement of Jesus: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Our high attainments in religion are only means to an end, and that the greatest of ends—to glorify God by upholding the Redeemer's kingdom, extending its influence, and spreading its triumphs.

IT IS ONE OF THE BEST SIGNS OF THE TIMES, IN THIS RESTLESS AND INQUIRING AGE, THAT THE CHURCH IS AWAKING TO THIS GREAT DUTY.

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even the emulous competition of rival denominations, show a sense of responsibility and a conviction that God requires something more of His people than the passive virtues—something more than the joy and the holiness which spring from faith, something more than the praise uttered from a grateful heart. We look with high hope upon this revival of earnestness, and are sure that if the zeal is purified and the activity rightly directed, there is a future before the Church of Christ which shall throw into the shade even the splendid triumphs of apostolic days—a future before which the boasts of infidelity shall be as idle wind, until at length Christian successes shall hush the doubts of scepticism into eternal silence, and God's name shall be glorified from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. The Church is framed for conquest; the spirit which her Founder imparts to her is a spirit of holy aggression; His plain command is, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" and the exalted motive by which He seeks to stimulate her zeal is that precious sentence which we have quoted as our text, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

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SERMON VIII.

THE SCRIPTURE RECORD CONCERNING "ETERNAL LIFE."

REV. W. R. PARKER, M.A.,
President of the London Conference.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."—1 John v. 11.

WHAT good thing have we that we have not received of God? All our blessings are Divine. We must gratefully concede His claim: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."

Oh! how shall we estimate aright the infinite sense of His benefits? The bestowment of matchless worth, of overwhelming surprise, outweighing all the rest, comprehending them all, is the Divine Father's gift of the Divine Son! "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Who shall bear adequate testimony concerning the world of wealth, the eternity of blessing bequeathed to our race in this priceless bestowment? There are witnesses in earth and in heaven. We have the witness of the Word and the Spirit. If the witness of man be not sufficiently credible, we have that of the

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Father, the *greater* and the absolutely authoritative. And of all the testimony furnished, this is the sense and epitome: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

The great subject announced is, *eternal life*. In reliance upon the needed help of the promised Spirit, let us consider:—

- I. What is eternal life?
- II. Whence is it?
- III. What does it involve?

I. WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

What do you say it is? Well, you say, It is life in eternity, a blissful hereafter—it is heaven! Yes, these indeed, but more. More, you say, than heaven, eternity! Yes, verily, more. What constitutes the tree you instinctively admire which adorns the sunny slope in autumn, clad in its gorgeous foliage? You reply, The trunk, branches, tinted leaves, and luscious fruit. Yes, indeed, these; but more. More than these?—what more can there be? you challenge. Why, the *root* as much as the fruit, the root before the fruit. True, true, you affirm. If the root does not grip the earth, grow in the ground, the fruit will never adorn the lofty branches that wave in the breezes of heaven.

As this tree, so is eternal life. Beyond question, it belongs to eternity, but to earth and time as well. And this tree will firmly root itself in the soil of the human heart in time, or it will never flourish in eter-

nity. In other words, we must possess eternal life here, or we cannot inherit it there.

If, therefore, we can, if we *must* have eternal life *here*, what is it? Such a question is too vital in its nature, too far-reaching in its inevitable consequences, to be answered in a polemical spirit, with the shibboleth of a sect—the dogma of a denomination. Our appeal must be to the “law and the testimony.” What saith the Scriptures on a subject in whose issues we are all interested more profoundly than in aught else in the universe? We understand from the word of God that eternal life is *spiritual life*—the life of God in the soul. It is the divine union of the soul with Christ. It is to be “the branch in the vine,” “the lively stone” in the chief corner-stone. It is the new creation; when “old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” It is that of which Paul affirms, “To be spiritually-minded is life.”

Matthew Henry, the shrewd and able commentator, says, “The Lord gives the spiritual life, which is eternal life in the bud.” Clearly, then, His teaching is this: that the only difference between spiritual life and eternal life is the difference in maturity—not in nature—between a well-defined bud down here in the cold atmosphere of earth and that same bud unfolded into a fragrant flower, or developed, blossom-like, into rich fruit in the Eden above. The relation is that subsisting between the grace of heaven in the soul and the heaven of grace in glory.

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this identity of nature. The line of proof must be more than indicated. The Scriptural processes are the same for possessing *spiritual* and *eternal life*.

(a) Both are obtained *by faith*. How oft quoted is the familiar formula of spiritual life: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And it is ever, in the deliverance from condemnation, consequent upon the exercise of this faith, that the happy believer can say, "The law of the Spirit of *life* in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." How do we possess eternal life? Let Christ Himself answer, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Thus *by faith* Christ is seized, and thus life seizes us; for Christ is our life, spiritual and eternal. Hence the proof of what we asserted, that eternal life is identical with spiritual, for they become a tangible possession upon the similar exercise of the same faith.

(b) Both are experienced through the *knowledge of God*. A chief characteristic of the wicked is that they have not the saving knowledge of God. Hence the Christian duty to "Teach every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord!" On the other hand, the Lord gives the "knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins." Hence springs spiritual life, and hence, precisely, by this knowledge

comes *eternal life*. Hear our Lord Himself: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Therefore, to *know God in Christ* is to possess eternal life.

To this purport the apostles bear witness of what they had seen, and "show that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Moreover, to know God is to know His love. And, besides, the love precedes the knowledge of God. The things of earth we first know and then love. But we love Christ *first*, and then know Him. This is the teaching of the inspired apostle: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." So then, the knowledge of God is the knowledge of love; for God is love. Consequently, to love God is to have eternal life, inasmuch as Christ teaches that to know the Father and the Son constitutes the substance of this priceless gift. Herein we definitely ascertain the identity of the *spiritual* and *eternal life*, the essence of both being the same "love."

(c) This law of eternal life is in harmony with the law of our eternal being.

Let any man ask himself what is the law—the real controlling force of his life—and see if the spontaneous response be not, "My strongest love!" It is well said that, "We do not live in earnest, till we love in earnest, and the greater and nobler our love, the greater and nobler our life."

That young man was but an indifferent youth until

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the premature death of his father devolved upon him the care of the home, and the responsibility for providing for his mother and sisters. But he proved equal to the emergency; for his labor of love transformed him into a perfect model of thoughtfulness and thrift.

That young widow, with her helpless charge, never knew want nor anxiety while her faithful husband was the thoughtful provider of their home. But her bitter bereavement brought her face to face with urgent need; and her own hands had to minister to her necessities and those of her household. Hers was the task of love, and the sequel evidenced the genius of this dominant passion, as an educating force, even in the school of adversity. The tenanted residence became a freehold; and the children, trained in intellect and heart, and schooled to habits of industry, rose to fill, successfully, positions of trust and emolument.

So Christian love constitutes and controls Christian life. It is by its moulding potency an indifferent man or an indifferent woman becomes noted, and develops the grandest capabilities. The rainbow is more brilliant—but more fitful too—than the white light. It is the light that “shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Talent, genius may be more brilliant, more flashy than love; but the perfect love of God that casteth out fear is the missionary of mightiest ministries for mankind. When Christ came to procure for us everlasting life, He came the very embodiment

of everlasting love, and as He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, so we, catching His spirit and copying His example, are to—"By love serve one another." And in this life-work—

"Love is the brightest of the train ;
And perfects all the rest."

Eternal life, therefore, will certainly be the same in essence, in kind, in the world to come as it is in this. Heaven is, beyond question, a place of "many mansions," as well as a state of ineffable bliss. But heaven, the *state*, must be put within us, before we can be put within heaven, the *place*. So then, we conclude, that eternal life in heaven differs from the same grand possession here only in degree—in the environments, the companionships.

Paul was the same man, as "the apostle to the Gentiles," that he was when "Saul of Tarsus." His character was, indeed, changed; his personal identity unchanged. So the saved believer, such as I have seen pass away. Sweetly happy and actively conscious till the last breath, she crossed the narrow stream—she entered through the thin veil. With her this higher life had no cessation, knew no change. It was not broken in two; it was only transfigured. It was but the eternal life of earth continued and developed. It was the same with her as with Paul, who was the same when "absent from the body and present with the Lord," as when he said, "For me to live is Christ."

So, at death, and after it, we will remain the same

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men and women that we are now, identically, though our surroundings and capacity will greatly differ. The fulness there will be only "the more and more" of the eternal life we have now in Christ. Our life will not be broken in two, but transfigured. It is as truly as tersely affirmed by a late writer: "We, we are the same beings that we *shall* be; and the burning seraph that shall bow before the Lamb, is within the soul now!" Grace, then, in the soul is heaven in that soul; and we fitly sing:

"The men of grace have found,
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground,
From faith and hope do grow."

II. WHENCE IS THIS ETERNAL LIFE?

We may ask a question, kindred to this—back of it: Whence is any life? Whence the life of a blade of grass, of a flower, of a bud, of an insect, of an animal, of man? Whence this all-prevalent, but unseen principle; this most mysterious, most marvellous something we call *life*? Many of the boastful manipulators of physical science—the evolutionist theorizers—claim for matter the source of life. They assert that they discern in matter "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." They locate the origin of life in *protoplasm*; and they affirm that, "Wherever there is protoplasm, there is life; and wherever there is life, there is protoplasm." Thus, arguing in a circle, they ignore God, and the life-producing presence and power of an intelligent Creator.

But these blasphemers are now disputing among themselves. They are challenging their own audacity, and refuting their own crude theories. Huxley has sounded the deep sea he calls "Bathybius," and the deep says: "Life, in its source, is not in me!" Tyndall has scaled the heavens on a ladder of light, but the sun, more loyal to his Creator than is the philosopher, declares: "The origin of life is not resident in me!"

Then challenge "Exact Science," so-called. Ask its high-priest, the biologist, whether he knows and dare affirm much regarding the *beginning* of life. Will he venture a categorical answer? At best, he admits, he has only "an expectation, that if he could reach back far enough across the uncrossed chasm, he would find life coming from *non-living germs*." He is almost as candid as the professor who said: "I am prepared to undergo an examination on any science, at any time, and I would answer every question uniformly with, *I don't know*." A remarkable instance of the lack of accord, in the theories of these boasted authorities, is found in the Report, published in 1879, of the address of Professor Allman, then President of the British Association for the Promotion of Science. He boldly refuted, to his face, Professor Huxley's teaching, that "Protoplasm can originate thought;" affirming that "While in protoplasm we find the only form of matter in which life can manifest itself, back of it there *must* reside *primal life*; that is, a *final cause*, or God, the *source of life*."

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Yes, verily ; soon all these, with one voice, must and will bow down adoringly, and say of life's source and spring,

“Lo ! God is here, let us adore !”

They shall confess that the Fountal Life, the *I am*, who breathed into Adam the breath of lives and he became a living soul, now inbreathes all life—sends forth His Spirit, and they are vitalized—He still “sendeth out His Word, and they are created !”

This persuasion of the real presence of the Life-giving Jehovah is a most natural, a most precious one. His deeds confirming the doctrine of His presence, and working on all about us.

The seed bursts into life, not perforce of dead laws : but because the finger of the Creator touches it, and it lives. The stars burn, not by occult forces : God's voice kindled their flame, and they light the firmament. So, the earth throbs with its myriad life, because the right hand of the Lord rolls it onward in its destined pathway through the infinity of space. And if the eternal power of an all-surrounding Deity thus blooms in the flower, glows in the stars, and sings in the majestic march of worlds, how much more shall we believe in the potential presence of the personal Christ, as the *Author* and *Giver* of this *spiritual, this eternal life* ?

(a) This brings us to consider that fundamental axiom of the text : “This life is in His Son.” The record of John in his Gospel confirms this of his Epistle : “In Him was life ; and the life was the light

of men." On this grand truth the Rev. Richard Watson remarks: "Life in Jesus Christ is *original* and *independent*. In Him was life as its *origin* and *source*—*unoriginated* and *essential life*."

Our Lord Himself thus propounds this doctrine: "For, as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

And this is the exercise of this given power: He took life from the barren fig-tree; and He put life into the dead form of the entombed Lazarus; and quickened into spiritual life souls long time spiritually dead. Skirting England is the Principality of Wales, of which Albert Edward is the Prince. There is a Principality of Life. Of this Jesus Christ is the Prince, the Proprietor, the Lord. In Him life inheres; and "Because He lives, we live also."

Life, this spiritual, eternal life, is in Christ as the stream is in the fountain, and as life is in the stream. Jesus said: "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life."

Life is in Christ as light is in the sun—"The Lord God is a Sun." "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

Life is in Christ, as vitality is in the atmosphere. You have but to exhaust the life—conserving oxygen from this audience-room—and, without the aid of sword, or plague, or pestilence, or famine, we must all

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perish. "So the Lord of heaven and earth giveth to all life and breath. For in Him we live and move and have our being."

This life is in Christ, as physical life is in bread, the proverbial "staff of life." By this familiar simile Christ teaches that it is His exclusive prerogative to give life to the dead souls of men, as He thus speaks: "I am the bread of life. The bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. *If a man eat of this bread he shall live forever.*" When some caviled at this strong statement, Christ replied: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath *eternal life.*" We do not understand this to afford any ground for the Romish dogma of Transubstantiation—" *Hic corpus meum est.*" We rather learn that, when we actually and duly partake of the bread and wine, the emblems of His broken body and shed blood, we receive Him spiritually. "We feed upon Him, by faith, in our hearts with thanksgiving."

Alas! how strange, that so many who claim to hope for eternal life, deliberately turn their back on the Lord's table, and touch not the symbols of life!

Once again, eternal life is in Christ for us, as it was for our first parents in the "tree of life." The first Adam possessed this eternal life, through the in-breathing of the breath of lives by his Creator. It is

claimed that this life was perpetuated by the agency of the Tree of life. Fairbairn, in his *Typology*, maintains, "That the Tree of life possessed the singular virtue of ministering to the human life in the *fountain-head*, and of upholding that life in its *root* and *principle*. That to it belonged the property of fortifying the vital powers of nature against the injuries of disease and the dissolution of death; and, also, to *preserve the soul in incorrupt purity and blessedness.*"

Richard Watson argues: "That, as the fruit of righteousness is declared a tree of life; and, as in Ezekiel's visions of the glory of the Church on earth, and in John's of her glory in heaven, the conquerors are to eat of the Tree of life, therefore, this Tree of life is closely connected with *spiritual, eternal life, here and hereafter.*"

Indeed, it would appear that, on the part of God, this *tree* was a pledge of the perpetuation of life; and, on the part of Adam, the eating of it was the dutiful obedience of a confiding son.

Alas! that that Tree of life was forfeited, and the way to it guarded by an angel and infolding flame. But, thank God, our Tree of Life, Jesus Christ, is not only approachable, but He invites and urges all to come boldly unto Him, with a world of welcome and a wealth of provision. He declares: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;" and again, "To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."

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III. WHAT ETERNAL LIFE INVOLVES.

By this we mean the subjective, personal effect on the man brought into life-giving connection with Christ.

(a) *This life involves death.*—This Jesus taught when He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." * So Paul teaches, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." And again, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

This, therefore, is life by the way of death, through death. Is not this the plan, the principle of all life? See the vegetable world. Does not the blossom die that the fruit may live? So, too, with grain. You hear our Lord announce this fact in illustration: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

So man—carnivorous, flesh-eating man—lives, in good part, by the death of the animal, the bird, the fish.

But the special analogy, the type, we find in Jesus Christ Himself. How does He give us life, but through His death? "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death he

* 1 John v. 24.

might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." "Jesus Christ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." Thus our Lord Himself gives assurance on this matter: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." He was so lifted up, and He gave His blood—the life—to procure life for the world. Thus:

"Jesus hath died that we might live,
Might live to God alone;
In Him eternal life receive,
And be in spirit one."

(b) *It may not be amiss to furnish here a legend of mediæval Christendom, by which it was sought to show the identification of the Cross of Christ with the Tree of Life.* "When Adam was at the point of death, he sent Seth to the gates of Paradise, that he might gain access to the Tree of Life, and bring of the Oil of Mercy which flowed from its branches to anoint his body for burial. That oil he was not allowed to have. It might not be used for man till the Redemption was accomplished; but the cherub, that guarded the gates of Paradise, gave him a slip from the sacred Tree. He returned with this and planted it on his father's grave in Golgotha, the centre of the earth, "the place of a skull." From it came the wood of the rod with which Moses wrought signs

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and wonders in Egypt; of that which budded in token of the Divine sanction given to the priesthood of Aaron; of the pole on which the brazen serpent was lifted up; and, finally, that of the Cross itself."

Now, whatever may be judged of this legend, we know that the Branch of our Tree of Life has budded; the Saviour, typified by the serpent of brass, has been *lifted up*; the Tree of Life has been planted at Golgotha; and the real Oil of Mercy freely and abundantly flows from its branches to heal the sick, and anoint the dying for their burial.

(c) *Let us note the process of this universal law*—this seeming paradox—that death means life, or that through death we are to lay hold upon *eternal life*. It is thus fitly illustrated: "The astronomer in search of a missing star, looks away from the field in which it lies, and by a side-light it steals into his eye." So the Christian believer, seeking the star that heralds the morning of his spiritual and eternal day, fixes his vision on the region of darkness and death, and so the light of the better life steals into his soul.

Here, too, we devoutly recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The fragments of Sinai's broken law smite to the death; but the smitten victim is able triumphantly to boast: "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death."

(d) *There is, moreover, involved in this question our own death.* As Christ died that we might live, so we must die to live in Him. Christ crucified is the life

of the world; and we must be crucified with Christ to live our full-orbed life.

Listen to Paul announce the *general* doctrine, as he relates his personal experience: "I am crucified with Christ; yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." And again: "Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin." Now, *what* if Paul was dead when he was crucified? Is this statement an epitaph written for the Apostle's death in the flesh? This cannot be, for the record was not made by another, but by himself. It is not Peter affirming Paul is *crucified*, but Paul himself declaring it. It is, then, not death *in the flesh*, but death *to* "the flesh" and sin. He means, that the old *self-life*, of which he had himself been the centre—"the carnal mind"—was *crucified*. This carnal selfhood, that cannot be made subject to the law of God, but must be eliminated, is the root cause of all sinful error—of every act of the unnatural rebellion—of all iniquitous wrong-doing.

By the divinity of this doctrine, the Apostle demands of us, and of all who claim to have laid hold upon *eternal life*, the possession of a like experience with him, and the practical adoption of this formula: "And they that are of Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh."

How forcible these right words, touching this great transformation—not only *dead to sin*, but raised into

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newness of life in Christ Jesus! This is the profoundest, the grandest human experience possible. Thus, this *theory* becomes *history*—

“Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves, to higher things.”

INFERENCEAL LESSONS.

FIRST—*This view of eternal life leaves no ground for the modern theory of “Conditional Immortality.”* Its advocates deny that man was created absolutely immortal, but admit that this was his proper, natural destination. They claim that through sin man misses his destiny, immortality; that all who die in their sins forfeit their *hereafter*. They regard the loss of immortality not only as a *penal*, but as an eternal, punishment; but their definition of eternal punishment is, *annihilation*.

They, moreover, contend that immortality is conditional upon the faith that saves the soul; and that such—and they only—as believe in Christ unto salvation have a perpetuity of being.

It is self-evident that the fallacy in their argument lies in the *misuse of terms*. Eternal life they define *eternal being*. They do, indeed, admit that blessedness, or well-being, in the natural, legitimate, adjective sense, is the inheritance of the glorified; yet *eternal existence* is the substantial import of eternal life in their creed. Thus they confound things that essentially differ,—*eternal being* and *eternal life*. They wrest the 12th verse—“He that hath the Son hath

life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life"—so as to mean, *hath* or *hath not eternal existence*. But by the fair interpretation, upon which we base the nature and essence of eternal life, it means: He that hath the Son of God hath *spiritual life*, the *bud*, the *germ*, the *principle* of eternal life here; and in the heavens, the immortal soul, blood-washed, is eternally blessed; while the soul unwashed is "filthy still in interminable woe!"

SECOND—*This view of this grand fundamental truth is fatal to the obnoxious errors promulgated by certain modern Evangelists, such as the character of a present and the conditions of an ultimate salvation.*

(a) They carry to its full extent the doctrine of the "final perseverance of the saint." Saved *once* by *one* act of faith—*always* saved. In the words of an American Methodist, they claim "that a single act of faith furnishes a man with a *through ticket* for heaven," or "a paid-up, non-forfeitable policy assuring the holder that he shall inherit eternal life."

The other dreadful heresy is: That even the youngest disciple—born of God—*cannot be hurt by actual sin*, because he has a *dual nature*—the *abstract* man that cannot sin, and the *concrete* man that may sin. He has two *natures*, the one born of the Spirit and *sinless*, the other born of Adam and *sinful*. Sin in such a one is sin in the old Adam-nature, and not chargeable to the renewed man.

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Now to deal with and confute these hurtful errors, we have the effective combination of the *Scientific* and the *Scriptural method*. Just as in this age of astonishing scientific progress, the microscope is employed as a marvellous agency to furnish whole continents of evidence in favour of theism and against atheism, so the *particles* and *tenses* of the Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, aid in settling disputed points of theology and in refuting heresies. The highest authorities on the grammar of the Greek Testament show that, in the main, the tenses are employed there with exactly the same accuracy as in the standard Greek works. Such modern critics as Dean Alford and Bishop Ellicott enrich their commentaries with gems of truth discovered by the use of the microscope of modern harmony; and they throw floods of light upon important passages by noting the tenses used.

Let us, to subserve the purpose before us, cite your attention to the specific difference between the force of the *Aorist* and the *present* tense. The Aorist expresses *singleness* of act, the simple *momentary* occurrence—*once for all*—of an action in past time, as: "I wrote." The present denotes *what is going on now*, a *continuous, repeated, habitual* action, as: "I am believing;" while nowhere in the New Testament does the Aorist tense express what is *wont to be*, or *continuous*. Now, let us look through this critical microscope, at the *one act of faith* theory, that means—*Believe once for all*, and you have eternal life,

present and continuous. "And as Moses . . . even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever *believeth* may in Him have eternal life."* Is the word believe, the Aorist, and thus expressive of an action wrought and made complete in the past, and the result to abide in perpetual force? No: it is the present tense, absolutely implying whosoever is *continuously believing* shall *continually* possess eternal life.

Here is the conclusive evidence that the *believing* and the *having eternal life* are *commensurate*. Where the *faith is*, the *eternal life* is; and where this faith *ceases*, this life is *forfeited*. Hear the concurrent testimony of so eminent a Presbyterian minister as the Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York. He says: "See a young lady fire a pistol—'tis loaded and handed to her, she holds it gingerly, as if afraid it will shoot from the handle. She takes aim, but does not shoot. At length, screwing her courage to sticking point she takes aim, shuts her eyes and fires. The thing is done, and done with! But though some folk think so, saving faith is not something like that. You screw up your courage and believe *once for all*—and so the thing is done, and you are saved. No, no! that is a mistake. Real faith goes on from time to eternity!"

LASTLY—*So of the doctrine of devils about the dual natures.* Set over against that wretched theory the telling experience of Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ." Is this expressed in the original Greek by the

* John iii. 14, 15.

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present tense, and so means: I am *being crucified*—I am *always dying* but *never dead*? No, but by the *Aorist*, expressing a completed past act. "I have been crucified, and *remain dead* to self and sin *till now*!"

See how *thorough* as well as *cruel* is death by crucifixion. The legs must be broken if such means be necessary to the completion—the utterness, the *sickness*, the *maiming*, the *paralysis* of the self-life will not suffice! Nothing will avail short of the actual mastery of death throughout every fibre and faculty of the "old man with his deeds." Alas! We hear but of too many feeble, apathetic folk—half dead and alive! But with Paul, one of the most live, energetic men of the whole Christian age, there was no "half-and-half." He was *wholly* dead, and *wholly* alive. He did not travel in his "journeys oft," or work in his "labor more abundant," lugging an *old man* on one arm, and a *new man* on the other. He had "put off the old man, which was corrupt," as really and loathingly as he at one time flung off the coiling viper into the Lystrian fire; and for a permanency he had "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth!"

Dear Reader: Suffer me to ask—Have you thus believed and laid hold upon eternal life? Have you passed through the crucifixion agony? Are you dead and not yet dead? Alive, and yet not alive? Self-dead, and Christ living in you, and yours the Christ-life? If this desired consummation be yours, you can

sympathize with the struggl^l and the victory recorded
in that touching little poem of Adolf Monod :—

Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow,
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
“ All of self and none of Thee.”

Yet He found me ; I beheld Him,
Bleeding on the accursed tree :
And my wistful heart said faintly,
“ Some of self and some of Thee.”

Day by day His tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full and free,
Brought me lower, while I whispered,
“ Less of self and more of Thee.”

Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered,
“ None of self and *all* of Thee.” Amen !

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SERMON IX.

ALONE.

REV. J. TALLMAN PITCHER.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.”—*John* xii. 24.

BY this our Lord illustrates a great law in the moral world—that is, the necessity of each man dying to a life of mere selfishness before he can possess true life. Our own corrupt, selfish nature is the “corn of wheat” which must “die” and be buried if we would have true fellowship with God and man. “He that loveth his life shall lose it;” that is, he that loveth his life of self without God, must lose true life in God, just as he who refuses to part with the seed must lose the harvest. On the other hand, “He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal;” that is, he who parts with this selfish life in time, shall possess that true life which is eternal. There are just two conditions of being possible, either of which must constitute our character—love and self. “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” “He that loveth not knoweth not God.” “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.” Love and self, therefore, represent two distinct characters, either of which

makes each man as he is known to God. Love seeks its life outside of itself; self seeks its life in itself. Love, in order to possess, sacrifices selfishness; while self, in order to possess, keeps itself and sacrifices love. "Love seeketh not its own;" self always seeks its own. Love is humility, self is pride. Love attracts souls, self repels souls. Love is the eternal law of order, self is the eternal law of disorder and misery.

I. AN UNLOVING SOUL IS WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

"It abideth alone." The question here is not as to the reality of God's love toward us; that is certain. But if all this love of God to us is not believed in, or appreciated, or returned by us, what are we profited by it? Of what avail is all the beauty there is in the world, if the eyes for which it is made be blind? What profit is it that this world is full of divine music, if the ears that should hear be deaf? So it is of no avail that God loves us, if our hearts are closed against Him. Without mutual love between God and man there is no fellowship. It is mutual love that enables each to say, "I am Thine and Thou art mine." If we do not love God we do not know Him, for "he that loveth not knoweth not God." He may be everywhere present as He is, laying His good hand upon us, pouring upon us ten thousand proofs of His good-will; but unless the heart receives His love and returns it, it is practically the same to us as if God did not exist. To us, in this case, the world is without a Father, even as it is without a sun at noon-day to the blind man.

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There is no reconciliation between the unloving soul and God—no heart answering to heart: the selfish man “abides alone.”

II. THE UNLOVING SOUL IS WITHOUT CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

“It abideth alone.” Jesus is one with the Father in being, in character, and love to man. To prove His knowledge of us, His interest in us, and His love for us, would be to recall every feature in His character, and to record every word and action of His life. He came to our world not merely to atone for our sin, but to impart to us, through His Spirit, that life of love which He had from eternity with the Father, so that in possession of that life we might have fellowship with the Father and the Son and with one another. He represents Himself, accordingly, as standing at the door of our hearts, knocking, and saying, “If any man open the door unto Me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me.” This supping with Him is the very symbol of the fellowship of brotherly love. But how is it possible for such intercourse to be realized, if self bars the door and there is no love to open it and bid Jesus welcome? Jesus may be as near to us as He was to Satan for forty days in the wilderness, and yet between us, as between Christ and Satan, there may be an impassable moral gulf. Judas was as far from the Saviour when he sat by His side at the last Supper, and saw His face and heard His words, and had his feet washed by Him, as he was when he went

forth from that upper chamber as the son of perdition to his own place. So we may be near Christ in privileges, near when He saves others; but if we have not love to Him we are without Him and "abide alone." So long as we do not believe in Christ to the saving of our souls, so long as we do not possess and enjoy the love of Christ, we are "alone," without Christ in the world, and even *now* the sentence is passed, "I know you not." Jesus cannot dwell in the selfish heart; there is no fellowship, no bond of union, no mutual indwelling; the unbelieving, unloving heart is alone.

III. THE UNLOVING SOUL IS WITHOUT THE SPIRIT.

"It abideth alone." The Spirit sheds upon our hearts the love of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Hence the Spirit strives with us, and seeks to deliver us from the bondage of self and make us free in the glorious liberty of the children of God. But what if we receive the grace of God in vain? if we "quench the Spirit," "resist the Spirit," and prefer darkness to light? What if we refuse to be led by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit! In such a case is it not evident that whatever the love of the Spirit may be, however constant His ministrations, however unwearied His pleadings, however touching His appeals, yet if we will not yield ourselves to these, it surely may be said of us with perfect truth, "These are they who separate themselves, not having the Spirit." Though eternal

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Wisdom cries, "Turn ye at my reproof," yet if "scorners will delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge," to them the awful words may be addressed, "Because I have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hands and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof, therefore I also will laugh at your misery and mock when your fear cometh."

IV. THE UNLOVING SOUL IS WITHOUT COMMUNION
WITH SAINTS.

"It abideth alone." There is but one family in heaven and on earth, and one spirit pervades the whole, that is the spirit of love. Nothing can prevent Christians from loving each other, and just so far as they do not, they are without the Spirit of the Master. Read Paul's epistles for the loving salutations which the Christians of one country sent to those of another; many of them entire strangers, who had never seen each other and never expected to in the flesh, yet they all felt that they belonged to a common brotherhood, "one in Christ Jesus." They realized that they were "members one of another."

"We are not divided, all one body we—
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

Prisons, loss, and bereavement cannot shut Christians out of the family and household of God. There is such a bond of sympathy between Christians that they are drawn to each other for communion and fellowship, and the Christian loves the godless man

with a depth and reality which the selfish man cannot understand. Christians everywhere are making great sacrifices to win the unsaved, to share in this same love. Two persons may grow up in the same family, and be united by the closest earthly bonds, yet if they do not possess that true love which begins and ends in God, there is no real abiding union between them. The one without love to God is "*alone*" with self, and what could be more dreary! We may be separated from men, wander by the great ocean with nothing to break the silence but the beat of the waves; or we may go into the solitude of the wilderness and hear nought but the murmur of the winds; but there would not be that painful loneliness, for communion with God might be enjoyed. There is a loneliness of spirit, arising from selfishness, that no image can fully picture a state so utterly dreary and forlorn. The sailor upon his one solitary plank, the sole survivor of his foundered ship, and drifting hopelessly on a shoreless sea; the prisoner in his solitary cell, shut out for life from the busy tide of human existence which flows past his prison-house, what are these lonely beings to those who, through selfish idolatry, have separated themselves forever from communion with God, and from Christ, and from the Holy Spirit, and from man?

Now, the unloving soul is not rejected by all these holy and loving personalities, but they are rejected by him; they do not shut him out of their hearts, but he shuts them out of his heart; they do not refuse to

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lavish upon him all the riches of their affection and treasures, but he refuses to be enriched by them. Their language is, "Come with us and we will do thee good." But the selfish soul replies: "I desire only myself." What words can we use to express the enormity of his sin? He has shut out from his heart the God who created him for His glory, and made him capable of enjoying the Divine favor forever, and who, in infinite love, gave His Son to seek and save him. He has shut out the Saviour who left heaven and came to earth; who died on the cross, and who lives evermore to bless him. He has shut out the Holy Spirit who would be his sanctifier, his comforter and instructor, and he has excluded those who would love him as they love themselves. *All, all* these he has exchanged for *himself*. Could we, we would with all earnestness ask such a one, "How can you, how dare you do so, and lose your soul? How dare you rob your God of that which belongs to Him and not to yourself? You have done a deed of fearful wrong, for which you must answer to your God." And what is to become of such a man? Whither can he flee for life? He must live forever. And, oh! how inconceivably dreadful will be that condition, to live forever without any object or pursuit worthy of the immortal Spirit! To live forever without fellowship, without love, without hope! O where can he fly to be delivered from his insupportable burden? Is there no one who will then have compassion on the poor wretched self-outcast? Is there no one to whom he can fly for comfort when

the shadows of the eternal night are falling about his lonely spirit? Will he seek that sainted mother who bore him, who bent over his infant couch with many prayers and longings unutterable, whose whole life was an intercession before the throne of God with supplications and tears for his good, and who would have died to save him, and whose spirit ascended to God with the petition that her orphan child might meet her in heaven. Alas! alas! that child's struggles have been a lifelong struggle against eternal night. Could she meet him now, she could not love one whose heart was at enmity with her God and Saviour, and with all she loved and rejoiced in. But a selfish soul would not seek to have communion with one whose life consisted in communion with God. O how true it is that he who shuts out love, shall be shut out from love! In the wide universe where will he find fellowship? He has rejected God, the Saviour, the Spirit, and the saints; where could he find hearts so ready to bless him? Does he seek satisfaction in the things of earth? From their very nature they cannot satisfy the soul any more than sand can the eye. His associates are equally as helpless as himself. Worldly pleasures and companions afford him no satisfaction. He must confess with one at whose feet the world worshipped, and who worshipped himself supremely.

“Though gay companions round the bowl,
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill,
 Though passions fire the madden'd soul,
 The heart, the heart, is lonely still.”

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As years advance, the conviction steals over the soul of the mere man of the world and pleasure, like the frosts of midnight, that his companions are falling away from him; that he is becoming more and more thrown back upon himself, without the sympathy and brotherhood of human hearts. Old age comes, and the world becomes like a cell where he must suffer solitary confinement. The spirit of loneliness hems him in, and ever confines him within a narrower circle whose centre is himself; deluded, disappointed, and irritated, he, like the scorpion, turns the sting upon himself. The deathbed at last is reached, and, as he lies there, the cold, wintry winds of death blowing, he sees that he must go forth *alone* into the unknown world beyond. Oh, how sad and dreary! Cable after cable is snapping, which bound him to the outward and visible, and, like a disabled wreck, he is about to drift from his moorings at midnight on the bosom of a mysterious, shoreless sea! He has lived alone, and now he is going where he is a stranger. Where could we find a more remarkable illustration of this, in modern times, than the latter days of a once famous man of fashion? The man who once ruled as a despot over that charmed circle which was supposed to contain within it all that was refined, tasteful, and notably aristocratic; he who attracted peers and princes by his combined powers of wit, irony and flattery, became in the end poor and bankrupt, was detested and trampled on, no man going to him and no one caring for him—the very children in the streets mocking him—until at last

his mind began to waver, and he acted alone the plays of the past, and smiled, and bowed, and paid compliments to the ghosts of the great fashionable world as they flitted past his wandering eyes, until he was buried, a pauper and an outcast!

We have the history of a man who, to gain his own ends, murdered all who stood between him and a throne. But having done so—to gain self—he became a terror and a curse to himself. His own fear and troubled conscience created the spectres which crowded around him; which at midnight glared on him with accusing eyes, pointing to him with their icy fingers, and made him so wretched by their looks of righteous condemnation. This was self punishing self. What to him is the kingdom he governs, the soldiers massed about him, the crowd of courtiers who are ready in the morning to bend the knee and the neck to him in obedience? He is alone, alone in a crowd, alone with himself—and the agony is insupportable.

Saul illustrates the loneliness of a proud, selfish heart. He has forsaken the Lord, and he stands like a tree blasted by the lightning, scared and peeled—God-forsaken. The Philistines have assembled and are ready to make war on his kingdom. To-morrow the famous battle of Mount Gilboa is to be fought. Samuel is dead. See him, bent like a pine-tree under the midnight winter gale, as he wends his way to the foul cave of the witch of Endor, if he can only find one whom he can call friend, or who has a spark of sympathy with him. And when he sees, or thinks he

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sees, the form of Samuel, listen to that sad wail, as it comes from the depths of an utterly desolate and lonely heart: "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and *God is departed from me, and answereth me no more.*"

Such is the loneliness and selfishness of sin, and the misery in this world a selfish heart is doomed to endure. From this loneliness there is no escape except coming within the circle of abiding and eternal love. God's moral law is as unchanging as His own being, and it is only fulfilled in this: "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." But only through faith in Jesus, and in possession of the Holy Spirit, can this law of righteousness be fulfilled in us: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death; for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Let us believe in that love as forgiving all our sins through Him who died for us: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Let us look to Jesus as possessing that life of true love to God and man, which He died and lives to impart to every one who believes in Him and abides in Him by simple trust. Let us look to the Holy Spirit who will deliver us from self, and who will teach us that there is something better, more noble, and more enduring than self to live for; that if we live for self we frus-

trate the design of our existence, we fail to answer the ends of our creation, and rob God of that which He claims and has a right to claim. By living for ourselves we make our lives unmeaning. Let the corn of wheat fall to the ground. Then we shall live in the only true sense of living. Then others will be blest by us. Oh, don't let us throw ourselves away! We are not our own. We are the Lord's. He bought us. Let us not disown or dishonor the proprietorship.

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SERMON X.

AN OLD TESTAMENT VIEW OF THE GOSPEL.

REV. T. G. WILLIAMS,

President of the Montreal Conference.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—*Isaiah* lv. 10, 11.

PAUL wrote to the Church at Corinth, “We walk by faith.” By this declaration he designed to teach them to trust in the word of God and confidently anticipate its fulfilment to the utmost letter, even when to human thought the probabilities were overwhelmingly great against it. This lesson to the Corinthians was not one new to God’s people. Read the 11th chapter of Hebrews and you will learn of the earnest conflicts and glorious triumphs of ancient worthies, and you will also learn that every victory was won by faith in God. The days in which the exercise of this Christian grace is necessary have not yet passed. Faith in God is now as ever the condition upon which blessings are

bestowed, and a firm reliance on His word is necessary when we try to anticipate the realization of the prophecies concerning the future triumphs of the Church. The ancient people looked to the prophetic promises and calmly and trustfully awaited their fulfilment. Their faith should be ours, for there are declarations yet to be verified concerning the great work of the Gospel of Christ. History strengthens our confidence, for as the centuries are unrolled we can clearly trace the accomplishment of God's plan.

The beautiful simile employed by the prophet is full of suggestions. It speaks of the agency by which the kingdom of Christ is to be established, the manner in which the work shall be accomplished, the immediate result desired, and affirms strongly the absolute certainty of success.

I. PROCLAIMED TRUTH IS THE AGENCY BY WHICH
THE WORLD IS TO BE SAVED.

The simplicity and seeming weakness of this agency, as compared with the infinitely more than Herculean task to be accomplished, at once strikes us, and tends to fill us with doubt; but this is anticipated by the prophet, and in the preceding verses we are taught not to measure the results of God's plans by the same tests we apply to similar efforts of men. We are reminded that "God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts," and we are to infer that as "His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts," so the results of God's plans shall

be correspondingly greater than similar means which are the outcome of human thoughts and ways.

The figure is that of a field, upon which it is desired to produce a fruitful crop. This field is carefully prepared by the skilful husbandman, the seed is faithfully scattered and harrowed in, and all promises an abundant reward for the toil performed. Now the husbandman waits for the promise of his reward. Days and weeks pass by, yet no green blade springs up through the brown soil to gladden his eye. He waits and wonders what is needed to crown his labors with success. While he waits the clouds gather and the rain showers fall upon the prepared field. They moisten the soil and they soften the hard, dry shell of the grain, and soon the beautiful mantle of green covers the field, and the toiler has the promise of his reward. The field is the human heart. Thousands of influences tend to prepare it for the reception of the gospel of peace. The existence of God, with faint glimpses of His moral nature; our responsibility and our guilt, our fear of punishment, and desire for pardon, and all else that natural religion teaches us, may be pressed upon our acceptance and yet no spiritual life will result. The field may be cultivated ever so perfectly, and seeds of truth scattered ever so widely, and it will remain barren and unproductive till the truth of the Gospel be proclaimed—this, God's greatest word to humanity, must be taught before the former truths and the human heart can be brought into such relation to each other that spiritual life and fruit will

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result. But when this marvellous word is proclaimed the moral desert gives signs of life, and the seeds long buried and unproductive feel the blessed inspiration of a new life, and burst forth into fruitfulness. What numerous evidences of this Divine power the history and present record of God's Church present! Men's hearts have yearned for comfort for long and wearying years, they have felt their guilt and feared the wrath of a Deity but dimly apprehended. They thirsted for the truth, and when the Gospel was proclaimed it was to their sin-sick souls as the blessed showers on the thirsty field. Life and gladness immediately sprang forth. But the text teaches us—

I. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PROCLAIMED TRUTH
COMES TO HUMAN HEARTS.

“As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven.” We are here taught to expect variety in the methods in which the truth shall come to human hearts. The rain sometimes falls so gently from the low-hanging clouds that the drooping flower, instead of bowing more lowly under the falling shower, lifts its dusty and fading leaves heavenward to receive the gracious baptism. So in the kingdom of grace God sends the showers of grace gently upon hearts which thirst for the life-giving truth; and the toil-worn are revived, the faint-hearted strengthened, and the despairing filled with Christian courage for life's battle. The thirstiness and barrenness of the field is recognized only to be remedied. So the sinfulness and ruin of

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the human heart is remembered only that it may be removed. God's law sanctions the charge of man's conscience as to his guilt, and declares that "the soul that sinneth shall die;" but the Gospel truth comes like the gently-falling shower and whispers: "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous;" and, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And under these blessed truths the bowed heart lifts itself, and the tears of penitence are dissipated by the smile of God's reconciling grace. Sometimes the rain descends in the storm and tempest, bearing before it all opposing objects, forcing for itself a path denied to the gentle shower. So God's word is sometimes accompanied with such manifestations of the power of God that the most obdurate and sullen hearts are terror-stricken, and bow submissively to its demands. And again, how *silently* the raindrop and the snowflake come down out of the clouds of heaven. So silently that the harmony of the most delicate music is not marred by the descent of the myriads of particles which fill the air, nor is the slumber of the most wakeful and fevered disturbed. As silently does God's all-powerful word enter the human heart, breaking down all the stubborn prejudices, subduing all the angry passions, and purifying the polluted fountains of sinful life. As the warm breezes of the tropics silently wrap themselves around the wandering iceberg from the arctic seas and dissolve it again into the water of the ocean,

so silently does God's word enwrap human hearts and melt them into sweet submission to the Divine will.

But we are also taught—

III. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT DESIRED FROM THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD.

“Maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.” Turn to the figure used. The sower prepares the field, scatters the grain, covers it with the soft soil, watches the falling shower, and anticipates his reward. But what is the reward he covets? What is the result for which he has toiled? The green blade which carpets the field is not his reward. Beautiful as it may be, it is in itself valueless. Nor will the strong stalk repay his toil and gladden his heart; it must grow till the full corn in the ear is produced, and the husbandman finds in his field the *reproduction* of the seed sown before he obtains the object for which he labored. So in the field of the human heart. It is not the pleasant appearance of a well-begun Christian life, however full of promise it may be, that rewards the Great Sower who has scattered the seed of life in our hearts; nor is it the fearless profession of devotion to Christ, nor the outward obedience to His law; but it consists in the *reproduction* of the same truth in our hearts and lives. Nor is the sower satisfied unless his field yield him an *increase*. To return naught, is obvious loss of all; to return the same as sown, means the loss of all the labor and the disap-

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pointment of hopes entertained, as the unprofitable servant who returned his Lord's talent; and only when there is an increase and development of truth does the Great Husbandman receive the return desired. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." This increase is necessary to the further extension of the work. Seed is required for other fields, and bread to sustain the toilers employed in scattering this seed of life. What God requires of each human heart is the *reproduction* of this truth in the life and effort of each, and its *multiplication* while thus reproduced. Short of this, the husbandman receives not the object of his toil; nor will the field receive the benediction bestowed upon the fruitful soil.

But the work is so stupendous, the obstacles in the way of its accomplishment so many and so potent, the enemies so watchful and untiring, the progress during past years so slow, and the discouragements so numerous, that we require special encouragement to cheer our hearts and nerve our arms for the conflict. God has not withheld it, for He has given us in the text—

IV. THE PLEDGE OF CERTAIN AND PERFECT SUCCESS.

"So shall My word be that goeth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

This is a wonderful thought here expressed. As

every drop of the falling shower, every flake of snow in the wild and blinding snowstorm which falls upon the thirsty soil and is lost to human sight, or driven with the hurricane's blast through the wild mountain gorges, still serves its purpose and ultimately returns to the blue heavens in the vapory cloud, so every word of truth is cared for by God and shall accomplish its purpose, and then return to God's bar to testify as to the result of its errand—whether it has been “savor of life unto life or of death unto death” to him who heard it. No matter when spoken—whether in the dim twilight of the coming gospel day, or in the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness—it shall go back to God bearing its testimony. No matter where spoken—whether in the stately cathedral, with its luxurious surroundings, to the powerful and refined, or in the cave on the mountain side, where the persecuted peasant fled to hear the truth under the ban of the law, often hounded to the death by a brutal soldiery—it is still the same truth, and equally precious in the eye of the Great Sower, who will call it all back to Himself in the final day. No matter by whom spoken—whether by the dignified priest, the simple preacher, the wise philosopher, or the dying peasant-martyr—whether spoken with soul-stirring eloquence and convincing force, or with the feeble and tremulous lisps of the merest child—the seed is still precious, and shall return unto Him at whose command it was sent forth. But another thought is connected with this return of God's word to Himself. “It shall not

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return unto Me void." It shall not return empty of result. It goes back freighted with eternal consequences of weal or woe to those to whom it was sent. Its record there is a perfect and eternal record, and relates to the everlasting future of human souls. Its testimony will be either for or against every son of man. None so high that he can escape; none so low that he is exempt. What will it testify concerning the way we have received it? But we must ask what testimony it bears here. "It shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The work of this preached word, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is "to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." This it has done for us, and our part is to accept these truths, yield to their saving influences, practise them in life, and, inspired with a strong faith in God's word, labor on in this great work till God shall give us release from labor and pronounce the eternal welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord."

SERMON XI.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

REV. J. J. RICE, COBOURG.

Assistant Secretary of the General Conference.

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!”—*Psalm*
lxxxiv. 1.

THIS is the language of *love*; and in this brief sentence is forcibly expressed the royal Psalmist's impassioned love for God, through the medium of His recognized abode. And it may be remarked, in passing, that wherever love exists, it seeks to make that existence known and understood. It is a principle inherently active and self-asserting; and, true as the needle to the pole, love's tendency is unerringly and unceasingly in the direction of its object. The presence or possession—as the case may be—of that object is its crowning good—the good of its ambition; while absence, or deprivation, is to its subject an unmixed misery. And whether applied to heaven-born or earth-born love, all this is equally true; for love, in operation, is alike in either case. Every-day experience amply proves this position as to natural

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love; and Seagraves, in his sweet *Pilgrim's Song*, thus puts the same idea as to its spiritual application:

"Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course.
Fire, ascending, seeks the sun—
Both speed them to their source:
Thus a soul, that's born of God,
Pants to see His glorious face;
Upwards tends to His abode,
To rest in His embrace."

It is manifest that objects are not equally attractive to all. Indeed, what to one may be superlatively lovely may have no attraction for others, and to some may appear positively repulsive. And this is equally so of Him who is the "altogether lovely;" for, with the poet, many of us can say to-day:

"By man despised, rejected, scorned,
No beauty they can see.
With grace and glory all adorned,
The loveliest form to me."

With so much by way of introduction, we now proceed to the discussion of

I. THE OBJECT.

The adjective rendered "amiable" (that is, beloved, lovely, admirable) refers to the "tabernacles" of Jehovah—dwelling-places of the Lord of hosts. The whole idea is evidently borrowed from the tabernacle, which, by Divine appointment and under very specific instructions, was prepared and set up by the Israelites at the beginning of their journey towards Canaan; and

which was the centre of religious attraction, and "the glory in the midst of them," for the forty years of their subsequent wilderness sojournings. "Tabernacles" signifies places of *temporary* rather than of fixed or permanent abode; and in this is implied the evanescent, short-lived nature of the race, and all that belongs to sublunary existence. The "tabernacles" of the "Lord of hosts" may, in general terms, be defined as sanctuaries, church edifices, places of worship; buildings dedicated to Jehovah, and set apart exclusively for His service. Such an erection, under whatever dispensation, and in every land, has been regarded as and designated the "house of God." And all worshippers, whether of the true God or of idols, have recognized the reasonableness of having such edifices in which to assemble for religious worship. God's ancient Israel, especially, multiplied their synagogues so as to have a "house of prayer" within easy reach of all; while upon their magnificent temple at Jerusalem they cheerfully and liberally bestowed of their means, first to erect and furnish, and afterwards suitably to sustain its ordinances. Under the present dispensation, the "house of God" is a term quite as full of meaning as of old; and in every land the most exemplary and devout of God's people are found among those who have deepest regard for and most regularly participate in the exercises and ordinances of the sanctuary. And this, too, irrespective of the cost or inexpensiveness of the structure; for the rude log shanty church of the pioneer backwoodsman is just as much

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an object of attraction, in its place, as is the gorgeous cathedral of the city full.

II. THE SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS APPELLATION.

It may, however, be objected that God, being omnipresent, is, of necessity, *everywhere*; and hence to speak of any particular place as His abode would be to assert an acknowledged truism equally as true of every place. We reply that in addition to Jehovah's necessary general presence—which all who hold anything like correct conceptions of Deity admit—God has also, in every age, vouchsafed a *special* presence to His own, and that this has always been at once the distinguished right and privilege of such as loved and served Him. In harmony with this view, many promises appear, of which two or three, however, will suffice: "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee."* "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."† "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."‡ "Ye are the temples of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them."§ In harmony with these promises are many declarations, such as "The voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden," as evidently a daily Edenic experience in the original estate of our first parents; "Enoch walked with God;" "And God said unto Noah,

*Exo. xx. 24. †Matt. xviii. 20. ‡John xiv. 23. §2 Cor. vi. 16.

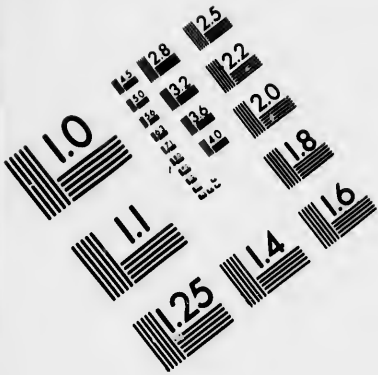
the end of all flesh is come before Me, . . . but with thee will I establish My covenant . . . Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with them." We read also that "the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God," and all the pious patriarchs were similarly blessed, for the brief record is remarkably full of proof texts, as of Moses at "the back-side of the desert," by Horeb; and the child Samuel as, aroused from his slumbers, he listens to what God audibly declares concerning Eli's sinning sons; and all the prophets had such special manifestations, and, under the Divine afflatus, these "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Of course, when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men," this unique manifestation of the Deity was beheld alike by all among whom "He went about doing good;" but even in the incarnate Logos the saints had special rights and privileges—He was to them what He was not to the world. Having, however, ascended up on high, again this special and exclusive right of God's people is more clearly seen, and the indwelling of "the Comforter" becomes the birthright experience of every child of God. The rights of individual believers in this respect become also the right of the sacramental host; and in this way is fulfilled the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"—furnishing thus the possibility and the pledge of the ultimate accomplishment of the Saviour's mis-

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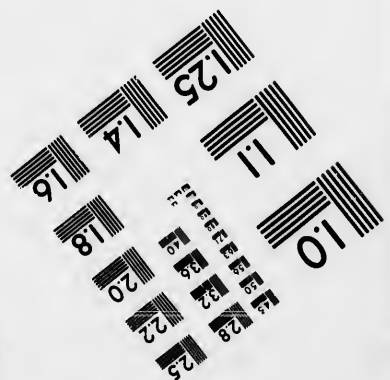
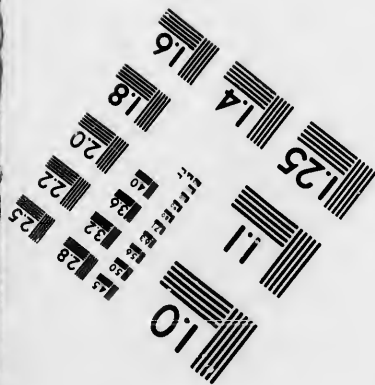
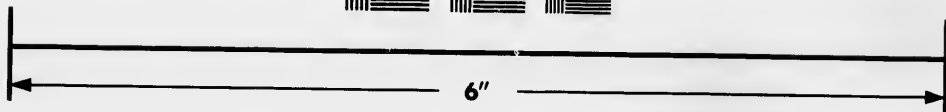
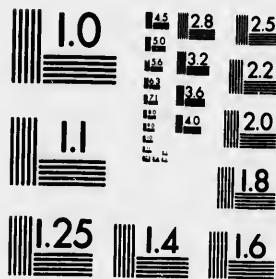
sion to mankind. It is scarcely necessary to add that as the Gospel dispensation excels in glory all others, so the special manifestation of Jehovah, under this dispensation, is at once the most glorious and tangible, and in every way satisfactory, of all that God has ever vouchsafed to His people. We now proceed to adduce, as a necessary practical application of what has been advanced, some of the advantages such Divine favor affords.

1. *As a source of comfort and rejoicing.*—All that has ever been said, or written, or felt, as to the delight of God's people in His sanctuary centres in this; and, apart from this one feature, the term "God's house" is without significance, and the place without attraction to the truly pious. In the appointed pilgrimage to the temple at Jerusalem, we find that the weary journey is forgotten in the anticipated good of at length "appearing in Zion before God;" and so the Israelites proceed "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." And when, in the days of Ezra, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, it was said they "wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy—so the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off." The delight of Israel's sweet singer and king in the house of his God is unmistakably presented: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let





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us go up unto the house of the Lord ;" " For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand ;" " I had rather be a doorkeeper (*i.e.*, occupy a place at the threshold) in the house of my God than to dwell within the tents of wickedness." And what, in this respect, was true of old, is equally so to-day. Those who drink most deeply into the Divine mind, and are most devout as worshippers and exemplary as Christians, are most regular and frequent attendants upon sanctuary exercises and ordinances, and deprivation of these privileges is counted as heaviest calamity. The language of every pious soul, at least in spirit, is—

" Not the fair palaces
 To which the great resort
 Are once to be compared with these
 Where Jesus holds His court.
 Give me, O Lord, a place
 Within Thy blest abode,
 Among the children of Thy grace,
 The servants of my God."

And Jehovah's special presence with His people alone accounts for this universally-expressed delight in God's house.

2. *As essential to faith, faithfulness, and success.*— It was a great truth expressed by Jesus to His disciples, " Without Me ye can do nothing." How fully the Lawgiver of Israel realized this, is clearly indicated in his earnest pleadings with God to reverse His avowed purpose of withdrawal from His greatly-sinful people. It is true that His angel was still to accompany them ; but Moses knew that nothing less

than the presence of the King Himself would do, and so he prays: "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Such powerful intercession is not in vain, for at length Jehovah assures His faithful servant: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give you rest." Again, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, the pious potentate personally presents to Israel's God that magnificent offering of His people, and begs for its acceptance at their hands. For seven long years he had incited his subjects to liberality, and in every way had helped forward the structure to completion. And now, in wondering admiration of his surroundings, he gratefully acknowledges "the great hand of their God upon them" in the matter, and feels that only one crowning good is needed to make his joy complete—it is the manifestation of the Divine Presence with His people. For this he prays; but, seemingly shocked at the presumptuous aspiration entertained, he exclaims: "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house that I have builded?" Still, confident that nothing else can supply the lack of this, he prays; and presently the prayer is answered, for the record reads, "The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord;" and from that time forward, while the Hebrews remained faithful to God, His presence with His people was their joy; as, in answer to their supplications, He maintained their cause, and no weapon formed against them prevailed.

Under the present dispensation, the disciples were actually forbidden to begin their ministry after the ascension of their Lord, until first "endued with power from on high." That word of prohibition is explained in the second chapter of the Acts, where it is declared that, after a ten days' protracted meeting, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." And then, as the astonished multitude rushed in to examine into this strange phenomenon, forthwith these men, whose hearts the Lord had touched, gave utterance with "tongue of fire," to gospel truth, and, with the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying, mighty results are immediately reached, for "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." In the early centuries of the Christian Church, and so long as it leaned alone upon this divine qualification, its operations were attended with unvarying and wonderful success, their fidelity to God was unshaken by even the tortures and martyrdoms sanctioned by and instigated under Nero and Domitian; and their faith was mighty through God, "to the pulling down of strongholds." And all down through the ages, whenever, and wherever, and by whomsoever God's work has been done in God's own way, and in humble reliance upon His presence and power, it has been attended with like results. Lack of success has only followed a condition of backslid-

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ing and apostasy, in which the query first arose, "Is the Lord amongst us or not?" and then, instead of returning and doing her first works, the Church has wickedly departed still further from her God, and grieved His Spirit so as to drive Him from her. Then it has appeared how utterly futile are all human advantages in evangelistic endeavor, where God's special presence and power are wanting, and that however patronized and petted by the State or mighty ones of earth, and with all the supplemented aids of finished education, prelatical ordination, and the authority of an organized system claiming prerogatives as exclusively the Church of God, the declaration of old, uttered under similar circumstances, is of universal and eternal application, "I have not sent them, therefore they shall not profit My people at all." God's method is a *preached gospel* to mankind, and with the power from on high accompanying, alone can meet and correct the world's great want, because it only has Divine sanction. Priestcraft finds no countenance in the Great Commission, and by it nor by any other substitute, can gospel preaching ever be successfully supplanted. And since a Divine Commission is essential to success, there is more than mere form of words in the question asked by our Church of every candidate for ordination, "Do you think in heart that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the office of a minister?"

In conclusion, permit me to ask what is "God's

house" to you? Is it amiable, beloved, superlatively attractive? Then, if your hearts be right with God, this must be so only as the result of God here manifesting Himself to your waiting souls. Here, engaged in holy exercises or participating in the appointed ordinances, these prove to you a benison. Here, waiting upon God, you renew your spiritual strength; by means of "the word," you are established and built up in your most holy faith; and, with perfect confidence in the appointed means, you here pray, and believe that God will make bare His arm in the salvation of precious souls. The chief source of joy to you under such circumstances is, as was realized and expressed by the dying Wesley, that "God is with us"—God, in His sin-pardoning and soul-sacrificing power; God, filling your souls with celestial joy, and peace, and love. In such a frame the "house of God" will be a blessed reality—there will be Holy Ghost praying, Holy Ghost singing, Holy Ghost Bible reading and exposition, Holy Ghost teaching and preaching, and with these the "shout of the King in the camp" is sure, and that shout will be the signal of liberty for the captive soul—the powers of darkness foiled, and victory on Israel's side. Under such divine power in the sanctuary, the sinner must either run or yield. Methodism has wondrously reproduced this apostolic simplicity, and faith, and zeal, and power, and to our common Methodism, to as great an extent at least as to Christians of any other name, the sanctuary has proved the house of God. In proportion as we perpetuate the

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distinctive principles and practice of Primitive Methodism, shall we continue to realize apostolic and Primitive Methodist success in winning souls, and, in exact ratio with this, will be the measure of our joy in the sanctuary. Recognizing this, let our earnest aspiration be—

“Haste again those days of grace,
 When assembled in our place,
 Signs and wonders marked the hour ;
 All were filled and spoke with power ;
 Hands uplifted, eyes o'erflowed ;
 Hearts enlarged, self destroyed :
 All things common now will prove,
 All our common stock be love.”

Then, indeed, will the language of our text be the language of us all, “How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts !” So let it be ! Amen.

SERMON XII.

THE LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

BY REV. J. BURWASH, M.A., CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”—*Deut.* xxix. 25.

“**Y**E shall be as gods knowing good and evil,” was the form of the first temptation. Moral ruin was the result of yielding to it. The first story of history is often repeated—moral ruin comes from the attempt to seek after forbidden knowledge. There are bounds to our knowledge, and there are bounds to our investigation. The disregard of this fact is sure to result in disaster. No subject is more practical than the one before us. For among the transgressors are all ranks of intellect and all grades of scholarship. Not only the speculative thinker by profession, the man of books and theories, is in danger; but the staid and prosaic man of business, with his bonds, and stocks, and market quotations. How many risk their eternal destiny on some plausibly-put cavil, which had its origin in unwarrantable and sinful speculations about problems whose solution is unattainable! There

are few who have not, some time or other, trespassed on this forbidden ground. All grades of culture and intelligence are found stumbling together in a darkness which is the result of their entering on the forbidden ground of "the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God."

All objects of knowledge, with reference to our capability of knowing them, may be divided into two classes—the discoverable and the undiscoverable, or what we can find out for ourselves, what is within the reach of our powers of investigation, and what we can never find out by ourselves, because it lies beyond our means of acquiring knowledge. The first is the province of man, the province of science; the other is the province of God, and, as far as God has willed it, of Revelation. With the first we are not concerned today. The text does not in any manner refer to it. I need not point out that secret here means, not merely unknown, but that which cannot be known. It is put as the contrast to "the revealed,"—that is, God's province, the undiscoverable, is divided into two divisions which are put in contrast; the secret, which He has kept to Himself; the revealed, which, though undiscoverable by us, He has chosen to make known. This passage has been taken to mean that the unknown facts of nature are forbidden to human inquiry. I perceive the wind blow, but I am not to question whence it cometh and whither it goeth. I see the hyssop clinging to the wall, but I am not to peer too curiously into the laws of its life and growth. I see

the lightning flash across the sky, but I am not to try and discover its nature, nor rashly ask the secret of its power. This was the error of the early ecclesiasticism in its blind and foolish opposition to scientific research. This and other Scriptures were wrested, if not to the total destruction, at least to the grievous injury of truth. Modern thought is still suffering from the effects of the violent rebound from restrictions so unreasonable and unnatural. The world is ours, with all it contains; the plant, the wind, the lightning. God has given "the earth to the children of men." He gives us senses to acquire knowledge; reason to collate and compare the facts of sense; a faith that the revelations of sense are facts; and with this equipment of sense, and faith and reason, I go out into this world of wonders to make it my own. I examine the structure of the plant, and determine the laws of its life. I telegraph to the west and find out whence the wind cometh; and then to the east, and find out whither it goeth. I watch the storm play over the face of the continent, and get new ideas of the wisdom, goodness, and power of Him who "holds the winds in His fists, and the waters in the hollow of His hand." God made this world and filled it with exquisite beauties and harmonies; does it not seem wrong if the only being He made capable of appreciating them should disregard them? I never examine the most insignificant flower but I think, What am I that I should not think it worth while to study a beauty which God thought it worth while to create?

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But though we claim the realm of sense as the province of man, and therefore not included in the forbidden "secret things," we are far from asserting that every object of sense is an object of absolute knowledge. Our senses are very far from telling us all about the most familiar objects. Of no one thing in the universe can we say, "I know all about it." What Tennyson said about his little "flower out of the crannied wall" could be said about every grain of sand, of every drop of water. Could we know it "*all in all*," "we should know what God and man is." Absolute knowledge of any one thing would imply absolute knowledge of everything, and that is of God alone. Every path of knowledge leads to an outer darkness of mystery; the prudent man stops at the boundary, but "the simple pass on and are punished." How punished? With moral ruin and disaster. "For such result," says one of the greatest of modern scientists, "must follow whenever a finite intelligence imagines that he has arrived at the ultimate scientific basis of things;" that is, that he can comprehend and explain all connected with the objects of sense. To know all is of God alone. Thus it is that so many scientific investigators have been led to say in their heart, "there is no God." When they came to the boundaries of discoverable fact they did not stop; but, dropping the microscope and the scalpel, they plunged wildly into the enchanted ground of speculative theory. They received, in their own withered, moral natures, the due reward of their rashness; for even in connection with

the commonest objects of nature there are "secret things that belong unto the Lord our God."

But more especially do we believe the caution of the text to be directed against unwarrantable speculations concerning that great region about which sense has nothing to reveal—the spiritual. There are questions which must arise in every thoughtful mind concerning man's origin, relations to the unseen, and eternal destiny. The assertion of the text we take to be, that the only answers to these questionings which it is lawful to seek are to be found in the Revelation given us by our Maker. Especially do I believe its caution to be directed against wild speculation concerning the being and moral government of God. It has been revealed that there is a God; but, in the very nature of the case, there must be much in the being of the Infinite and Eternal that the finite mind cannot know. Man's lips lisp the word infinite; but who can comprehend "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all?" Man's thoughts may wander through eternity, but they cannot reach back to the "from everlasting." We say there is a God. What does *that* mean? It means to the child a great and good Man who lives above the sky. It means to the unlettered a great Spirit who has a supreme power, and will reward and punish. It means to the sage of many years and many thoughts, the Cause of all causes, the Principle of all principles, the final Reason of all that is.

Though Revelation has declared God, the very revelations have multiplied the mysteries of His being.

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The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ! One God ! Three persons ! How are they three ? How is He one ? How are they related ? How are they distinct ? Stay, rash enquirer. This is not the place for the curious questioning of reason, but for the reverent worship of faith. We ask no further ; we reason no more ; but fall on our knees exclaiming :

Almighty God, to Thee
 Be endless honors done ;
 The undivided Three
 And the mysterious One—
 When reason fails with all her powers,
 Then faith prevails and love adores.

The being of the revealed God may be a puzzling mystery, but to suppose yourself and the universe, and no God, would be a more puzzling mystery still.

More presumptuous still, if possible, than the attempts to fathom the being of God, are the attempts to understand and explain all connected with His moral government. Men daringly question the goodness of God. How came sin in the universe of a holy Creator ? How could a holy God make a being such that it was possible for him to think of evil, to rebel against his Maker, to seduce others into rebellion ? How was he allowed to continue in existence with all the evil and sin that he had originated, age after age, contaminating a new role of beings and involving them in the same estate of sin and misery ? Why, when sin was allowed to enter the world, was it punished by death, disease and pain, that affect alike the innocent infant

and the hoary profligate? Why, when the Saviour for sin was provided, did the world have to wait so long for His coming? Why did those royal hearts, of whom the world was not worthy, go down to the grave mourning over the world's wickedness and woes? Century after century, why did He bury so many workmen before He opened up the fulness of the work? What a power Daniel would be with the printing-press and telegraph! What a tower of strength Ezekiel or Isaiah would be in our pulpits or on our platforms! Stop! Stop! There are many things in the government of the world which make the goodness of God a puzzle; but what a horrible puzzle a malignant God would be! O, to think of the Supreme as delighting in torture! Of His having us sentient beings in His giant grasp, and He malignant! We cannot endure the thought one moment. But who dare question the goodness of His nature or government? Why, the very cyclone would stop in its wild course to rebuke such audacity, and, in the voice that spake to the patriarch, thunder out, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" It would almost seem as if such impiety would arrest the very light in its swift course to the outermost bounds of shoreless space and bring out the enquiry, "Hast Thou commanded the morning since Thy days, or caused the dayspring to know his place?" "Where is the way where light dwelleth, or darkness; where is the place thereof?" Do not meddle with the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God.

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"Those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children." All the undiscoverable is not the unknowable, as the agnostics would fain assert. Things which we could never discover for ourselves have been revealed. This very soul-thirst after knowledge of things beyond the realm of sense argues the necessity of a revelation. Like every other faculty of the soul, it ought to have the legitimate field for its exercise. When a naturalist takes up a fish from the green depths of the ocean and finds it has eyes, he concludes that, hundreds of fathoms beneath the surface where that animal had its home, there is light. There would not have been an eye if there had been no light for the eye. So this very desire to know the unseen proves that there has been a revelation; there is light for *that eye*. "Granted," says one of the ablest of modern skeptics, "that man has an immortal and spiritual nature, and you must grant the necessity of a revelation." As there is light for the eye, sound for the ear, pleasant flavor for the taste, so for this immortal soul-hunger there is a satisfying portion. "Those things which are revealed do belong unto us and to our children."

Blessed Bible; our confidence in it, our delight in it, only increases as the years go by. Here we find all we want. Though much is hidden, though there is nothing revealed simply to please an idle fancy or gratify a foolish curiosity, yet all has been revealed that is necessary to life and godliness. I turn to-day towards the earliest memories of childhood and recall

the first experience of conscious existence. This is what I see in the mists of the past: A dark and stormy winter's night, the snow sifting against the window panes, the melancholy howling of the wind give my young mind ideas of the operation of powers I cannot understand. The bright fire blazes on the hearth. Father and mother and friends are there. I remember going with childish curiosity and opening the door. Cold, darkness, mystery were there, that filled me with a shuddering sense of awe and fear. It was a world I did not understand, and I remember the dread that seized my young heart. But I remember, too, the feeling of gratitude, and comfort, and confidence with which I closed the door and turned back to the warmth and light and loving faces within. Brethren, my world has widened since; but that infant memory tells my experience still. On every side there is darkness and mystery, and the operation of mighty powers of which I know but little. I peer curiously into them sometimes, but my heart grows cold, and I shudder with fear at the awful mystery that surrounds my life; but I do not go out to stay in the cold, but turn back with gratitude to the warmth and light of this revelation, and my only wish is to abide forever with deep content in the light and love of my Father's home. Revelation is my home. What care I for the darkness and mystery without? All I want is there. Though much has been hidden, yet all the soul requires for its highest needs has been revealed. The mystery of the Trinity is hidden, but the Fatherhood of God

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in Christ is revealed. The origin of sin is hidden, but the salvation from sin is revealed. The explanation of a mysterious Providence is hidden, but there is revealed the glorious certainty that the "Lord God will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

"That we may do all the words of this law." Revelation is made for the purpose of practical life. The truth is not conveyed to us in the form of abstruse metaphysical propositions, but of plain directions for living. A grain of wheat has, wrapped up in its little compass, many mysteries. We don't know the mysteries, but we know the practical facts about it, and we act on these. We don't know all about the philosophy of life, but we do know that if we put it in the ground, it will grow, and we don't wait till we know all the mysteries of growth before we plant the seed. What a mystery it is, that the little green blade should appear above the brown earth! What mysteries in the ripening of the full corn in the ear; what mysteries in the nourishment it afterwards affords my body, as the little life-builders take from it in one place bone, in another brain, in another muscle! I do not stop to solve the mysteries before I eat my food, but I act on the knowledge I have, and the little grain does not make any whit the less brain, bone or muscle, because I cannot solve the mysteries. So there are mysteries in the government of God, mysteries in sin, mysteries in the atonement, but we have the practical knowledge that there is a God, there is a Saviour, there is forgive-

ness with Him that He may be sought unto. We act on this, we are forgiven, and the freedom from sin is not the less blessed that we do not know all about the mysteries of our spiritual life.

Yes, the gospel has been such a power in the world because it taught men to "do" and not to speculate. Why, these dreamers, these speculators have been at their unprofitable trade ever since the days of Job and his friends, and they are no farther advanced than they were then in the knowledge of these "secret things." What intellectual giants those philosophers were, but they did nothing for the world, while a few fishermen of Judea went out preaching a few plain practical truths that the veriest child can understand, and began a work that will never cease till it has regenerated the human race. The truest philosophy of life is not found in philosophy, but in faith—faith in the Supreme and in the great truths of living which He has revealed to us. The books of nature apart from revelation can only bring despair; we are puzzled and confounded, but we are not helped or comforted in spirit by the majesty of the material universe. I have sometimes gone out and gazed into the infinite blue above till a sense of oppression came upon me. "The universe is so great, so vast, and I so insignificant, the creation of a day, an atom in this little world; and then, worse than my littleness, my vileness, my sin! What is the Maker of these worlds, the owner of this wealth of worlds, that He should notice me in my unworthy life! Are not the agnostics

right? He has made great laws, but has left them to work out their own results without any care as to how they affect the individual life? But turning back to the revealed word, how sweet to the soul! "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." The measure of the majesty is the measure of the mercy; the measure of the grandeur is the measure of the grace.

SERMON XIII.

HOLINESS NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE.

BY REV. LOUIS N. BEAUDRY,

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—
"Be ye holy, for I am holy."—1 Peter i. 16.

WHEN God created the heaven and the earth, He made them a counterpart of Himself, the perfect garb of His own thoughts. He said to them, "Be perfect, for I am perfect;" "and God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Thus, in the tiniest blade of grass or flower up to the loftiest oak or pine, in all their stems, leaves and fruits, or seeds, also in bubbling springs and babbling brooks, in majestic rivers and the melancholy waste of ocean, in clouds and storm, in sunshine and in shade; yea, indeed, in all that God has made, are seen tracings of His own divine perfection.

And thus if upon the lower creation, that is, upon the material, God has written His law of perfection, why should it be called in question whether God can, in the regeneration, produce a perfect race, as a holy people?

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Three distinct yet correlative propositions will be presented and discussed in this connection:—

- I. The necessity of holiness.
- II. The possibility of holiness.
- III. How to obtain the blessing.

We will discuss our first proposition, namely:

I. THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS, UNDER A TRIPLE ASPECT.

(1) *As it relates to ourselves.* This alone can harmonize the hitherto discordant elements or faculties of our fallen nature. Sin has brought this discord in our nature. It has defiled and cast into ruin this magnificent temple. So long as sin remains in any of its forms or forces within us, it must be antagonistic to the unity of our faculties, and to our growth in grace. It must be eradicated, root and branch. The "old man" must be "crucified" and "cast out," before the "new life," the real resurrected life, can prevail. Nothing but holiness can satisfy our longings. Our souls are ever crying:

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin,
And fully set my spirit free:
I cannot rest till pure within,
Till I am wholly lost in Thee."

(2) *Our relations to our fellows make this state of grace a necessity.* As Christians, we cannot be perfectly united in one, answerable to Christ's prayer for His disciples without being wholly sanctified, or

made free from sin. All scriptural teaching presents purity of heart as the prerequisite to fraternal unity. The Master Himself, taught that we must love God with all the heart and soul, that is, be holy, and then we might love our neighbor as ourself. In the context our apostle presents the same thought: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

When sin ceases in an individual, all his faculties blend like pure spray that forms the dewdrop; and a number of such cleansed individuals will unite as readily as would the sparkling dewdrops if brought together, and their song would be:

"Distinct as the waves, but one as the sea."

It is only when thus saved that each individual and the united Church can be really useful. Then "she looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, Thou in Me, *that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.*"

Just in proportion to the nearness of a Christian's heart to Christ, will be his ability to get near the sinner's heart, that he may draw him to goodness and to God.

(3) *Our relations to God make this state of holiness*

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necessary. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." This is no arbitrary requirement. It is based upon the very nature of God and our mutual relations. Since God is holy, none but a holy being can have fellowship with Him and enjoy Him. Only the pure in heart shall see God. Only he that hath clean hands and a pure heart can ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in His holy place. If in the Jewish economy every defiled person was made "common," and was excluded from the privilege of a right to draw nigh to God in His solemn worship, in the new dispensation impurity of thought, word or deed must forever exclude from the fellowship of God. Inward and outward holiness is a grand necessity of the Christian dispensation. This is the primal thought, which, as Bishop Foster says, "breathes in the prophecies, thunders in the law, murmurs in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme from its alpha to its omega, from its beginning to its end."

II. THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS.

The general argument in support of the possibility of this grace or state is found in its necessity. This principle is clearly discoverable in all the works of God. Every want indicates a supply. The lungs cry for air; and God has enveloped our globe with an abundant supply. Our eyes pray for light; and behold how amply its golden beams flood the earth!

Our growing and decaying bodies demand food ; and how abundantly our faithful mother, earth, is made to "bring forth and bud, that she may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater."

Nature admits of no vacuum. Is there an aching void within that the world can never fill ? You need only to hold your open cup under God's pouring Niagara and it will soon be filled. Our yearnings for spiritual blessings are inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The want felt and the prayer offered are a sure pledge of a blessing. Cause and effect follow each other quickly in all the works of God. We need but test this truth :

" Ask but His grace, and, lo ! 'tis given ;
Ask, and He turns your hell to heaven."

If the blessing sought seems too great for our faith to grasp it, we may be encouraged by looking at this illustration : You see a loathsome worm, from which you shrink. It crawls lazily upon the dust, on which it also seems to live. But by-and-bye there comes a transformation. The apparently wretched creature rises to newness of life and becomes the gorgeous butterfly, whose existence is really too poetical and ethereal to seem natural. Oh ! if in the ordinary process of nature we behold such marvels, let us no longer doubt the wonders of Divine grace, its transforming power upon the souls and lives of men.

Interesting as may be the illustrations drawn from nature, as Christians we may say : "But we turn to the more sure word of prophecy."

(1) *This is the object of our calling.* "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." "Called to be saints" is frequently found in the canonical epistles. In the context again: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

"What is our calling's glorious hope
But inward holiness?
For this to Jesus I look up,
I calmly wait for this."

(2) *It is made the subject of earnest prayer.* David cries: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter, than snow." Also: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Paul to the brethren at Thessalonica writes: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, to encourage them in the feasibility of the glorious work, he adds: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

(3) *It is the great end of Christ's mission on earth.* "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

(4) *It is clearly revealed to be the will of God.* "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

"He wills that I should holy be!
What can withhold His will?
The counsel of His grace in me
He surely will fulfil."

(5) *It is the oft-repeated promise of God.* To His ancient people He promised to circumcise their heart and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord with all their heart. Through Ezekiel He said: "Then will I sprinkle clear water upon you, and ye shall be clean." John says: "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And Peter adds: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye may be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Wonderful as are the depth and scope of these words, let us remember that "all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in Him amen unto the glory of God by us."

We can venture to add only another encouragement, namely,

(6) *It is the command of God to His people.* To us

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He cries: "Sanctify yourselves and be ye holy." "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." "Be ye holy, for I am holy." He cannot command us the impossible. That would be cruel mockery. "And His commandments are not grievous." Now we see, to some extent, the depth of meaning in the prophet's exclamation: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Need we any more to dispel the lingering doubt as to the possibility of this work? We hope not. There only remains a brief statement of our last proposition, namely,

III. HOW TO OBTAIN THE BLESSING.

Here we need give only the graphic description of His own experience, portrayed by Isaiah.

(1) *As a believer he uses the means of grace, and is found worshipping in God's house.*

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train filled the temple."

(2) *He uses worship only as a means to an end, as an astronomer uses his telescope; for he contemplates the true character of God, especially His holiness.*

"Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

(3) *Then he was led to look at his own defilement and to bewail it before the Lord.*

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

(4) While he thus humbled himself, bewailed and confessed his inward depravity, confessed his vileness, and longed for deliverance, *he doubtless trusted God to do this mighty work within him, for he adds:*

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal (symbol of the Holy Ghost) in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

(5) *With his faculties all harmonized and made sensitive to the Divine voice and touch*, he was soon called upon to confess and to make use of the great blessing he had received.

"Also, I heard the voice of the Lord God, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

This was a blessed preparation for and call to the ministry of the word. May it be the happy experience of thousands!

"Now let me gain perfection's height,
Now let me into nothing fall,
As less than nothing in Thy sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all."

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SERMON XIV.

OUR FATHER'S GOOD THINGS.

REV. CRANWICK JOST, A.M., BRIDGETOWN, N.S.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—*Luke xi. 13.*

THE chapter before us opens by saying that Jesus "was praying in a certain place." In other words, He was engaged in private prayer, either in the presence of His disciples, or in some retired place near by to which He had resorted for that purpose.

This is not the first occasion upon which the disciples knew their Master to be employed in the hal-
lowed exercise of private prayer.

They knew that He had spent in prayer the whole of the night immediately preceding the day on which He had selected the twelve out of the larger company of His followers. They knew, also, that His object in going up to the mountain where He was transfigured, was to pray. And there were, no doubt, other occasions unrecorded in the Gospels when they knew Him to be similarly occupied in sweet communion with His Father.

Now, you have sometimes seen good men engaged in prayer, who, when they have risen from their knees, have borne in their countenances and manner the pleasing evidences of the blessedness of prayer. For just as a person who remains for a time in a conservatory, the atmosphere of which is laden with the perfume of many flowers, bears away with him when he comes out some of that perfume upon his person, so they who habitually hold communion with God, bear with them among their fellow-men the glory of the Divine presence.

In the case of Jesus the God-man, the communion was perfect, and the outward evidences of it were distinct and clear. It was while He was praying, on the mount of transfiguration, that "the fashion of His countenance was altered," so that His face shone as the sun. And something which taught the same lesson, that the Father heard and answered the prayers of the Son, was manifest whenever Jesus was engaged in prayer. His very look and mien told of the praise and joy which reigned within, in answer to His trustful, earnest, supplication.

The disciples were thereby led to feel that there is a meaning and a power in prayer which they did not fully comprehend. They knew that the secret was with Him, and they were anxious to discover it. They wanted to be taught to pray so that they also might prevail with God, and be rewarded with the same peaceful answers. When, therefore, He ceased praying, one of them approached Him with the request,

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"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." And in response Jesus discoursed to them concerning prayer, as in the passage before us, closing with the words of the text.

You will observe by comparison that the present discourse was chiefly a repetition of what He had already said to them in the Sermon on the Mount.

First, He repeated "the Lord's Prayer"—that wonderfully comprehensive epitome of human wants and pious aspirations. Then, by the parable of the man who went to his friend at midnight to ask for three loaves, He taught the necessity of earnestness and importunity in prayer. Then He assured them that true prayer is always answered. It may not be answered directly, but if not, it will be answered indirectly. If God does not grant the thing asked for, it is because His superior wisdom sees that something else is better and more needed, and then He bestows the better and more needed thing. Notice how emphatic and unqualified the words are in which He declares the blessed fact that true prayer is always answered. "Ask and it *shall* be given you, seek and ye *shall* find, knock and it *shall* be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it *shall* be opened." And, finally, He taught them to confide in God, as better and more generous towards those who seek His face than earthly parents are towards their own children. "Against Atheism, which teaches that there is no God; against Pantheism, which teaches that God

is not a person, but identical with nature; against Epicurism, which teaches that God cares nothing for His creatures; against Polytheism, which teaches that there are many gods, Jesus teaches that our one God is a tender and generous parent, who knows our wants and listens to our prayers."

"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" Will a human father mock or trifle with a hungry son by offering to him something which may bear some outward resemblance to that for which he asks, but which may be hurtful to him, and, at any rate, cannot satisfy his needs? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Or, as we read in the parallel passage in Matthew's Gospel, "How much more shall your heavenly Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?"

I. WE WILL FIRST NOTICE THE RELATION WHICH JESUS REPRESENTS GOD AS SUSTAINING TO MAN, THE RELATION OF "FATHER," "YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER."

Under the Mosaic dispensation this relationship of God to man, in some of its aspects, was not unknown. Isaiah, in an earnest prayer to God, in which he entreats Him to look down from heaven, the habitation of His holiness and glory, and remember and bless

His people, bases his plea upon the Divine Fatherhood. "Doubtless," he says, "Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer." The prophet Jeremiah, when predicting the return from the captivity in Babylon, endeavors to increase the confidence of the people in the fulfillment of the promise, by representing God as saying, "I am a Father unto Israel." In the Psalms, those crystallizations of the best experience of the Old Testament saints, the same truth is found. "A Father of the fatherless . . . is God in His holy habitation." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear Him."

But these references to the Divine Fatherhood were only like the twilight before the dawn; only the dim foreshadowing of the full revelation of the great truth. Never was the Fatherhood of God so prominently recognized, never was universal man taught so confidently to draw near to God in prayer with the familiar name, "Our Father," as in those discourses of the Great Teacher, which constitute the platform of the higher revelation of the Christian dispensation.

Throughout these discourses, in every instance in which God is spoken of in His relation to man, it is in the character of "Our Father," "Our Father in heaven."

There is implied in this relationship that our origin is in God. We are all His offspring. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." Every human

pedigree dates back to the time when God made man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul.

But this is the lowest truth implied in the Fatherhood of God.

There is a far higher one, and one which can only be realized in its full meaning on earth and in heaven by those who are obedient to God, and make His will the rule of all their actions.

We are all God's children by creation. But we are prodigal children. We have become tired of the Father's eye upon us; we have left our Father's house; we have taken and squandered in riotous living the portion of goods which fell to us; we have, through sin, forfeited the privileges of our birthright. It is only when the prodigal, tired of his wanderings, and conscious that he is dying of want while there is bread and to spare in his Father's house, comes back penitently and humbly, willing, through mercy, to take anything the Father is willing to bestow, that the tokens of sonship are conferred upon him. But what a hearty welcome is accorded to him then—a welcome which the Father is more ready to give than the prodigal is willing to receive! Then the robe, and the ring, and the shoes, and the kiss, and the feast are provided; and the court of heaven resounds with the Father's joyful recognition, "This My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Then he receives the adoption of son; then God sends forth

the Spirit of His Son into his heart, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father;" then he becomes an heir of God, through Christ; then, being an heir of God, he is an heir of everything which belongs to God; there is nothing essential to his real enjoyment which he may not claim and will not abundantly receive. On earth he enjoys the foretastes, blessed foretastes, and in heaven the full, unchangeable reality of an Almighty Father's love.

Now Jesus teaches us all to say, "Our Father." He authorizes every human being, of every nation, and clime, and color, and position in life, to draw near to God with the endearing name and powerful plea, "Our Father;" and He thereby authorizes us to believe that every human being may, by showing himself to be an obedient child, claim heirship to all the blessings which that name implies. Can any be so blind and self-willed as to refuse the gracious offer? Is there a prodigal child here to-day, who is beginning to realize his loss, and to look wishfully to the joy and plenty of his Father's house?

"Far from home; yes, far from home,
In sin and rage, I sadly roam;
No tender love or Father's care,
But filled with sorrow and despair.
Far from home and far from God,
I feel the chastening of His rod;
In feeding here among the swine,
Refusing peace and love Divine."

Is this the sorrowful experience of any? Then,

accept the Father's invitation which you have been slighting, and He will willingly receive you now.

“Quick to the banquet-house repair ;
Thy Father stands to greet thee there ;
Come, now, behold His smiling face ;
He'll kiss thee with His pardoning grace.”

II. WE MUST OBSERVE THAT “OUR FATHER” IS HERE
SPOKEN OF AS THE GIVER OF “GOOD THINGS.”

“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” or, taking the words of Matthew's Gospel, “How much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”

Early Christian art was accustomed to represent Jesus by the figure of a lamb, the Holy Spirit by that of a dove, and God, the Father, by an open hand extended through the clouds, in the act of giving something to men. How beautifully expressive of the constant beneficence of God—an open hand descending through the clouds and filled with blessings !

There are the blessings of His daily providence, food and raiment, and health, and all our earthly comforts. If He chooses to withdraw the open hand, as He sometimes does for purposes of discipline, how easily He can deprive us of them all ! He has a thousand ministers of justice ready at His command to destroy the fruit of our labors, to take away our comforts, and to teach a God-forgetting people their dependence upon Him.

The proud Nebuchadnezzar, walking upon the roof of his palace, and surveying the city over which he ruled, was puffed up with self-importance, and said: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" And God took away the reason of the haughty monarch, so that, imagining himself to be an ox, he ate the grass of the field. But, when his reason was restored, he learned the needed lesson of dependence upon the providence of God, and began "to praise and extol the God of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment, and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

How often it has been observed that when the operations of God in nature move smoothly on, and the daily wants of men are uninterruptedly supplied, and their daily comforts multiplied, they are liable to forget God, who directs the course of nature and makes the labor of their hands successful. But when His judgments are abroad in the earth, men begin to feel their helplessness and need, and to seek Him with sincere and humble hearts.

Yet after all the needed chastenings of Providence, how many "good things" are bestowed upon us by the open hand of our kind and compassionate Father? Men shake their heads sometimes when we speak to them about miracles, and express grave doubts as to their possibility. But there is not any miracle recorded in the Word of God which required for its

performance more power, or wisdom, or which displayed more beneficence than do the works of Providence daily wrought before our eyes. It required Omnipotence to multiply the five barley loaves and the two small fishes so that they might feed five thousand, and no less does it require Omnipotence to cause the seed sown in the field, by the hand of industrious man, to germinate and multiply into an abundant harvest. It required Omnipotence to raise the dead Lazarus from his grave, and no less does it require Omnipotence to preserve the living, and to keep the complicated mechanism of the human system in harmonious operation. Let us be profoundly grateful for the omnipotence displayed in the daily providence of God; let us be mindful of our constant dependence upon the Divine Father's bounty; let the grateful outburst of our thanksgiving be, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

But there are better gifts than these which the open hand of God supplies.

And here we see the difference which often exists between Jesus' estimate of "good things" and man's estimate of "good things." Man's estimate of "good things" often is the blessings of daily providence, food and raiment, and clothing, and houses, and lands, and wealth, and worldly happiness. Now these are "good things," not to be despised or undervalued. But how mistaken they are who limit their inventory of "good things" to these, and make them the sole

object of their desire. Jesus' estimate of "good things" is contained in that one word, "the Holy Spirit," and His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is that our ambition and desire should first claim God's best and greatest gift, "the Holy Spirit," and that then there will surely follow everything of worldly good really needed and really beneficial.

In this age of hurry and enterprise, and ambition and restless grasping after more, when the boundary-line between a proper desire for worldly success and an improper desire for worldly success is so easily crossed; when the demon of avarice comes even into our churches, and drags down some who might have been pillars in the house of God—there is need that the admonishing lesson inculcated by Jesus, of trust in the overruling providence of God, should be clearly and frequently heard. "After all these things do the Gentiles seek;" the people who know not God. They are the first object of their search. But it shall not be so with you. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" and all these things will He bestow in measure sufficient for your real good, if first you seek the best things—the absolutely necessary things—the Holy Spirit, which He is waiting to bestow upon you in large and overflowing abundance.

This, then, is Jesus' estimate of "good things;" the Holy Spirit in the heart, regenerating it, fitting it to be a temple where God may reside, filling it with His love, witnessing with our spirit to our own adoption

into the family of God, assuring us that we are "heirs of God," and of everything which belongs to God; and pledging to us God's word that nothing on earth or in heaven, which is really for our good, will be withheld from those who walk uprightly.

Let us ask and receive that our joy may be full. Let us remember that no matter how well supplied we may be with the blessings of daily providence, we can have little happiness, we are poor indeed, if the higher blessings of grace are wanting; but, with these higher blessings, we can gratefully receive whatever God pleases to bestow of the blessings of earth, whether little or much, and can sit under His shadow with great delight, and find His fruit sweet to our taste.

III. FINALLY, WE HERE LEARN THAT "OUR FATHER" IS MORE WILLING TO GIVE "GOOD THINGS" TO HIS CHILDREN THAN HUMAN PARENTS ARE TO GIVE TO THEIR CHILDREN SUCH BLESSINGS AS IT IS IN THEIR POWER TO BESTOW.

This is a very blessed truth--so large, so full, that it is difficult for us to believe that it can be realized; but that it is a truth we must admit upon the testimony of Jesus.

I recommend this blessed truth to your prayerful consideration, as well calculated to awaken the deepest gratitude, and to lead to strong confidence in prayer.

We all know something, by experience or observation, of a parent's love. We know that by universal consent the strongest of all human ties are those

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which bind parents to their children, especially during the period of the children's dependence upon parental oversight and care. We know that a very large share of the anxiety and toil which the best parents undergo is prompted by the love they bear to those whom God has given to them; and, if you take away from them their children, you take away a great part of the stimulus to labor and of the sweetness and joy of life.

What labors, what sacrifices, what self-denials, what pains the love of a mother will endure! And yet, take parental love in its highest manifestations and purest disinterestedness, and, O blessed truth! how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things—the Holy Spirit—to them that ask Him?

"How much more!" What a depth of meaning in the words! "How much more!" As much more as the infinite exceeds the finite; as much more as the ocean which encircles the globe is greater than the drop of water which you can hold upon the point of a needle; as much more as God is greater than man. Is there any promise in God's Word better calculated to give to parents just ideas of the Divine beneficence and abundant willingness to hear and answer prayer?

I have one request to make of the parents who are present this morning. When at the close of this service you return to your homes, and are seated around the table, and are supplying your children with their needed food, just think of the great pleasure it gives you to be able to satisfy their physical wants; and think of the pain and distress you would experience if

they should cry to you for bread and you had none to give. Endeavor in this way to take the measure of your affection for your children; and then look up to heaven, and remember that you have a "Father" there; a "Father" whose supply of good things can never fail, because it is as large as His own infinity; a "Father" who is more willing, "how much more" willing, to give His best blessings to those that ask Him, than you are to give to your children the blessings of this life.

And may this great truth, the height of which we cannot fully reach, and the depth of which we cannot fully fathom, be our encouragement and guide in never-ceasing prayer.

"Father, 'tis Thine each day to yield
 Thy children's wants, a fresh supply;
 Thou clothest the lilies of the field,
 And hearest the young raven's cry;
 On Thee we cast our care; we live
 Through Thee who knowest our every need;
 O feed us with Thy grace, and give
 Our souls this day the living bread."

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SERMON XV.

HUMILIATION OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. W. I. SHAW, M.A., LL.B.,

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“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.”—*Luke ix. lviii.*

THE fame of Christ had extended far and wide in Galilee and Samaria, and it was no marvel, for many were the wondrous works which He had wrought. The palsied and paralyzed had been invigorated with health and energy, which bounded through their systems and made them physically new men. Demoniacs were freed from their diabolical tormentors. The dead had been summoned from the shades of darkness, and called back from the great empire of death to the activities of life. The sightless eyeballs of the blind, by a single volition of the Saviour's will, had been so rectified that light, precious, beautiful light, came with the gentle silence of angel steps and ushered them into the magnificent world of vision. The sea of Tiberias was calmed before the presence of its Maker, and on the shores, where in after years the Emperor Vespasian, and in after centuries the Emperor Na-

oleon appeared in the pomp of human power—on those very shores, quietly and unostentatiously, the Son of God displayed His divine majesty. The fame of Christ was extending through all those lands, and now as the time approached that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem. A scribe came to Him by the way. Of His feelings and motives we can judge only by conjecture, but from the fragment of history we have before us relating to Him, this much, we believe, is very probable that the man thought, Here now this astonishing person, Jesus, is on His way to Jerusalem. The rumors of His miracles and power have gone there before Him, and it is most likely that the Jews will be ready, notwithstanding all the opposition they have raised, to receive Him as the Messiah. That He is the Messiah of whom the Scriptures speak, which it is my business to copy and study, I can have no doubt; and so if He be welcomed to Jerusalem as the deliverer of our people, and the long-expected Redeemer who will raise our nation to honor and supremacy, then will I likely have a good chance of promotion in His kingdom, especially if I join His little band while it is yet small and despised. They are on their way to Jerusalem, and so here at Capernaum I will offer Him my allegiance and service. I think, without misinterpreting the motives of this scribe, we may, consistently with the record, impute to him such a train of thought. I know it is very easy to misinterpret men's motives, so that brass often passes as gold, and some-

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times gold as brass; yet, looking at the narrative before us, one would naturally and necessarily conjecture some such train of thought in the mind of the scribe to account for the words of Christ. This scribe met Jesus in the way and said unto Him, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But Jesus in substance replied, "Seek not temporal comfort and advantage, of which carnal nature is so fond. If you seek it with Me, you will be disappointed, for this even I myself forego. Seek rather those spiritual blessings I came to impart, instead of temporal ease and power; for, remember this, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.'" What the man's next thought or did, we have no means of knowing. It seems to be only conjecture on the part of Clement of Alexandria, and of Lange, to regard the persons whose call to follow Christ is described in this narrative as Philip, Judas, Matthew or Thomas. Whoever this impetuous volunteer was, Christ gave him a response which may profitably suggest for our prayerful thought, the humiliation of Christ, some reasons for this humiliation and the practical lesson it suggests.

I. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

An adequate conception of Christ's humiliation we fail to have, simply because we cannot properly conceive of the immense disparity there is between Jesus the created man and Jesus the uncreated God. We sing:

He deigns in flesh to appear,
Widest extremes to join.

But when we can measure the infinite distance between these extremes, and not till then can we properly comprehend the humiliation of Christ, I verily believe that this mystery of the incarnation would so stagger our poor limited powers, were it not explicitly stated to us in Holy Writ, that proud reason would never give the bewildering article a place in its creed. However, the truth in Christ's humiliation is stated, and stated in such a way as to have a vital and necessary connection with every part of the divine government as well as with the interests of humanity, and so

We take the blessing from above,
And wonder at such boundless love.

In the whole range of gospel truth there is not a more striking statement of this mystery of ages than in the passage before us. Let a king place himself in a lower position of comfort than the very dog in its kennel, or the ox in its stall, for the welfare of his subjects, and let those subjects be ungrateful, wretched rebels, and let the throne of that king be one of affluence and power, and then we have a faint picture or type of the condescension of Christ. The coming of Christ as the world's rightful Lord had been heralded through forty centuries before His advent. He "whose going forth had been from of old, even from everlasting," upon whose brow was the diadem of universal empire, had announced by His servant Micah that in a small, obscure village called Bethlehem He would make His appearance on earth. And now that this Divine One

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appears, how surprising and startling it is to all the conjectures of human reason that we should hear from His lips such strange words as these: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." The foxes burrow in the earth and make for themselves places of rest and security. The birds, by curious art and skill given them by their Creator, make most marvellous contrivances for nests and homes, but Jesus, the Son of God, the Word by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made, when He comes down among the lowest orders of His creation, has not where to lay His head. How careful was Christ as God over the meanest insect He had made, yea, the very time He was Himself a rejected wanderer on earth. By a moderate calculation it is computed that there are 250,000 existing species of animal life, and that there were at least as many more previous to the creation of man, yet it is found that out of this half million of species there is not a single one but what is most wonderfully and perfectly made. The mechanism of each is so ingeniously executed that every want and purpose of its existence are fully met. The goodness and wisdom of the divine Jesus had provided all this, but so disinterested was His love and rich His grace that when He became man He provided not for Himself a place to lay His head. The sparrow would flit cheerily along past Him, unconscious of the presence of its Creator; the bee would speed away on its errand of industry, the butterfly would

playfully flutter in its innocence, but He who made them all had not where to lay His head. No spot on earth was there He could call His home. He was despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet none the less God over all blessed for ever. When wearied He rested on Jacob's well; the pillars of heaven and the foundations of the earth rested securely on His sustaining power. When He bore hunger and thirst, He nevertheless showed by changing water into wine, and by feeding thousands with a few loaves, that it was He who was indeed supplying the wants of every living thing, and that He endured hunger and thirst from no defect of power. We may leave it to theologians to discuss whether the term Kryptist or the term Kenotist will best describe this humiliation—whether the idea is the more correct of Christ's concealment of His glory or absolute divestment of His majesty. It is enough for us to know that He came with a heart full of loving sympathy very near to our poverty and weakness. One thing seems plain, that He displayed His divine power only when necessary to further His merciful purpose of our salvation. Only once He went to the mount of transfiguration—often did He go to the Mount of Olives. Seldom was He seen in the glory of His divinity—often was He hid in the darkness of night praying for our base, ungrateful world. "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." Such was the amazing condescension of Christ, as so forcibly stated in our

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text. Observe, next, the considerations that may account for this humiliation.

II. REASONS FOR CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

First notice, in passing, the title which Christ here applies to Himself, that of "Son of man." This expression occurs sixty-one times in the Gospels, and in every instance is used by Jesus Himself. The term "Son of God," was generally used by others in reference to Christ, and implies essential deity so clearly that the Jews took up stones to stone Him, inasmuch as He made Himself God, because, as they represented, He had said, "I am the Son of God." Similarly, in the crucifixion, the chief priest in reviling Christ, declared, "He said I am the Son of God." The only instances recorded in which Christ calls Himself Son of God are six, and they are all recorded by John, one of them being in the Apocalypse, in the letter to the church at Thyatira. There appears to be another instance in the question, in the ninth chapter of John, put by Christ to the blind man He had healed: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" But here the weight of authority seems to favor the usual expression of Christ, "Son of man." This is a term which, especially as understood by a Hebrew, implies great contempt, and seems designedly chosen and applied by the Saviour to Himself to show the humility of His character and render still more vivid this picture of the homeless Jesus. Yet it is very significant that, in the fourteenth chapter of the Revela-

tion of John, in the description of Christ's second advent in judgment, the same term is used as if to imply that He who during the incarnation nearly always took to Himself this designation of contempt, this very same Man of sorrows, shall come again in the majesty of His kingly glory. "I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown."

As "Son of man," Christ showed by His humiliation that we have forfeited all the providential favors of divine goodness. The relation of Providence to the atonement is often overlooked. How many of us suppose that spiritual blessings are over and above what God is obliged to give us, but that temporal blessings He is under obligation in some way, as our Creator, to bestow. The truth is, that by sin we have forfeited all claim to Heaven's care, and no ground for complaint have we if divine justice strip us of all earthly good, and no right have we, being sinners, to expect anything from heaven but punishment for our sins; and so Christ, without a place to lay His head, Christ homeless and destitute, Christ a weary, wayworn wanderer, showed, as He stood on earth in His humanity, that we are here only as tenants by sufferance, that we have by our sins forfeited all this world can give.

Again, He has shown as Son of man, that this world is not our home, that we must seek a home for the immortal spirit somewhere else. To the sceptical mind there is a great deal in the Apocalypse concern-

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ing the end of the world and the consummation of human history, that seems mere fancy [and imagery, but without such a revelation, which, by the way, is no more mysterious to us now than was the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to the Jews, two thousand six-hundred years ago—without such a revelation, what idea can we possibly have of the great future? We know that men die, and with equal certainty we learn from Scripture, reason and consciousness that they shall live again, but where shall they live again unless as described in God's Word, either in Paradise or perdition—that is, in a state either of confirmed submission or of confirmed enmity to God. If the world is to continue its feverish rounds of worry, and strife, and toil, through unnumbered years and millions of ages, aye, forever, and never approach anything better, never reach the grand vindication in judgment of the equity of God's government, the thought seems to sicken and dishearten us; but with faith in God and truth, and our hearts amidst earth's trials often singing:

"I would not live away, I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm rise o'er the dark way,"

we can glory in the prospect of having a home somewhere else—yea, that where Jesus is, the same Jesus who trod this planet during the days of His humiliation, where He is there shall we be also.

Again, Christ suffered humiliation as part of His plan for the world's salvation. For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through

death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. It is the death of Christ alone that expiates sin. The perfect obedience of His life can neither atone for our guilt nor supply by imputation any such righteousness for us the law demands. The law is still in force, requiring from us individually perfect righteousness. Wherein we incur guilt by sin or defective service, the cross purchases for us an ample pardon in addition to the grace we need to enable us to serve God acceptably. It is not, then, to the humiliation of Christ's life that we look for atonement. But perfect obedience in the ordeal of this humiliation stands on one hand as a pledge and testimony of the perfect suffering of the divine victim, the Saint of God who taketh away the sin of the world, and, on the other hand, as an example of patient suffering and triumphant magnanimity as well as a guarantee of sympathy with humanity. "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Again, the humiliation of Christ stands as an emblem of the unearthliness of His kingdom. The founder of this vast spiritual empire, which sweeps in triumph over all continents, and the isles of the sea, and requires an eternity to reach the consummation of its glory, was allied to the great fraternity of human poverty. And so, every now and again, Christianity rises up in all its divine majesty to prove that it is independent of kings, and emperors, and armies, and all

the petty caprices and conceits of men. God forbid that I should brand the Church with imbecility, or make an ally of ignorance, but its strength is not in anything human. From the lips of the King Himself are the words sent out on the ages, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and I have no doubt when He uttered them, He looked away down the centuries and foresaw the changing frowns and smiles of fickle rulers and still more fickle mobs who would sometimes stab His cause and at other times defend it. Christianity is not communism, it is not lawlessness, but at the same time it grows rather more in poverty than in wealth, and almost as readily apart from human culture as with it. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." These are words not only of history, but of implied prophecy, and harmonize with the humiliation of Christ, from the depths of which has arisen that everlasting kingdom that can never be moved.

III. PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Of the practical lessons taught by this passage, this first suggests itself, though not first in importance, Let us not judge of a person's merit by mere appearances and circumstances. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." It is surely

a significant fact that the most noble of all the beings of earth was the most lowly, that He who was richest in the possession of all that was good and excellent, was poorest in the possession of temporal benefits. Let us honor humility, and honor the man who strives to live bravely and faithfully in spite of poverty and adversity. Some one says, "He must be great, who is willing to be small." Wherever we see merit, however disguised beneath an unfavorable exterior, let us honor it. Let us train our feelings that they shall at once be in sympathy with it. Let us oppose the spirit that is so prevalent about us, of worshipping mammon and being obsequious to affluence and influence; but wherever you see a man that is truly good, honor him as one of the royal seed of heaven, one of the nobility of the skies. Be too intelligent to hate or envy the rich, be too independent to crouch to their wealth.

Another lesson we may learn from our text is, that we should be resigned to adversity and humiliation. If you have a bed on which to rest, it is what was often denied to Christ. If you have a spot on earth you call home, where centre your affection and thoughts, you are favored more than He; but remember, if adversity should leave you without a home, you would still be no worse off than He. What of secular trial may befall you we cannot tell, but this you may know to your comfort, you will never be poorer than Jesus. There is another lesson taught us by our text—a lesson full of consolation, and that is, that the condition

of adversity endured here by Christ and His followers will in eternity all be changed. In the other world everything will be reversed. How grand the prospect of Christ coming to judge the world. "Then shall ye see the Son of man"—observe the expression, it is not Son of God, but "Son of man," the very same expression of humiliation used in our text, the same Son of man who on earth had not where to lay His head—"then shall ye see the Son of man coming in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," not then as the Man of sorrows and the victim of human nature, but sitting on the throne of His glory. Oh how precious the assurance that when startled from the long sleep of ages by the last trump, the first object to arrest our gaze will be our living kinsman, the brother in our nature, the once helpless one of Bethlehem, the wearied one of Sychar, the tempted one of Gethsemane, the weeping one of Bethany, the suffering one of Calvary. The Saviour on the throne of judgment will be the Saviour we formerly trusted, and Lord on the throne of grace, and, as a writer says, "The whisper will circulate through the throng of the ransomed as they gaze on their Judge," "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Oh what a contrast—that once buffeted and forsaken Man, whose infant dwelling was canopied by the rude rafters of a Judean stable, whose unpillowed head was oft denied the meanest shelter afforded to beast or bird, whose sceptre was the rod of mockery and His only throne the bitter cross—what a contrast with the King on whose brow shall be many crowns, and whose hand shall hold the sceptre of universal

empire! Believer, is it not worth living for, to have the smile of Jesus all through life, and, what is better, to have His favor on the day of judgment? Ye pilgrims to the skies, murmur not if the path you tread leads you through sorrows; rather rejoice that it will lead you to the bright land where sorrows are unknown. Do not repine if, in following Jesus, you have to bear the cross; rather rejoice in the prospect of wearing the crown. As the state of Christ on earth is in heaven all reversed, so, thank God, is it with His Church. Here we are exposed to the assaults of hell and the chilling influences of the world, and many an hour of darkness have we to pass through; but through our tear-filled eyes and all the gloom of trial, we can keep looking unto Jesus, we can see His footsteps before us, and, hearing His loving voice coming through the darkness, we are nerved with spiritual power to follow Him to the land of light beyond. Christian hearer, let the grandeur of hope fire your soul with animation and power, to conquer any difficulty and make your way to heaven. If at times you have to wear the sackcloth of sadness and bereavement here, remember that in heaven it shall be worn no more. Whatever may be our lot on earth, certain it is that Jesus who knows what it is to be homeless, is preparing for us mansions of glory, from which, if once gained, we will go no more out forever. Believer, if you remain steadfast and faithful to the end, you will be welcomed by this same Jesus to heaven. Unbeliever, if you remain impenitent to the end, it is equally certain you will be banished forever from the glory of His presence.

SERMON XVI.

THE INCREASE OF CHRIST.

REV. A. B. CHAMBERS, LL.B., QUEBEC.

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"He must increase, but I must decrease."—*John* iii. 30.

JESUS CHRIST had just entered on His public ministry. Already the matchless magnetism of His person and work began to be felt. And from one to another men began to spread the rising fame which in our day encircles the globe. The disciples of John heard of the interest which this new Teacher had awakened, and were immediately filled with the fear of their own and their Master's eclipse by this Greater Baptist.

They hasten to John, saying, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to Him."

With equal haste the Baptist seeks to allay the rising envy in the breasts of his disciples.

His reply to these agitated followers, reveals at once a breadth of thought, a strength of conviction, a

clearness of vision, and a spirit of self-sacrifice worthy the Messiah's forerunner, and which made it easy for his disciples to transfer their affections to the Christ of God.

My text is a part of that answer. In it the increase of Christ is affirmed. We are Christians, the Christ of John and ours is the same. We have espoused His cause. • We have linked our fortunes to His. His triumph means our triumph. His defeat means our confusion and loss. It is, therefore, most important for us to examine whether the premises from which John argued were sufficient to warrant his conclusion; and whether the subsequent history is confirmatory of my text or otherwise. This ground requires to be gone over again and again, as there are always those who are only just waking up to the importance of such questions. In secular matters each generation requires to be instructed in elementary principles, in order that it may intelligently grasp what is highest and purest in literature, in art, or in science. So, in the domain of theology and religion, we require betimes, for our own comfort and the instruction of the young, to examine the foundations of our dogmas and the ground of our hopes.

The conviction of the Baptist, as expressed in my text, has never met with universal acceptance. To-day it is contrary to the expressed belief and the avowed desire of many.

I. In view of these things, our first inquiry is: *Why do we, in the face of unbelief and adverse criti-*

cism, endorse the assertion of John, and proclaim to the world that Christ must increase?

1. I answer, *Because this is the design of God the Father.* For some weeks prior to the 11th of August, 1882, there was unusual activity in all the military circles of England, watching the movements in arsenals, barracks, and shipyards. Seeing that intense, though half-concealed, eagerness which ran through the army and navy, one could not fail to discover that some great purpose revolved in the brain and throbbed in the heart of England. On the memorable eleventh, while emblazoned banners kissed the breeze and martial music filled the air, 34,000 British troops sailed out from the quays of the sea-girt isle. What did all this mean? What was the intention of England? It meant that in the land of the Pharaohs there was a pretender to power—a rebel in arms, whose influence had raised up a hostile force and filled a whole land with anarchy, which had already shed British blood in unrighteous insurrection. What was the design of England? Answer: To overthrow and rout the rebel leader and his forces; to bid anarchy subside and order reign again, and to extend the influence, the fame, the glory of the British name. Had the expedition failed, then England had been defeated. But from the hour in which her intention was proclaimed to the world few could be found to question the issue.

Now, in God's world there is an arch-rebel who has excited much anarchy, shed much blood, and ruined

many souls. And the Father has commissioned His Son to make war upon the rebel, wrest the sceptre from his hand, and fill the world with His own principles, influence, and glory. This is the Father's design. I can only give you a few quotations. Among the many wonderful things said of Christ in the 9th chapter of Isaiah, is this: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." In the second Psalm the Father, addressing the Son, says: "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me and I will give *Thee* the heathen *for* Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* Thy possession." St. Paul, in speaking of Christ, assures us that "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* in earth and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Many other texts might be cited. Let these suffice to establish the Divine intention.

With these before us, I believe we are warranted in saying that if anything in God's word is clear, is beyond doubt, it is, that the Father designs the increase of Christ until His fame shall fill all lands, His

principles permeate all human institutions, and His sceptre have universal sway. Then, should there be failure, it is obvious that such failure would be the defeat of heaven's undisguised and heralded design. Now, is such defeat likely? I said some time ago that as soon as England's intention was known in the recent war few could be found to seriously doubt the issue. Why was this? What was the ground of confidence? I answer: England's history; the long line of her victories by land and sea; the skill and discipline of her troops; the splendid genius of her generals; the awful daring and indomitable resolution of officers and men were guarantees of victory before a gun was fired or a sabre drawn. And now do you ask me why I believe in the proclaimed design of the Father as the certain presage of fulfilment? Then I will pass by the omnipotence, the omniscience, and the wisdom infinite, which stand pledged, and base my answer on the history—the history of other foretold battles fought and won—of prophecies fulfilled; designs accomplished, and increase growing at this hour.

What design has failed? Did He design to make a world? Then "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." There are no half-formed and motionless worlds in His universe.

When our first parents sinned He promised a Deliverer—He proclaimed His intention to redeem humanity. Did He fail? Let the manger and the garden speak. Let the cruel cross, the rending earth, and the

darkened heavens answer. Did He fail? Let the open, empty grave, the ascending Lord, the descending Spirit, and the glad acclaim of thousands saved, tell how gloriously the design of man's redemption was fulfilled. What though centuries elapsed between the proclamation and its accomplishment. Centuries are but days with God!

I point you to another design. When fallen man had multiplied and sinned, and repented not, "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth," He resolved to cut off that sinning, unrepenting race. Noah was called to prepare an ark, and God prepared the fountains. What though man mocked for one hundred and twenty years. At the appointed moment the pent-up floods burst from their reservoirs, and a deluged world transformed *intention* into *history*.

Again, did God tell Abram that He would give to him and to his seed the land of Canaan? He did, and He kept His promise. What though five centuries and Egypt lay between the promise and the fulfilment. Let history tell how grandly the design was accomplished. Let the plagued and baffled hosts, the divided sea, the piled-up waters of the Jordan, the flinty rock giving water and the heavens raining bread, tell that when God promises He fulfils. When He designs He accomplishes.

Other proofs I must not now recall. I simply place in the list with these that other design of God—a design set forth by symbol and prophecy, by miracle

and promise. It is the design, that of the increase of Christ's kingdom there shall be no end; that Christ, lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Him.

Brethren, this is the cause which we have espoused. This is the work with which we are identified. This is the man, the Christ, the God to whom we have given ourselves. Let us rejoice in our calling, and glory in the triumph of His cause and ours. The fiat has gone forth from the lips of the eternal, and heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His word shall fail.

2. My second answer to the question, "Why do we, in the face of unbelief and adverse criticism, endorse the assertion of John and proclaim to the world that Christ must increase," is this, *The forces employed are adequate.*

(1) What are these? The first is *Love*. This is the mightiest force in God's universe. Even dwarfed, deformed, and too often sensualized, as we find it among men, it is the power which fills the world with the busy hum of labor. It fills our universities with scholars, our senates with the best talent of our land, our armies with the pride and flower of our country, our homes with the hallowed accents and hymns of domestic joy, our hearts and our sanctuaries with the swelling anthem of praise to our Creator and Redeemer, God. This is the love of earth. Yet even this shall prove a factor in the consummation which my text proclaims. It is, however, of the love of God I wish to speak just now, from which all earthly

ardor is but an emanation, of which all human loves are but corruscations. The love of God made man in His own image. This love redeemed our fallen race by the pouring out of the precious blood of Christ. This love sent the Holy Spirit to convince man of his danger, reveal his filthiness, let light stream in upon his darkness, and lead him to the crucified for cleansing in His blood. This love has built up not only the heavens on which we gaze in the noontime and the night—heavens which dazzle us with their splendor and enchant us with their beauty—but it has built the heaven of heavens, the gates of which it has thrown open that man may enter. It has made and polished the harps of praise, chased the crowns of glory, and caused to glitter with the dews of immortality the palms of victory which invite men up to the throne of God. Brethren, I say the first force is the love of God, making man, redeeming him, and preparing heaven for his reception and eternal joy. I have not here distinguished between the love of the Father and the love of the Son; for in the work of making, redeeming, and saving men they clasp hands, they intervene together, they embrace the sinner. Listen to the logic of Paul: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

(2) The second force is *the Holy Spirit*. It is His office to convince the sinner, to break down the fortresses behind which sinners entrench themselves, to pierce the adamant in which sinners encase their

hearts, to take the bandages from their eyes and chase the darkness that they may see. Now, we say there is power enough in the Holy Ghost to do this in the case of every sinner on the face of God's earth. It matters not whether he be gentle as John, impetuous and cowardly as Peter, licentious as Agrippa, red-handed as Saul of Tarsus or Manasseh, or cursed by devils as the demoniac of Gadara.

(3) The third force is *the Holy Scriptures*. You see this volume lying quietly before me—I declare this the mightiest visible force in the world to-day. It is above armies, and parliaments, and kings. Is it a power? Ask its enemies. Ask Mohammedanism why it fears the Bible? Why it burned the Bible House in Constantinople? And it will tell you that the Koran when brought in contact with the Bible loses its charm, its genius pales, its power wanes.

Ask Romanism why it withholds the Bible from the masses. And whatever priests may tell you, the answer of history is that the power of priestcraft dies in the presence of an open Bible, the chains of superstition are sundered, and the Christ of God which it reveals hurls from the throne of human hearts the man of sin. Is the Bible a power? Ask the fires in which its enemies have endeavored to burn it, the dungeons in which they have sought to immure it, the pillars to which they hoped to keep it chained; while the writings of Porphyry, Julian, Hume, Voltaire and Bolingbroke are to-day lost, forgotten or contraband. Where is the Bible? Wherever there is light, speak-

ing the language of heaven in fifteen score of the tongues of earth. While the mightiest nations of earth rest on it as on an immovable foundation, it still goes forth by day and night, in storm and calm, to win new triumphs. It works quietly as the leaven to permeate the mass; or, following the bugle blast of war, when nations lash in their madness and throw down the barriers of centuries, the Bible enters to find new hearts awaiting its coming and new thrones from which to sway its sceptre. These, though the chief, are only *some* of the forces at work. But with their adjuncts they are adequate to the consummation proclaimed in my text. The love of God the Father and the Son, the energy of the Holy Spirit, the instructing, uplifting, fetter-breaking power of the Holy Scriptures, proclaimed by a living ministry and illustrated by a consecrated Church, I will match against all the powers of hell and sin.

II. We now proceed, in the second place, to inquire, *What does this increase mean?*

(1) And I answer, first, *individual felicity*. Here I need only refer to your experience and the experience of all who have fully embraced Christ. The testimony is one, whether you select it from apostolic days or these; whether borne to us from Indian wigwam or oriental palace; whether lisped by the child of tender years or spoken by the Simeons in Christ's Church; whether sung in the songs of our health or breathed in the last faint whispers of the dying, the testimony is one. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord

Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For Thou art with me Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort Me." As Christ increases, the circle of those enjoying that felicity will continue to extend.

(2) Again, this increase means *social elevation*. Man is a social being. The physical, intellectual, and moral constitution with which we are endowed, proclaims not only the Creator's intention, but also man's necessity for and adaptation to social life. Man shall hold intercourse with his fellow-man, the sexes shall be united, and generation after generation grow up under proper restraints and healthful discipline. This is the design of God, and this is necessary for the development of what is best in humanity. But where, apart from Christianity, do we find these things, except in forms which make us blush? Man is cruel in his dealings with his fellows, and the extent of his cruelty is only restrained by civil law. The strong oppress the weak; the free apply the lash to the enslaved; woman is a beast of burden or the sport of passion; child-life is joyless and domestic happiness unknown. This is the testimony from Persia, from ancient Rome, from India and Turkey in our own day; from Pagan lands in all ages. The record is too awful to be read except with loathing, and too indelicate to be spoken in public. Now, the increase of Christ, affirmed in

the text, means revolution and elevation in all these departments. It is true, Christianity does not directly attack every form of social evil. Against one of the worst forms of social injustice it hurls no special anathema. I refer to war. But its tendency everywhere is either directly or indirectly to destroy the evil and promote the good. The increase of Christ subdues the savage in man's breast and tells him that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." It makes marriage honorable and binding between one man and one woman; it makes the husband faithful and the wife virtuous; it makes child-life happy and worthy of the most brotherly, fatherly, and kingly caress. For Jesus took little children up in His arms, and, blessing them, said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The increase of Christ elevates woman until her ministries are like benedictions from heaven, and in return it gives her the love of her husband, and "her children rise up and call her blessed." The greeting of Christianity to her who in heathen lands is a beast of burden, and in polished but infidel courts is the sport of passion, is this:

"Hail, woman, hail! last formed in Eden's bowers,
'Midst humming streams and fragrant-breathing flowers.
Thou art, 'mid light and gloom, through good and ill,
Creator's glory, man's chief blessing still.
Thou calm'st our thoughts as Halcyons calm the sea—
Sooth'st in distress, when servile minions flee;
And O! without thy sun-bright smiles below,
Life were a night and earth a waste of woe."

The increase of Christ takes the slave's fetters off and bids him sing of freedom. In His presence the whole accursed brood of social vampires dies, as the foul fungus of the night dies when noonday brilliance penetrates the domain of darkness. As Christ increases, there rises to our view refuges for the homeless, hospitals for the sick, asylums for the vacated thrones of reason, schools for the training of the intellect, and churches for the cultivation of the heart. The logic of history attests these positions.

(3) The increase of Christ means *national advancement*. This is a fact so apparent that little is required to support the announcement. Look at Persia, Egypt, Turkey, India, Spain, Ireland, and even France, to-day, and compare them with Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, Prussia, the United States and England. What has kept the former down and filled them with anarchy and bloodshed? What has elevated and made happy the latter? We answer: in the former, the blight and curse of Paganism, Mohammedanism, Popery or infidelity; and in the latter, the assertion of Protestantism and the increase of Christ. Remember, there was a time when Britons were scarcely deemed fit to be slaves for Romans. Trace the history of Britain for centuries, and you will find her struggling, oppressed, obscure. But at last, casting her idols to the moles and to the bats, shaking herself free from ecclesiastical bondage, making the Bible a free and open book, and planting her throne upon it, she drifted out from her ancient and

ignoble moorings and took her place among the first-class Powers of the world. I will not dwell longer on this proposition, for beyond all question in the increase of Christ there is national advancement.

III. My last question is: *How is this increase to be secured?*

1. And I answer briefly, *first, by individual effort and influence.* In this manner it commenced. Jesus called Andrew, and he immediately went in search of his brother Simon, and, finding him, saith, "We have found the Messiah." The day following, Jesus found Philip, and said unto him, "Follow Me." Then Philip found Nathanael and told him the glad tidings. So the work began and spread. In like manner, by individual effort, Christ has increased to this day.

One of the conditions of Christly indwelling in the heart is, that the possessor shall make Him known to others. Each Christian a preacher, every believer in Christ a missionary as far as his opportunity extends, is one of the great secrets of increase. To the reclaimed demoniac of Gadara, Christ said, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And he immediately went out and began to publish in Decapolis, a region containing ten cities, how great things the Lord had done for him.

Dear friends who have found Christ, be assured He expects you to lead some other to Him.

No one else can do your work. There is no possible way of getting rid of the responsibility. Then speak

of Him. Spread abroad the savor of His name. Everywhere proclaim—

“The arms of love that compass me,
Would all mankind embrace.”

2. The second mode of securing the increase of Christ, is, *By organized advance upon the strongholds of darkness.* Thank God that we live in an age when Christian endeavor is no longer circumscribed by local or natural boundaries, no longer fitful or desultory. The sense of responsibility and the tide of love swaying the Christian Church to-day have borne down and overflowed all state lines and natural barriers, and are this day attacking all the “issues” of sin. Incessant, organized, aggressive effort is the watchword of the Church. Not only are there more men and women consecrated to this work in their individual capacity than ever before, but millions are bonded together in Church unions, in Bible societies, in missionary organizations. They have their officers, their agents, their machinery all at work.

The British troops marching against Tel-el-Kebir in the gray dawn of that September morning, were not better organized or officered than is the Church of Christ to-day, as she marches against the strongholds of darkness.

But despite her brilliant troops and splendid organization, England would have failed without the sinews of war. These the British Parliament voted, and the victory was won.

So in the Church's organized march against the evils which still remain enthroned, she requires money, large sums of money, and for this we make our appeal to the parliament of a free and Christ-saved people. Dear friends, we believe in Christ. Many of you have found peace and joy and the hope of heaven through faith in Him. Let every other supreme ambition die.

Bury the aspirations for human glory, and in the hope and in the spirit of the Baptist say—

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

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SERMON XVII.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD AND MODERN SCEPTICISM.

REV. LEROY HOOKER, OF KINGSTON.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”—
Gen. i. 1.

[The following sermon is the last of a series of four on “The Christian Doctrine of God and Modern Scepticism.” The first treats of the Doctrine, the second of the Denial, or Atheism, the third of the Doubt, or Agnosticism, and the fourth of the Demonstration.” They are all founded on the same text, viz., *Gen. i. 1.* This explanation is given in order to render more easily intelligible some features of this sermon.]

A VERY few men deny the doctrine of my text; and, in opposition to it, declare that the heaven and the earth were not created at all; and that there is no God to create anything. A somewhat larger number hold that, whatever the truth is, it is not known, and probably cannot be known, that there is or is not a personal Creator. But the overwhelming majority of men, as well in the most benighted as in the most enlightened nations of the earth, hold it in unquestioned belief.

And, the doctrine assumed being true, it should not

be a matter of very great wonder that this belief is common to the minds of men in all states of mental culture; for, then, it is a truth which we may, without presumption, suppose that the Creator would, by some means, make known to His human children; and we have equal warrant for the supposition that it is a truth toward which the mental proclivities, appetites, and instincts of men would tremble, as the magnetic needle trembles to the pole.

It is of prime importance to enquire, just at this point, what account do these Scriptures give of the means by which men came to the knowledge of their Divine Father? The answer is not hard to find. From the beginning to the end of it, the Bible everywhere declares that God revealed or discovered Himself to men. There is here no smallest hint to support the "innate idea" theory, by which it is claimed that there is in every soul born into the world an ingenerated thought and certainty of the being of God; nor is it claimed here that there is such an immanence or manifest indwelling of God in nature that His existence is to everyone a self-evident fact; nor do these Scriptures assert that there have been given to all men such powers of perception and reason that each several man can take the bare facts of nature and, with no foregoing testimony to suggest the thought, "reason from nature up to nature's God."

The theory of the Book is, that the Being who created the senses and intellectual powers of men is well able to discover Himself to those powers and

senses; and it declares that He has done so. According to its history, the first man was favored with personal intercourse with his Creator. So also was Moses, unto whom He spake "face to face as a man speaketh to his friend." And all down through the long succession of patriarchs and prophets the Lord was pleased to discover Himself to His servants in such manner that they perceived His presence and understood His communications. In the fulness of time He was pleased to come into the view of multitudes in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, that men might see the personality of life and power and love of their universal Father. Beside this special discovery of Himself to chosen instructors and leaders of the people—to prophets and apostles—He has ever looked unto every man in all the world who has been of a humble and contrite spirit, and, in answer to prayer, has manifested Himself to him by the inward ministry of the Holy Ghost.

While, however, it is true that the knowledge of God comes not by innate idea, nor by an independent course of reasoning, nor by self-evidence, it is not admitted that there is any difficulty in the way of gaining that knowledge which may not be easily overcome by the ordinary mind of man. It is one of that class of truths which, when once declared, may be so supported by evidence as to be held in belief and so tested by experience as to become fixed in the mind as matters of certain knowledge. Watt did not reason in his way; to the power of steam. It declared itself to

his eye as he sat looking at a volume of steam rushing out of a spout. Newton did not reason his way to the law of gravitation. There it was in nature, silent, invisible, and almost omnipotent—cording together and holding in its mighty grasp the atoms, the planets, the systems of the material universe—but it was not self-evident; nor was it so conspicuous that men found it necessary to their theories of nature and then reasoned to a certainty of it. In the falling of an apple it declared itself to the observing mind of Newton. Once suggested, that great philosopher seized the clue and followed it, partly by reason and partly by experiment, until he was able to announce it as an established and stupendous fact.

The same is true of the doctrine of God, save that it was not left to a late and accidental discovery. It is not self-evident. The idea is not innate. It was not discovered by unassisted reason. It was at first, and from the Divine side, announced by an immediate discovery of God to men. As a direct revelation it has been repeated at different times and to different persons. It has also been mediately declared to every age in the testimony of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs. And although men could never have felt their way to it, it is, nevertheless, a doctrine which is supported by proof sufficient to confirm belief, and so easily tested by experience that whosoever will may advance his belief into knowledge.

Permit me, then, to set forth, as fully as I can in

the brief space at my command, the evidences which establish the belief in God.

I. THERE IS A STRONG PRESUMPTION IN FAVOR OF THAT BELIEF IN THE FACT THAT MEN HAVE ALWAYS AND ALMOST UNIVERSALLY HELD IT.

When Columbus discovered this Western world he found its inhabitants worshipping God as the "Great Master of Life," although, from time immemorial, they had had no communication with the rest of mankind. The sable Numidian, how gross soever his conception of Him and the image in which he symbolizes Him, worships God. The intellectual Greek of the olden time, with his thousand idol-gods still Godless, built an altar to the great "Unknown God," and, at that shrine, worshipped more truly than at the altars of the familiar gods of his mythology. The Persian sees, and, in his own way, worships God in the fire and in the sun. Europe, in the height of her nineteenth-century culture and civilization, bows reverently at His throne. Down from the remotest ages comes a voice from the heart of humanity—a voice which blends in its world-wide volume the speech of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people that have ever dwelt under the vault of heaven—a voice that swells into thunders in our ears to-day—and the burden of its testimony is this: "The Lord God omnipotent liveth and reigneth!" And how is all this to be explained? Why, we are asked to believe that the great heart of humanity lies, and has always lied; or,

that it is, and always has been, deceived! But, whether we refer it to wilful falsehood or honest mistake, it is certainly unparalleled and incredible that nearly all men, without any common consent, have fallen into the same error or committed the same crime. If it be an idea so chimerical and repugnant to reason as the advocates of a sceptical philosophy would have us believe, how came it to be as early as the annals of man, and as wide as the race? Admit the doctrine that there is a Divine Creator such as the Bible sets forth, and all these facts are at once and sufficiently explained. Then, and naturally enough, the invisible Father has declared Himself, and His children have found it easy to receive the declaration as being in perfect accord with their own nature.

II. THE PRESUMPTION, WHICH IS SUFFICIENTLY JUSTIFIED BY THE COMMON BELIEF OF MANKIND, IS STRENGTHENED TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE BY THE FACT THAT NOTHING THAT MAKES AGAINST IT HAS EVER BEEN ESTABLISHED BY PROOF.

Every one must admit that, were the doctrine of God untrue, it would be an untruth so monstrous, so palpable, and so pronounced in its utter want of accord with the facts of nature in general, and with the instincts both of the heart and the intellect of mankind in particular that, among those who have opposed it, some one would have been able to point to at least one established fact that would expose its untruthfulness.

It has been urged that belief in the eternity of matter should weaken if not destroy belief in God. But wherefore should it? It is far from clear that one could not believe that matter is eternal, if there were any proof of it, and at the same time hold the doctrine of God in unshaken confidence. If matter has always existed, that does not prove that its existence is uncaused and independent. Moreover, the fact that something that is not God is eternal does not, of necessity, compel even a doubt of His existence. Duration is something; space is something; for they are named and defined; and men do not name and define nothing. Now, duration and space are eternal; and yet we are so far from being disturbed in our faith in God by these that we cannot even think of Him without requiring, as the complement of our thought, eternal duration as the flow of His existence, and limitless, eternal space as the field of His operations. Nor would there be any insuperable difficulty in believing in Him if it were granted that matter, too, is eternal. But it is not granted; for no man has ever proved the eternity of matter; and I venture to say that no man ever will.

It has been thought by some that the scientific doctrine of evolution and development should shake the belief in God. Again I ask wherefore? I grant that it accounts for many of the facts of nature. But no men know so well as LaMark and Darwin and Tyndall and Herbert Spencer that it does not account for all nor for the principal facts. It is not unreason-

able, therefore, to insist upon holding it as a mere theory until it shall have been shown to fit all around the circle of nature.

Suppose, however, that for a little space we allow that it fits all around—what then? Why, just this: Accepted as a fact, evolution is the most wonderful fact in the whole compass of our knowledge, and, more than anything I can think of, requires the existence of an intelligent Creator! It has acted all along as if, in the beginning, it had a carefully prepared plan and the minutest specifications of the structures it was to build—say, of the lily, the horse, the man. It began to work toward its object on material most unpromising, the chaotic matter in the primitive nebular mass which floated in space as a vast extended cloud. It took millions of years to produce the first specimens of its handiwork—the first lily, the first horse, the first man. Through all the millions of years, like a wise master-builder, it never deviated from its plan in a single particular; like a giant refreshed with the wine of immortality, it never fainted in its toil for a single instant. I am filled with admiration! I am overwhelmed with wonder! Why, sirs, if this be true—and I do not say that it is not—but, if it be true, I will no longer ask the lily to tell me of the hand that clothed it with such wondrous beauty, nor the horse who was that clothed his warlike neck with thunder, nor the man who set him, in the majesty of thought and will, upon the throne of earthly dominion!

Turning from these I will interrogate the laws of evolution; for they will stand nearer to God than the things they have produced. Just as the automatic lathe is nearer to the inventor, and more fully expresses his genius than the article fashioned by it, so this unreasoning but most capable and untiring force called evolution must stand nearer to and more fully express the genius and omnipotence of the invisible God than any of the efforts produced by it. And, far beyond the inferior glory expressed in the visible features of nature, I shall see in the system and forces of evolution the more excellent glory of the Great Being who first conceived the plan and specifications of all things in earth and heaven that have beauty, light, motion, intelligence, and then gave out from Himself an automatic force so ordained in its laws of action, and so invigorated with immortal energy, that it wrought, unguided and unreplenished, through a million ages, and turned out the completed system of nature, with its varied lines and hues of beauty, with its mystery of life and its majesty of man. Yes, my hearers, evolution being nothing more than unintelligent force in operation, calls more loudly than any other theory for an intelligent power behind it. Its very heart and flesh cry out for the living God; for, without Him, it can give no rational account of itself.

Many of our more modern free-thinkers claim that a case is made out against necessary belief in God when they have said, and, to their own satisfaction,

established it, that the laws which now govern matter have always governed it. There is here, in the first place, an incorrect statement. It is very far from the truth to say that all the laws that now govern matter have always done so. The testimony that the earth bears of its past is this: that far back in the bewildering ages it existed as a mass of molten matter. It must be plain to every one that at that stage of its existence there could have been no form of life in it; and that, therefore, the laws of life now in operation did not then govern any portion of the matter contained in our globe. When life began to be, in even its lowest forms, a set of laws new to the earth began to be operative and to control a portion of matter. The statement is not only incorrect in part; it is, as a whole, a specimen of very bad reasoning. To my judgment the existence and operation of law—law in which the keenest analysis can detect neither life nor thought—requires the existence of a lawgiver. Does the Code Napoleon weaken or destroy the evidences that such a person as Napoleon once existed? On the contrary, it is almost the only enduring memorial that is left in the world of that great, bad man. Already time has well-nigh removed the scars made by his iron heel upon the race and upon the very bosom of the earth. The empire and the subordinate kingdoms he founded disappeared like the morning cloud while he was yet alive. But the Code Napoleon yet survives to tell that he once lived. Even so the existence and

reign of a perfect and universal law in nature proclaims the existence of a Divine Lawgiver.

From time to time it has been trumpeted in the ears of the world that all the defences of this belief in God have been exploded. I shall have more to say about this presently. I only pause here long enough to consider whether, if it were a fact that infidels have—to their own satisfaction—exploded every argument that believers have advanced, that would make it untrue that God lives and created the heaven and the earth. There is nothing more misleading than the apparent results of controversy. It seldom does more than decide which of the contestants is the superior wrangler. Once and again the after-experience of men has shown that the man who had been silenced by seemingly syllogisms was, nevertheless, in the right. When Columbus proposed to the Court of Spain his bold scheme, which looked to the discovery of new islands and continents in the Western Atlantic, the spherical form of the earth was included in his theory. Now, nothing was ever more completely exploded than was this part of his theory, and, along with it, his ridiculous assertion that ships could sail part way around a globe and then sail back again. The scholars and princes, and, I grieve to say it, the priests of religion were against him, almost to a man. They heaped ridicule upon "the foolish idea of the existence of antipodes, of people who walk opposite to us with their heels upwards and their heads hanging down, where trees grow with their branches downwards, and

it rains, hails, and snows upwards." They also demonstrated, in the most scientific way, that "if the world be round why, then, the ships could never come back, for the voyage home would, of course, be a perpetual journey up a mountain of sea." His arguments were exploded, and himself and his projects were reduced to absurdity by men who thought they knew; but Columbus got afloat; he found America; he demonstrated the rotundity of the earth; and, astonishing to say, on the voyage home he sailed up that mountain of sea. In like manner, and in spite of the scientific bugbears of philosophy when it is falsely so called, men continue to believe in God, to seek Him, and to find Him. As to philosophy, rightly so called, it has never to this day adopted a single doctrine that is in any degree destructive of the belief in the living God.

III. THIS DOCTRINE OF GOD IS STILL FURTHER STRENGTHENED AND COMMENDED TO SOUND REASON BY A FAIR CONSIDERATION OF THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

That religion is deeply seated in our nature—in fact, ineradicable—is fully conceded, even by Dr. Tyndall. In the preface to the 7th edition of the celebrated Belfast Address, he says: "No atheistical reasoning can ever dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic." In his

estimation—to quote his own words once more—“the problem of problems of our day is to find a legitimate satisfaction for the religious emotions.”

Equally certain and conspicuous is the moral element in man—the conscience. Grant that it is sometimes ill-informed and, in consequence, delivers, occasionally, a false judgment, yet there it is, a moral sense, the deputy of Eternal Righteousness, sitting in majesty in the soul of every man and passing sentence of approval or condemnation upon all the acts, motives, and tempers of men.

Now these elements, the moral and the religious, are fixed quantities in the constitution of man. What do they mean? Man will worship; and he should worship up—toward some being greater than himself; some being worthy of his homage! Man has a conscience of right and wrong, both absolute and relative, and thereby knows that the law of right and wrong cannot be of himself!

Dr. Tyndall's problem can have no new solution. The old strictly accords with the instincts and with the plainest analogies of our nature. The natural satisfaction of the lungs is found in the vital air, and they assert its existence. The ear is formed for sound, and its satisfaction is provided. Rightly understood, the eye would assert with all authority, even to a blind man, the existence of light. And, brethren, the moral and the religious elements in us assert with equal authority the existence of a Being “who is worthy to receive blessing and honor and glory”—a

Being whose right is to "govern the nations that be upon the earth," and to bring men into judgment and "render unto every man according as his work shall be."

IV. THE MANIFEST DESIGN IN THE CONSTITUTION AND ACTIVITIES OF NATURE AFFORDS, IN ITSELF, SUFFICIENT GROUND OF BELIEF THAT THEY WERE PLANNED AND BROUGHT INTO BEING, AND ARE NOW OPERATED BY AN INTELLIGENT AND ALL-POWERFUL BEING.

The facts upon which this argument is based are so well known, and have of necessity been so often before us in this series of sermons, that I need not now dwell upon them at any great length.

There is scientific evidence that before the present mechanism of the universe was set in motion, there was a preparation and grouping of its materials, and an adjustment of its minutest parts. So great an authority as Sir John Herschell asserts that "chemical analysis most certainly points to an origin, and effectually destroys the idea of a self-existent matter, by giving to each of its atoms the essential character, at once, *of a manufactured article and a subordinate agent.*" "Thus," says Dr. Cocker, "in the very elements out of which the universe is built, we see the indications not only of a fashioning, but also of an originating intelligence—a creating God."

But this is going very far back. Look, now, at the more familiar fact that nature is in universal and per-

petual motion. Sap and blood are coursing through the veins of plants and animals. From time immemorial the seasons have followed each other in such regular succession that day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, have never come out of time. The planets, so vast in size, in number, and in the sweep of their orbits, come and go with such precision and steadiness that there is never a collision, and the astronomer is able to calculate to a second when any one of them will appear at a given point in its orbit a thousand years hence.

More wonderful still is the fact that each of these operations has its proper end, and that it is accomplished with as much exactness as would be possible if the agent knew what it is expected to do and took intelligent measures to do it. Be it noted, also, that these ends stand related to one another as a connected series in an ascending scale, and result in a final ministry to the life of man. Upon the revolutions of the planets the changes of the seasons depend; upon the changes of the seasons vegetable life and reproduction depend; upon these, in turn, animal life—culminating in the life of man—depends.

Most amazing of all, is the fact that these agents, which act exactly as they would if they knew their appointed service and took wise and efficient measures to accomplish it, are known to be destitute of intelligence and of inherent power. We must gather into this connection the mystery of life also. Time was when there was no life in all the earth, for once it

was a mass of molten matter; and we know that no germ of life could have endured such heat as was necessary to melt it. How, then, did life begin? In their desperate determination to deny the being of God, some have taken refuge in the theory that life sprang up spontaneously—that is, without a pre-existing life to spring from. Let us move carefully over this ground. It must be admitted that the cooling lava of a world which had certainly been fused from centre to circumference had, in itself, no germ of life. The life which is now its most remarkable feature must therefore be accounted for, and that in one of two ways. It either sprang up spontaneously, or was derived from a source entirely apart from and independent of the earth. Prof. Huxley was bold enough to announce his belief in the spontaneous origin of life, and that he could demonstrate it by an experiment. He made his experiment with a piece of raw flesh placed in a vacuum, and all the world held its breath awaiting the result. It was a failure. Dr. Tyndall followed with three experiments in the same line. The first was with common air in a closed vessel, and he got life in the insect form. The second was with enclosed air which had been subjected to a high degree of heat, sufficient to destroy any germs of life in the air, *and he got no life*. In the third the vessel was first made a vacuum and then the air was permitted to filter back through cotton fibre which was wadded into the neck, *and he got no life*. As the result of all, Dr. Tyndall came out convinced that *every life in the universe sprang from a father-life!*

Now, gather into one view all these facts. In the primitive elements of which the material universe is made, every atom bears the marks of a "manufactured article;" organized matter is, every moment, acting according to a most rational, complicated, and benevolent design; life, of which no rational account can be given but to ascribe it to a father-life, which father-life could not have been in the cooling lava of a molten earth, is all around us and is a part of our own experience—for we live. And yet I read the other day in a book, and I was told years ago by a gentleman who made some pretensions to learning, that the argument from design has been exploded! Brethren, it refuses to explode! One might as well undertake to explode the simplest verities of mathematics. Can the whole of anything contain more than the sum of all its parts? Most certainly it cannot. And yet we are asked to believe that an exhaustive analysis of the universe as a whole gives us only matter and unreasoning force! And in these two, we are told, must be found—if found at all—the sufficient causes of life and motion! Why, here are matter and force beyond a question; but beside these here is life, and here are activities so complicated, so extended, and so rational that they out-do the power and genius of the most capable of mankind; and they are not unworthy of the infinite reason and power of the great and living God, by whom these Scriptures declare they were created. Wisdom will scarcely die with the atheistic philosophers. The Bible is only just in pronouncing

them fools; it is strictly scientific in locating the fountain of their folly in the heart rather than in the intellect. For the time, at least, the man must have lost the proportions of reason who can believe that *life* was conceived and born of *death*, that *order*, of that excellent kind which prevails in nature, was the creation of *chaos*, and that *activities*, so far-reaching and potent as to wield the material universe, so rational and benevolent as to be easily understood by a child in the useful and necessary services they minister to the life of man, were caused by *inert, unconscious, unliving, unfeeling, unreasoning matter*.

V. THIS BELIEF IN GOD WHICH HAS COMMENDED ITSELF ALMOST UNIVERSALLY TO THE JUDGMENT OF MANKIND, AGAINST WHICH NOTHING HAS EVER BEEN ESTABLISHED BY PROOF, WHICH IS CONFIRMED AND COMMENDED TO SOUND REASON BY THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS OF MAN, AND ALSO BY THE EVIDENCES OF RATIONAL AND BENEVOLENT DESIGN IN NATURE—THIS BELIEF, I SAY, HAS BEEN TESTED BY EXPERIENCE BY MULTITUDES OF HONEST AND CAPABLE MEN, AND HAS BEEN FOUND TRUE TO FACT.

I shall not enlarge upon this point. The argument is very simple, and its value is easily estimated. Such men as Faraday, Cook, Tholuck, Wesley, Fletcher, and thousands more—good men all, and scholarly—declare “we have found the Lord.” There it stands. There is not a shadow of countervailing evidence. It con-

tradicts the experience of no man under heaven. That they were consciously false in their testimony is incredible. That they were deceived in thinking that they had found the Lord no man will be allowed to assert until he has himself failed to find Him in an honest and scriptural endeavor so to do. Moreover, it must be noted that among the men who have testified that they have found the Lord are some of the most capable and trustworthy of mankind. If their testimony was true to fact, then there was, and is, and ever shall be, world without end, a God for men to find, obey, and enjoy forever.

The applications of this doctrine are too many and too vast in their scope to be treated in an exhaustive way in the little space that remains. A few of the more important may, however, be mentioned.

(1) *The doctrine we have been considering is essential to science.* When all the facts of nature shall have been ascertained and systematized, there will yet remain to be answered the question of questions, *Whence came the structures, the order, the activities, the life?* Until the true answer is given science must remain what she is this day—a fragment incapable of being completed. And I venture the opinion that when science speaks in answer to that great question with the authority of certain knowledge, she will refer the life to a father-life, the order to intelligence, and the activities to a power that is under the direction of a **LIVING PERSON**; and that, borrowing the long-neglected language of holy writ, she will write

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in her final text-book: "IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM."

(2) *The doctrine of God is fundamental to every vital feature of Christianity.* It furnishes the exact point around which the serious battle between the Christian philosophy and its several opponents must be fought. Holding it, everything in Christianity becomes possible, rational, and even necessary; for then Providence is only the care which the Creator very naturally takes of the things which He thought it worth His while to make; revelation is accounted for from the natural desire of the Creator to communicate His thought and will to such of His creatures as were capable of receiving them; and redemption is but the out-going of a Father's love towards His guilty and perishing children.

(3) *It would be improper to take leave of the subject without saying a plain word to the believers of this doctrine.* You accept the statement that God created the heaven and the earth and you. Perhaps you congratulate yourselves upon the fact that you are very firm believers—that nothing could shake your faith. And possibly you may harbor the notion that if you can only keep up that intense faith to the end of life Jesus Christ will reward you for it by opening to you the gates of His holy and blessed heaven, and by saying "Come, ye blessed."

And yet, in all kindness, I must remind you that some of us believers in God are to be numbered

amongst the worst people in all the world. I will not say that we live—some of us, at least—as atheists and sceptics; for in saying that I should insult many men who are less bad than some of us are. It remains for the nominal believers of the day to commit the stupendous wickedness of practising fraud, of oppressing the poor, of blasting other people's reputation by slanders—and much more and much worse—and all in direct disobedience of the great God *in whom they believe!* It remains for such to blaspheme and insult the great God *in whom they believe!* It remains for them to go to the sublimest height of all wickedness by neglecting, rejecting, blaspheming the crucified Redeemer *in whom they believe!* May our merciful God turn our hearts from iniquity, lest it prove our eternal overthrow! Be persuaded to seek Him, and you shall find in Him a Father and a Friend that will stand by you in life and in death, and be to you a satisfying portion to all eternity.

SERMON XVIII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST—THE FITTING THEME OF A MINSITER'S GLORYING.

BY REV. W. JACKSON, MONTREAL.

Preached before the Theological Union of the Montreal Conference.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Gal. vi. 14.*

THIS avowal of the great Apostle of the Gentiles will, I am sure, find an echo in the heart of every true minister of Jesus Christ now before me; and also in the heart of every hearer in whose soul there pulsates the joys of a new life. I have chosen this text to-night, not so much for purposes of exposition, as to avail myself of the opportunity it affords of stating three or four reasons why the cross of Christ is the proper object of ministerial glorying. Depending upon the help of the good Spirit of God, and craving the aid of your patience and prayers, I will, without further preliminary remark, address myself to the task before me.

I. MY FIRST REASON FOR GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS BECAUSE IT JUSTIFIES THE FACT OF THE INCARNATION TO MY REASON AND COMMENDS IT TO MY HEART.

I do not say it explains the mystery, only that it justifies the fact. Our definitions of the Hypostatic Union as a fact may be clearer and more finely cut than at some former periods of the Church's history; but we are no nearer the comprehension of its profound mystery than the generations who have gone before us. The fact in its relation to other truths is better understood than formerly, and the influence it exerts on modern theological thought is wider, regulating and modifying our views of the whole doctrinal frame-work of Christianity.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, as taught in Scripture, can have only one meaning—the complete and actual union of the divine and human natures in the one person of our Lord. It certainly cannot be less than this. *How* this can be, is a mystery which towers above our faculties as the stars above the earth. We are not asked to understand how; that were impossible. And surely none of my hearers have reached that climax of intellectual folly in which a man says to himself, "I will give credence to nought but what I understand," for then a man cannot credit even his own existence. God cannot reduce Himself or His Divine Son to the narrow limits of our logical formulas. A God within the range of our faculties



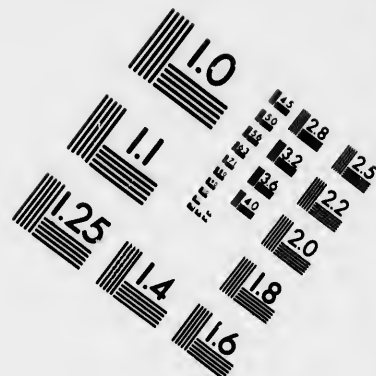
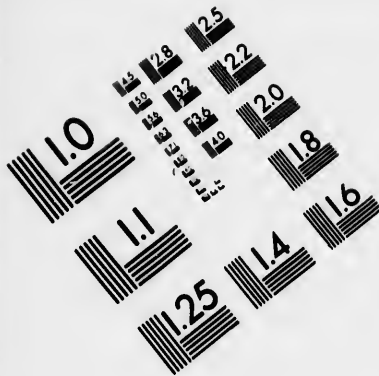
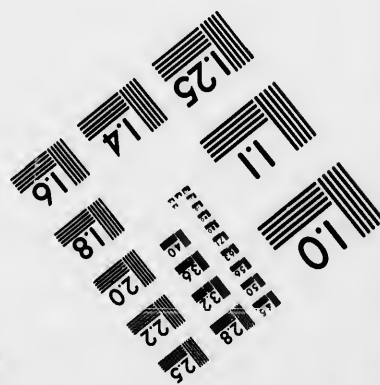
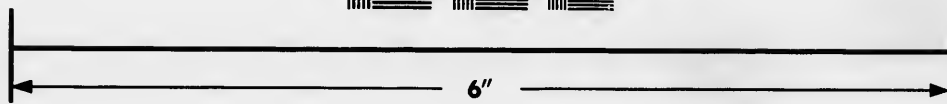
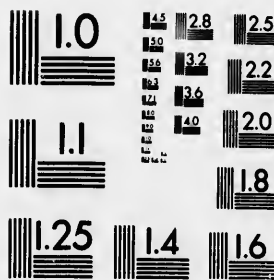


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were no God at all. Logically, the union of the Divine and human in the person of our Lord is impossible—it is just as well to admit that once for all—but our poor logic is shivered at once into atoms in the presence of the person of Jesus Christ, who is at once human and divine.

I need not detain you with any formal proof of this; that Christ had the attributes of both natures, while He was but one person, is written as with a sunbeam on the inspired pages. No fires of adverse criticism can eliminate this truth from the sacred record, in hatred or depravity impeach the record. It stands here to-night in a lustre brighter far for the ordeals through which it has passed during the centuries. Christ is man, and He is more than man; Christ is God, and He is less than God. Christ is man stooping to the lowest attitude of human weakness, frailty, and limitation. Christ is God invested with all the attributes and exercising all the prerogatives of the Deity. He is like us, brethren, and yet most unlike. He has no parallel among the race, and yet He is linked to the lowest of us by a nature like our own. Christ is linked to man as the wayfarer, with weary limb and aching brow; and He is equally linked to the Deity by the sweep of His intellect, the might of His arm, and the matchlessness of His moral purity. By this mysterious blending of the Divine and human natures in His own person, Christ is equally akin to both. He is the co-equal of the Eternal Father, yet He is my brother. On the one side, His nature reaches upward

to the Deity; on the other, downward to the poorest and lowest man. In the peerless dignity of the Divine nature in union with the sinless limitations of the human, Christ stands alone the joy of earth and the glory of heaven.

This doctrine of the two natures in the one person of our Lord is the basis on which rests the whole fabric of Christian truth; it is the centre to which all the lines of the system converge, and from which they derive at once their significance and their worth. The relation between the person of Christ and the doctrines He taught is most vital, mutually re-acting on each other. Our best definition of Christianity is Christ, and by so much as you lower the dignity of His person you lower the excellence of Christianity; and the converse of this is equally true: pare down the doctrines of Christianity to their smallest possible significance, and the natural consequence will be the degradation of Christ's person.

That Christ, the Eternal Son of God, should assume any nature is about the last thing which I could expect, and though I am assured of the fact, it is a thought which staggers my reason and strikes me dumb. But when I survey the cross of Christ as the instrument designed of God to win men back to purity, dignity, and the bright destinies of a blessed immortality, and feel in my own soul something of the joys and hopes it inspires, my reason is satisfied to accept the fact as it is revealed to me, assured that in the infinite wisdom of the Deity the end aimed at is com-

mensurate with the means He has adopted to bring it to pass. I will not say, as some have done, that this is the only way in which God could save fallen ones. I dare not attempt to measure the resources of the Deity, or put a limit on the faculties of the Infinite, but since He has chosen this method we may be satisfied it was most in accord with His own perfect wisdom and the requirements of the race it was designed to save.

If it be urged that the nature of man is too insignificant to account for a humiliation so profound, and a sacrifice so great as that implied in the incarnation and death of the Son of God, then, I answer, there are other worlds than this, and other races than ours, and while the immediate and direct subjects of redeeming grace are sinful men, and while that is the grand theme of this Holy Book, its pages are not a substitute of intimations that the death of Christ has a comprehensive though indirect bearing on the whole universe of intelligent beings. In the light of the intimations to which I allude, I think I am warranted in saying that by the cross of Christ it is the purpose of the Eternal to bring all holy intelligences in the universe under one system of perfect order, harmony, and love—weld them together in one harmonious and happy whole. As my thought glances forward to the time when this purpose shall be accomplished, when I see angels and men drawn together by the magnetic power of the cross, and fused into a white heat of gratitude and love, my reason is satisfied to accept the

mystery of the incarnation. Let the cold or heartless critics or sceptics say what they will, we affirm this to be an object not unworthy of the Son of God Himself.

Assured that such is to be the outcome of the incarnation and the cross of Christ, it becomes a matter more for my heart than my head—a subject for adoring gratitude, self-consuming love, and life-long service, rather than an intellectual problem for one to solve. As a sinner, I humbly and lovingly bow to the mystery, resting my soul on the Crucified for acceptance and hope. As a minister, I can but glory in the cross as the means by which results so grand and far-reaching are realized.

II. MY SECOND REASON FOR GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS BECAUSE IT CONTAINS THE BRIGHTEST AND FULLEST REVELATION GOD HAS MADE OF HIMSELF TO MAN.

The human can only rise to the Divine by the contemplation of the Deity, but the Divine is beyond the ken of the human. The partial revelations God made of Himself in the olden time were chiefly a cause of fear. In the complex nature of His Divine Son, He has given us the fullest revelation of Himself, so that if, like Moses, we desire to see the "glory of the Lord" without a veil, we may behold its brilliance in "the face of Jesus Christ." "He is the express image of His Father's person," nor did the human in the Son in any way hinder the revelation of the Divine Father;

yea, it was a fitting vehicle through which to manifest Himself unto His earthly children. Through Christ's flesh there came frequent flashes of the Divinity there was in Him, and men "Beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of truth and grace."

Now, amid all the revelations of Himself, which God has made to mankind, this is at once the most comprehensive and the best suited to our faculties. We may learn something of His wisdom and His power from the study of His works. God has written His presence and power on all creation. Revelations of His wisdom and skill are scattered on earth, and air, and sky. We have only to use our faculties to trace Him in everything about us. We see Him in the lofty mountain, and in the tiny flowers; in the sparkling dewdrops, and the restless sea. We hear Him in the sigh of the zephyr, and the roar of the storm; in the ripple of the streamlet, and the song of the bird. "The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work." But as we gaze in amazement on the stupendous power and matchless wisdom of the Almighty as seen in the works of His hands, we feel that in these things there is no response to the deepest longings of our intellects or our hearts.

For ages earth's keenest minds have been reading this story of hill and valley, earth and ocean, field and flowers, sun and star; and the more they have read the more they have been bewildered, because nature cannot answer the soul's questionings con-

cerning God. Looking at the Divine Being through nature alone, your apprehensions of Him will be as variable as a kaleidoscopic view—as defective and conflicting as you can possibly conceive. Sin has so warped the human soul that it can only perceive partial and distorted images of the Deity written on the works of His hands.

Again, we may attain some knowledge of God's moral attributes by the study of His immutable law, but only such knowledge as will intensify our fears. Here we find a majesty which overwhelms us, and a justice which chills our blood in its flow. This is a revelation beyond our grasp; and unless we can get some clearer light, His attributes must appear to us to be in conflict. This clearer light—thanks to His ever-blessed Name—He has given in the person of His beloved Son. Here we have the Infinite in human form, and within the range of our faculties; here we may grasp the hands of a human brother in the person of our adorable Lord; here are human eyes wet with tears of brotherly sympathy, which well up from the heart of our God; here is a human voice speaking to us, but the infinite tenderness of its love-tones reveals the Deity that utters them: in that spotless life of loving labor, with its crown of unselfish sacrifice, we see Divine justice and tenderness, Divine wisdom and power, as we see them nowhere else. Looking at the Divine Being through any other medium, I am either blinded or bewildered, but in Jesus Christ I behold Him in such a way as to kindle my adoration and

love. I cannot comprehend Him—that were impossible—but I can see enough of Him to quiet my troubled conscience, and give my earth-worn, sin-polluted spirit rest.

Study the character of God from any other altitude than that of Calvary and its cross, and you will find your views oscillating to and fro like the pendulum of a clock; now you will think He is good, then you will think He is eternally just, if not harshly cruel; but standing by the cross and looking at the Eternal Father in the reflected light it throws upon His face, we see Him as He actually is. Looking at the Deity through the Crucified corrects all our hard thoughts and conflicting conceptions of Him. The cross brings the Deity near to us, reveals Him as the friend of many, enabling the obedient to call the Infinite and the Eternal by the name of Father. The cross localizes God so as to make Him apprehensible to our powers, weakened and perverted by sin.

In the cross God has opened a wider rift in the clouds which hang over His infinite nature than we find anywhere else, and through which comes our widest knowledge of Him. Perfections of the Divine nature which, studied separately, seem to be in conflict, are here blended in perfect and sublime harmony. Joseph Cook, speaking of his love of sitting by the sea at eventide, says: "As the stars come out, I love to lift above my thoughts Richter's Apologue, which represents an angel catching a man up into the infinity of space, and moving with him from gallery to gallery,

until the human heart fainted and called out, 'End is there none of the universe of God!' And the constellations answered, 'End is there none that ever yet we heard of.' Again the angel flew on with the man past immeasurable architraves, and immensity after immensity sown with rushing worlds; and the human heart fainted again and cried out, 'End is there none of the universe of God!' And the angel answered, 'End is there none of the universe of God; so, also, there is no beginning.' But if, while I, thus entranced, look into the sky, you bring above my gaze the page of the gospel recording the fact of the atonement, all other revelations of the Divine glory appear in contrast but chaff and dust."

Now, if the well-being of man for time and eternity depends upon a correct knowledge of God, and the maintenance of a right relation to Him, it becomes a duty, enforced alike by gratitude and by self-interest, to study the revelation He has made of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. For a man to know Christ, love Christ, spend life in the study of Christ, is to know God and enjoy a life-long fellowship with Him. What makes this Gospel "Glad tidings of great joy," save that therein the universal Father reveals Himself unto His earthly children? What is this gospel but Christ the Teacher, Christ the Priest, Christ the Exemplar, winning back the poor prodigal race to the Father's heart and home? Take Christ out of this Gospel as the manifestation of God, and the demonstration of His love to man, and

it has neither beauty nor power; it only mocks my hopes and sports with my misery. But Christ, as the revelation of the Father's love, is the central figure here; and that is, I contend, a sufficient reason for glory in the cross on which that revelation culminates. Let those who will pursue the world's wealth, or pleasure, or fame, and make these things the objects of their boasting; let us, Christian brethren, spend our days and nights in the study of Christ, and make Him the sole object of our glorying. Perish every other pursuit, let failure be the outcome of every other endeavor; but O thou blessed Jesus, help our intellects and hearts in the study of Thee and Thy Cross, that our souls may know, love, and enjoy the universal Father for ever!

III. MY THIRD REASON FOR GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY FOUNTAIN WHENCE FLOWS A SUPPLY ADEQUATE FOR THE DEEPEST NEEDS OF HUMANITY.

All I need as a man or sinner is here. I see in Christ a sympathising friend, a faultless exemplar, and an atonement-making priest. Every man finds himself in circumstances where the sympathy and help of no other friend can reach him; among all the characters set before him as worthy of imitation there is no other whom, in all things, it would be safe to follow; while in the heavens above or in the earth beneath, no other has made atonement for his sins. The cross of Christ is heaven's own method for meeting the moral

and judicial destitution of our race for cleansing and saving human souls.

Go where you will, to the lowest depth of its degradation or to the sublimest heights of its civilization and culture, there is in the soul of man the consciousness of guilt; and to get from under this burden is the explanation of all forms of sacrifice; but no sacrifice can give the soul the assurance of pardon save that of Christ. Equally extended also is the consciousness of personal impurity, and that is the explanation of all forms of penance and self-mortification; but there is no power can wash out the ingrained pollution of sin, save the precious blood of Christ. Oh, when this doctrine of Christ and His Cross is apprehended by the intellect and believed by the heart, how near it brings the soul of poor sinful man to the Eternal God! It puts the soul into a harmonious relation to the Deity and the universe of being. But the tendency of the age is to ignore the doctrine of the Cross. With sonorous voice and a prophetic fearlessness we must continue to iterate and reiterate it in the world's ear. The confusion of earth's Babel must not be permitted to drown the voice of Heaven's mercy.

On the one side of us there are the apostles of culture, who in their lunacy imagine they have got beyond the intellectual altitude of Christianity. These would supplant the cross by transcendentalism—the joint product of the philosopher and the poet. Instead of cleansing for the impure, they offer a repast for the intellect or the taste; ignoring the fact of universal

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depravity they offer a deadly opiate to the individual conscience; recognizing the capacity of the human soul, and conscious of its own inability to lead men up the sublime heights of being, this form of modern scepticism is content to administer the Lethæan draught by which the soul becomes oblivious to its highest character and its sublimest destiny. I have not a word to say against what all men ask for in the shape of culture; would that in intellect and taste we were a race of men instead of a race of babies; but when I am asked to substitute these for the guilt-pardoning, soul-cleansing, soul-satisfying truths of the Gospel, I demur; I will not give my bread for your stone, gentlemen, for however beautifully you may have polished it there is no nourishment for my heart in it.

On the other side of us we have a class of men who obscure the Cross by their ritualism. Practically these men reduce Christianity from a system of heaven-born principles, for exhibition in the earthly lives of men, to a round of ordinances to be observed. In this system ministers are no longer ambassadors of Christ, wooing and beseeching men to be reconciled to God, but a set of professional posture-makers, or a kind of secondary mediators between God and the people. Follow this notion of a human priesthood in the Church to its legitimate and logical consequences and what have you?—no Saviour at all! A priest is one whose chief duty is to offer sacrifice; but if there is any sacrifice to offer in the Christian Church, then it must be supplementary to the sacrifice of Christ; and

if the sacrifice of Christ needs to be supplemented by that of the human priest, then I conclude that the sacrifice of Christ must have been insufficient for the purpose for which it was offered; but, if the sacrifice of Christ be insufficient for my salvation, my intuitions tell me that no sacrifice of the human priest can supply that which Christ's lacks. Thus this theory leaves us without a Saviour, helpless and hopeless in our sins. Away! away, I say, with your worthless substitutes; give me back my Crucified and Risen Lord! Don't, I pray you, put your forms between my soul and Christ. They are not saviours, at the best, only channels to convey His grace to the souls of men.

Brethren, in the face of an arrogant scepticism on the one hand, and of an imperious ritualism on the other, let us hold high in air, and with untremulous hand, the Cross of Christ as the only source whence men may draw strength for the duties of life, and a meetness for the issues of life. I do not argue that you shall give the doctrines of the Cross a place among the sciences or philanthropic schemes of men; in the name, and by the authority of Him who was crucified thereon, I claim for them a supremacy exclusive and absolute in their own sphere. Christianity is not of earth but from heaven, and its supremacy is gone the moment its origin is obscured. We must not on the one hand ignore the progress of modern thought, nor on the other allow it to deny, ignore, or even obscure the fact of man's fall by sin and his

recovery by Christ, which are the Alpha and Omega of Christianity.

But all attempts to describe what Christ is to the soul that receives Him are a failure; words are too few and feeble for the mighty theme. Is there a moral evil, from which the souls of men suffer, which has not in Christ an infallible antidote? Is there a virtue of which we are capable of which He is not at once the spring and the substance? To apprehend Christ with the intellect and the heart is to be made free from sin, and to rise to something of the dignity and sublimity of His own character and life. Oh, blessed privilege this, brethren! These souls of ours made like unto that of our Lord! Oh, to have His gentleness, His meekness, His purity, and His self-denial! To follow Him in His universal obedience to the Father's will as the law of our lives; to have the same supreme love for the Father, and the same yearning sympathy for man, as the motive power of our lives! Oh, brothers, to be like Him is the truest dignity and the highest destiny of a human soul!—a dignity and destiny short of which our soul cannot be at rest. Thus we may become through Christ. The magnetism of the Cross can attract and bind every weary, sin-stained soul of man about the very heart of God.

Remember, too, that there are such resources in Christ that this process of assimilation into His likeness may go on for ever without the possibility of exhausting them. Plants and animals die for lack of food, or from the loss of power to appropriate it; but

we have the Infinite on which to feed, and our own wilfulness is the only way in which we can lose our power of appropriation. The law of progress is woven into the texture of our being, and the Cross has made possible to us everything short of the Infinite. "Ever onward" is the motto of the Christly soul; eternal progression is the law of its life.

All our analogies fail us just here. I know of no figure which fitly represents the possibilities or progressions of a soul that takes Christ into itself, and makes Him the centre and circumference of its life. Spain once held both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar. So highly did she value her possessions, that she stamped on her coin the two pillars of Hercules, as the promontories of rock were called; and in a scroll thrown over these were the words, "*ne plus ultra*"—no more beyond. But when the bold spirit of Columbus sailed beyond these pillars and found the new world, then Spain struck the word "*ne*" from her coin, and left the "*plus ultra*"—more beyond. No Christian man in time or eternity will arrive at a stage when he will be able to say, "No more beyond;" but ever and for ever he may grow in virtue and in likeness to Christ, and plume himself for higher flights, inspired with the assurance that there is "*more beyond*."

With these thoughts in my mind, I rejoice to contemplate the period when this poor soul of mine shall crawl out of the darkness to bask in the sunlight of Christ's presence and throne; when I shall be ringed

about with His glory, and drink in bliss from all the sources and through all the avenues of knowledge as I commune with Him; when I shall be rid of all the obstructions and hindrances of a frail body; and when with undimmed eye I shall look into the brightness of my Saviour's face, and flash back His light and love. Now, as Christ by the Cross proposes to do this for me, and the race to which I belong, I take it to be a strong reason why I should glory alike in the Cross and the Crucified.

IV. MY FOURTH REASON FOR GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS BECAUSE IT IS THE MIGHTIEST INSTRUMENT IN THE HANDS OF M. N FOR THE UPLIFTING OF HIS BROTHER.

I take this to be our life-work, brethren, and I affirm that the Cross is the one instrument of our power. Conscious of the ever-present and oppressive fact of sin, humanity through the ages has striven to set itself right with God. Each succeeding age has had its own favorite remedy for removing the misery of men; but what have they accomplished? Man feels the hostile relation in which he stands to God. To set himself right he has put forth the mightiest efforts and made the costliest sacrifices; no suffering has been too great, no pang too severe, to be left untried. But failure has been the uniform outcome of all these mere human endeavors to set the soul right with God. Men have elaborated systems enough, but they have failed to give peace to his con-

science, or rest to his sin-burdened heart. Guilt has left its stains on the human soul, and while these remain man cannot be at rest. You may educate his mind to the highest and purest forms of thought; you may store his memory with the spoils of literature both ancient and modern; you may refine his taste and elevate his mind by the study of the sciences; but these guilt stains you cannot remove. Man's thirstings after the Infinite neither your culture nor your refinement can satisfy. Your philosophies, sciences, schemes of civilization, and systems of education are utterly powerless in the presence of the needs of humanity. There are questionings in each soul of immense moment which they cannot answer; yearnings in every human heart which they cannot satisfy; an hunger of spirit which they cannot appease. If you would dignify, ennoble, elevate, save a human soul, you must bring it in sight of the cross, and into direct contact with Him who was crucified thereon. That life only is truly blessed of which God's love in Christ has become at once inspiration and motive; in a word, this Gospel, for which there is absolutely no substitute, is the ocean of God's love, unfathomable in its depth and shoreless in its amplitude, where a befouled and despairing race may find cleansing and hope.

By the cross it is God's purpose to regenerate the world. The record of its career in the world is the pledge and prophecy of its ultimate triumph. The philosophies, superstitions, infidelities, and religions of

men have all been opposed to it. Every obstruction that hatred could forge or malice invent has been thrown in its way, but its benign course has been onward, with the steadiness of an eagle's flight toward the sun. Without any control of the great centres of learning, influence, or wealth, Christianity has made its way in the world, conquering the souls of men, and flooding them with its own light of purity and joy. Its "weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God." This Gospel of Christ, with its treasures of truth, its exhaustless resources, and its heart of love, is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," as when Paul proclaimed it in wealthy Corinth or in imperial Rome.

The cross of Christ is designed to conquer the world, liberating humanity from the bondage of error and superstition, and all the degradation of sin. All the lines of history are converging toward this glorious consummation. We live in a time pregnant with hope for the world. No century has been so radiant with bright prospects for the human race as our own. Its revolutions of blood, and its ferment of thought; its scientific discoveries, and its inventions; its ceaseless activity, and unprecedented mingling of the nations, are all being made subservient to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom among men. This is no dream of an enthusiast, but the words of truth and soberness, based on facts in the world's history, and on the prophecies and promises of God's inspired Word.

Christ's kingdom is coming, brethren—the dawn of the millennial glory is at hand. In faith and patience has the Church long waited with her eyes toward the East. Already the morn is breaking. The harbinger of day tips the distant hill-tops with its golden glory. Soon will the Sun of Righteousness arise on our earth in His splendor, greeted by a redeemed and saved humanity. Oh, when we think of what the cross has done for us, and what it is designed to do for the world, well may we exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

What we want, brethren,—if you will suffer a word of exhortation from one of the feeblest of your grand brotherhood,—is a profound conviction of the truth and worth of this Gospel. It must be a force in our hearts, and not a mere dogma in our creed, if it is to become in our hands the instrument of saving men. We want, for success in preaching the cross, the enthusiasm and earnestness of profound conviction. If, as ministers, we allow the divine doctrines of the cross to sink to the level of ordinary topics, we shall bring upon ourselves a terrible entail of weakness and limitation. The Cross, of which we are preachers, is God's embassy to a fallen world, involving at once man's duty and destiny; its origin and importance, therefore, demand for it an earnestness and a devotion which nought else can claim. No teaching in philosophy, no discovery in science, can for one moment be compared with the claims which Christ and His cross

have upon our intellects and hearts. The man whose soul is enwrapped in divine earnestness, kindled and sustained at the foot of the cross, gleams with a glory brighter far than any pagentry of earth, daily winning men from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Brethren, ours is a high mission and a noble work, and the cross of Christ is the one instrument of our power. We shall be mighty to pull down the strongholds of sin and the empire of Satan, to the degree in which we maintain the deep inflow of a divine life by a daily consecration at the foot of the cross, and an equally deep outflow of that life in active labor to save the souls of men. This will clothe us with Pentecostal power—converting the feeblest of us into men of giant strength, and gifting each with a tongue of flame wherewith to melt the hearts of men. *Without* this endowment of power we can only mutter the articles of a soulless creed to constantly decreasing congregations.

By the creeds of humanity and the provisions of grace, by the rewards of faithfulness and the destinies of eternity, I call upon my own soul and yours to a renewal of our consecration to Christ and His work of saving the world. Amid the demands on our time, our thoughts, our energies, let us exclaim with Paul, "I am determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." God grant that the coming Conference year may be the brightest and best in our history as men and ministers! Amen.

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SERMON XIX.

PIETY THE CONDITION OF SUCCESS IN LIFE.

*A Baccalaureate Sermon, delivered before Albert University, Belleville,
June 18th, 1882.*

BY REV. J. R. JACQUES, D.D., PH.D.,

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“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”—*Josh. i. 7-8.*

A CAREFUL reading of these verses will show that obedience to the divine law is *rectitude*—that is, a *right line*—or *rectitude of conduct* and character. The text reads: “Observe to do according to all the law; . . . turn not from it to the right nor to the left.” That is, go in a right line—a mathematical line—a “strait gate”—a “narrow way”—a path of rectitude or straightness (as the word *rectitude* means.)

Secondly. It will be seen in the text that the necessary preparation for, and condition of obedience is *meditation*, or study of the divine law. It is said: "The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night—that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." Thus study of the law is a condition necessary to obedience to the law.

Thirdly. Obedience to the divine law is followed by *prosperity*, or *success in life*. The text reads: "Observe to do all that is written in the law; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

There are, then, three *leading thoughts* in this text: I. The nature of obedience, which is rectitude or exactitude of conduct. II. The condition of obedience, which is study, thought, or meditation. III. The consequence of obedience, which is success in life.

I. THE NATURE OR ESSENCE OF OBEDIENCE IS RECTITUDE OR EXACTITUDE OF CONDUCT.

To make this proposition more evident, consider:

(1) *The foundation of morals is the essential difference there is between moral straightness and moral crookedness.*

There is a difference between the right and the wrong—an essential difference, an irreconcilable difference, an immutable difference, an eternal difference. The right is not made by caprice, nor custom, nor convention, nor by legislation. The right is right

because it is in harmony with the Divine reason and the Divine nature, and, therefore, is expressed as the Divine will. The right can no more coincide with the wrong than a right line can coincide with a crooked line. They are essentially and eternally different.

(2) *Our moral nature instinctively demands undeviating rectitude or exactitude of conduct.*

No unperturbed conscience can be satisfied with the least deviation from the standard of supreme rectitude. Only the diseased conscience can see the right in the wrong. If the moral quality of an action is brought distinctly before the eye of conscience, a normal conscience will confound right with wrong no more than a normal eye will confound straightness with crookedness. This instinctive conviction of the human mind appears in all history, and literature, and language. This conviction of the fitness and rightness of moral action has impressed itself on the very structure of human language. In the various languages the words that denote moral right mean straightness, or a right line, or regularity, and the words that mean moral wrong denote deviation, crookedness, or irregularity. The human mind thus unconsciously crystallizing its instinctive convictions, offers testimony to the moral law that cannot be gainsaid nor despised. This testimony of language is the testimony of man's intuitions. But the discursive reason, too, has expressed itself all through the ages, and the opinions of the greatest human thinkers agree in representing virtue as exactitude of conduct. However different

schools of philosophy in different nations and ages differ in definitions of virtue, all agree that there is an ideal life of virtue, which is rectitude of conduct. The indestructible difference between vice and virtue is confessed by all people, of all climes and all times. Herein Plato and Paul agree. Confucius and Solomon point toward the same ideal life of rectitude.

(3) *The analogy of nature teaches us moral exactness or rectitude.*

All things in nature, in quality, in quantity, and in motion, are adjusted and fitted to their place and office in the cosmical system. The solar system, in its structure and plan, reveals this law of exactitude to such a degree that its motions and changes may be predicted with unerring precision centuries in advance. The inclination of the ecliptic might have been wrong but is demonstrably right. The earth, by a nice adjustment of forces, is made to move with unerring precision in its orbit. The proportions of the two elements in the atmosphere are exactly what they ought to be to avoid the disaster and death that would follow the excess of the one or the other. The proportion of animals and vegetables on earth is an illustration of this all-prevailing law of exactitude.

You cannot with microscopic eye gaze so far into the infinitely small as not to see some new evidence of this wondrous law of balance, adjustment, and exactness of form and movement. The whole science of chemistry, with its laws of affinity and definite proportions, is a revelation of God's wondrous thoughts

of order, adjustment, and precision of action. No wonder that Pythagoras conceived harmonious numbers to be the first principles of all things in the universe. This law is seen everywhere. No reasonable man can fail to see these harmonies and adjustments of the universe about him. The very eye with which man looks at this nice adjustment of the cosmos is itself a microcosm of wonders in its exactness of structure and precision of action.

Now then, shall all things in *nature* be exact and move with exactness, and shall man—the master and masterpiece of creation—be irregular and loose and lawless in movement? Who shall dare affirm that God means that nature shall move in right lines, but man in crooked lines? All nature on earth and in heaven from her one thousand pulpits preaches rectitude and rebukes turpitude of conduct.

Paul asks, "Doth not nature teach you?" We answer, "Yes." Nature abhors all our crooked paths, the confession of which is heard in our class-meetings, but never heard from the stars of heaven or the atoms of earth.

(4) *Exactness of moral conduct is demanded in order that our virtues may not run into vicious extremes on the one hand or the other.*

The text says, Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. The reason for this caution may be made clear. Every virtue seems midway between two vices—one negative, the other positive—the one wrong by

a deficiency of the good quality, the other wrong by an abnormal excess of the good quality.

This doctrine of a middle, a virtuous mean, or "mediocrity," was suggested by Plato, and was made quite prominent by Aristotle. It needs to be more fully unfolded in our modern Christian pulpit. To illustrate from our Christian standpoint this doctrine of the "*aureum medium*," or golden mean, examine some of the virtues:

Economy is a virtue, but must be guarded on the right hand and on the left, or economy degenerates on the one hand into the vice of prodigality, penuriousness, or miserliness.

Temperance is a virtue that needs to be guarded, or it may be perverted into gloomy asceticism on the one hand, or, on the other hand, it may pass into the opposite vice of sensuality.

Thus, a lack of courage is timidity, and its excess is temerity—both of which are vicious extremes.

Self-love is a virtue that must not only be guarded against an excess in the form of selfishness, but against the negative extreme of self-contempt.

Faith, on its intellectual side, is a natural virtue, but by a defect or excess of faith you may rush or glide into the opposite vices of scepticism or credulity. Faith, on its spiritual side, easily passes into the negative vice of unbelief, or the positive vice of presumption.

Cheerfulness is a virtue whose absence we call *melancholy*. Its excess we call levity, or giddiness.

Charity or catholicity is a virtue midway between the negative extreme of *bigotry* and the positive extreme of a dangerous latitudinarianism.

Christian liberty is a blessed deliverance from bondage of spirit, but it must be watched and guarded or it merges into the other extreme of licence or licentiousness.

Right reasoning is a virtue that must be kept at a safe distance from the two extremes of unreasoning folly and impious rationalism.

Religious fervor may be chilled into frigid formality, or, unchecked, it may blaze out into the frenzy of fanaticism.

Thus it is seen that the normal life (or rectitude) is a mathematical line from which, if there be the slightest deviation, the Christian goes into one extreme or the other of the correlated vices. This is the ideal life—as the text enjoins—there must be no turning to the right hand nor to the left.

(5) *But above and beyond every other argument, the Bible requires rectitude or exactitude of conduct.*

The law is answered with all the precision of a mathematical formula or legal instrument. The law in general form is given in the Ten Commandments. It is given in detail in multitudes of special injunctions, and finally epitomized in the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, might, and strength." And the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

There is nowhere in the Christian revelation the least licence or toleration of crooked ways or deviations from rectitude. Christianity stretches out before us a path upward and Godward, but narrow and straight, which, like its Divine Original, is without "variableness or shadow of turning." Having said these words respecting the nature of obedience to the Divine Law, we now proceed to consider—

II. THE CONDITION OF OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF RECTITUDE, NAMELY, PATIENT THOUGHT, OR STUDY, OR INVESTIGATION.

To obey the law, we must know the law, and to know the law, we must study it daily and deeply, as the new exigencies of life are constantly arising. This exhortation of the text emphasizes the duty of careful daily and nightly meditation on the Law of God. That is, we are exhorted to the study of ethics, or moral science, or the science of moral obligation. And this exhortation has a profound significance, arising as it does from the necessity of the case. Consider briefly some reasons why the voice of inspiration thus calls for this constant study of the Divine Law. There must be a reason for this singularly earnest exhortation to read and meditate.

(1) *The science of duty, or ethics, is the most important study.*

Other sciences have to do with human life at certain places and occasions and points of character, but the Divine Law, or ethics, has to do with man in every

place, every moment of life, and at every point of character. This is the one study that should precede all others, and accompany all others, and follow all others. Whenever or wherever man acts, or speaks, or thinks, or feels, or wills, he must confront the supreme question of duty, the question whether "I ought or ought not." The science of ethics considers this question of duty, and, therefore, transcends all other sciences in importance. It is therefore the most practical science. Mathematics, in this utilitarian age, is justly esteemed a very important and practical study. But what shall we say of the wisdom of the man who gives all diligence to know the science of numbers and quantity to get a living, but neglects to study the science of right-living?

Shall a man learn to solve every other problem than the supreme problem of duty and destiny? Shall a man traverse all the fair fields of physical science and material nature, while he leaves unexplored and untouched the fairer fields of moral science and his higher nature? Astronomy is an important and sublime science, revealing, as it does, the Divine thoughts embodied in the stars of heaven, the orbits of the planets and the laws of the physical universe. But how much more important is that science that has for its object the investigation of the orbits of men in the moral universe, the laws of righteousness, and the methods by which the righteous shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and

they that have turned any to righteousness as the stars forever and ever?

The study of literature, penned by man, is important—immensely important. What, then, shall we say of the study of that sacred literature that is penned by the hand of Divine inspiration? The study of the æsthetic branches is important, by exalting our finer nature with views of the beauties of the fine arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, music, and the like. But what fine art is to be compared with the art of shaping the soul into a gorgeous temple—decorating its walls with imperishable beauty and making life move with the perfect rhythm of a perpetual Divine poem. All other branches of knowledge have their place and their worth; but though we “understand all mysteries and all knowledge,” and have not the knowledge of the Divine righteousness, “it profiteth us nothing, and we are nothing.” In these days of material triumphs and scientific wonders and outward splendors, it is time to utter a plea for moral triumphs and inward splendors, and the claims of the unseen world of moral magnificence.

(2) *The science of duty, or ethics, requires study, because it is the most difficult science.*

From the very nature of the subject it must be a difficult study. Duty has to do with the soul, and God, and destiny, and immortality. And who hath measured, or can measure, the heights and depths and lengths of meaning in these wondrous words? Who has ever fathomed the mysteries of the human soul,

in its thoughts, reaching out into the infinities of time and space, in its hopes and aspirations, soaring higher than the heavens? And who can compass in thought the infinities of meaning in the one word, God? Sometimes, in our better moods, we catch glimpses of meaning in this awe-inspiring word which fill and thrill us; but we have no language to express our glimpses of mystery and majesty. The subject must, then, be a difficult one. The greatest minds of earth have grappled and struggled with these great ethical questions pertaining to the soul and God, and have confessed their difficulty. Moreover, the Bible confesses itself to be difficult. The language of this text implies this. If the Divine law must be studied day and night it must in some way be difficult. Paul does not hesitate to admit that "great is the mystery of godliness," that is, the Christian religion. And while some of us dislike to confess that there is anything hard to be understood in any author, the apostle Peter honestly confesses that in Paul's epistles are "some things hard to be understood." The science of duty or moral law is, and must be, difficult; because it is difficult to find the right, which is one right line (or unity), while the wrong is any deviation from the right line, and therefore manifold or infinite in its possible variations. That is, a man can be right in only one way. He can be wrong in a thousand ways, or ten thousand times ten thousand ways.

We have seen that duty lies between two vices, into one or the other of which we are liable to go astray.

But this does not express all the difficulty, for the path of virtue is a straight and narrow way, leading through the midst of a legion of possible vices. The liability to take the wrong path is therefore ever prevalent, requiring perpetual vigilance and care, thus making the study of moral distinctions constantly necessary. The study of duty or rectitude is therefore a difficult study.

(3) *Constant study of the Divine Law is necessary, because without careful study, and consequent knowledge, religion degenerates into fanaticism.*

We see this tendency in all Church history. In Luther's time, the Reformation was well-nigh wrecked by the ignorance and consequent fanaticism of a few who refused to be guided by knowledge and discretion.

In Wesley's time, Methodism was imperilled by some misguided men who had more zeal than knowledge—whose fanaticism had to be rebuked by the great leader, and finally expelled from the Methodist Societies. It is sometimes said,

“What avails superior light
Without superior love?”

But in view of the constant liability of even real Christians to become fanatics through lack of light, but not of love, we may almost reverse the maxim and say:

“What avails superior love
Without superior light?”

We have seen whole Conferences blighted and burned over by a fanaticism that fed its fires on ignorance. I have but to mention the word "Nazaritism" that swept over New York some years ago, to remind you of the mischiefs of sufficient religion without sufficient knowledge.

Thus the text says: "Meditate on the law day and night."

- (4) *The Divine Law, or ethics, should be studied, because knowledge of ethics or morality of itself tends to morality.*

We do not say that knowledge of morality will always lead to morality, but we do say that knowledge of morality tends to morality. Statistics gathered from Europe and America have proved the moralizing tendency of moral teaching and training. And why should it not be so? Why should not a knowledge of the sublime principles of righteousness tend to righteousness? So impressed was Plato with this elevating and moralizing influence of knowledge, that he resolved virtue in its last analysis into knowledge, that is, according to his system, he who perfectly knows the right will do the right. Then the unrighteous man must be ignorant of righteousness, else he would be righteous, for "no man is willingly evil." If he knew better, he would do better.

Now, while we would not adopt this extreme view of the saving efficacy of knowledge, we would affirm that knowledge of the right always tends to the right. And this will appear the more clearly if we consider

the effect, not only of the theory of right living, but also the effect of right living itself, as exhibited in the arena of the world or in literature.

It is the combined effect of the theory and the examples of the ideal life that gives to the Bible its surpassing power of elevating men. We are told that in the Royal Gallery at Dresden may be often seen a group of connoisseurs, who sit for hours before a single painting. They walk around those halls and corridors, whose walls are so eloquent with the triumphs of art, *but they come back and pause again before that one masterpiece.* They go away, but return the next day, and again the first and the last object which charms their eye is that canvas on which genius has pictured more of beauty than on any other in the world. Weeks every year are spent in the study of that one work of the genius of Raphael.

Lovers of art cannot enjoy it to the full till they have made it their own by prolonged communion with its matchless forms of beauty. Says one of its admirers: "I could spend an hour every day for years upon that assemblage of human, and angelic, and divine ideals, and on the last day of the last year I could discover some new beauty and a new joy."

Thus it is with the man who once elevates himself into communion with the divine ideals of character in the Bible.

There is in man a spiritual and æsthetic faculty, that may be similarly influenced and entranced by the picture gallery of the Bible. There is a beauty of

spirit, of soul, of heart, of life in the transcendent saints of the Bible. You gaze with ever renewed admiration at the saintliness of Joseph, the majesty of Moses, the heroism of Daniel, the un-earthly faith of Elijah, the grandeur of Paul, and with every look you are lifted toward the same summit of saintliness.

What, then, shall we say of the effect of a daily and mighty fellowship with the New Testament picture of the immaculate Son of God? It is this looking unto Jesus that changes us into the "same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God." Here comes into exercise a true Christian "æstheticism." He who communes not with a high ideal of Christian life will never approximate to that high ideal. Here comes into play the true Platonic love of the beautiful in character, virtue and truth. He who daily reads the law and the testimony respecting this sublime symmetry of character; he who becomes so enamoured of this spiritual beauty that he will barter away all else to win this pearl of great price in the heart; he who would rather *die* than lose sight of his beau-ideal of saintliness; he who would rather gaze upon and wear the crown of saintliness than

"Wear a royal diadem,
And sit upon a throne"—

in fine, he who meditates day and night on this law of love and ideal righteousness, that man will never fall into a low life, but will shine with moral

beauty more and more unto the perfect day; and, his soul transfigured into immortal beauty, shall be exalted to adorn the Temple above forever and forever. But the text declares this study and observance of the Divine Law will be followed by *prosperity* and *success in life*.

Hear the words of the text: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and have good success." "*Good success!*" That is what all are looking after. And what is good success, or "*Success in life?*"

There are certain popular fallacies respecting this great question of success in life. The question of "*success in life*"—taking the terms in their full signification—is a question of supreme interest to everyone, but especially to graduates of an institution like this. Taking success in its divine and immortal meaning, it comprehends all duty and all high destiny. Taking the word "*life*" in its highest, deepest, broadest meaning, it comprehends all that is grand in the present life and in the ages of immortality.

Success in life, therefore, is the question that absorbs all others into itself—overshadowing and outlasting all other considerations—being itself the question of questions in which all others find their culmination. Let it be premised—

1. Man is created for success in life. The doctrine

of Divine Providence implies and demands this. That Providence designs every man to *succeed* in some good sense is a statement that partakes of the nature of a moral axiom.

2. If our former fundamental statement is correct, it follows that every human being has capacity or ability to succeed in accomplishing the purpose of Providence in his creation.

3. It follows that no powers of nature, or events of life—no oppositions of men or of demons will be permitted to thwart the plan of Providence in preparing each person for a successful life. If men fail, they will fail through lack of will and work.

4. It follows that it is reasonable and right to *aim at success*, steadily, patiently, and intelligently.

With these views, then, it becomes a question of all-engrossing interest, What is success in life? A general and brief definition of success in life may be declared to be "Doing our best to develop, ennoble, and elevate both ourselves and others." Another statement (but equivalent in meaning) may represent success in life as the highest development of all our faculties and the largest practicable beneficence to our fellow-beings. Or we may condense the statement into the words *noble character* and *noble doing*. But since there can be no really noble character without noble doing, and no really noble doing without noble character, we may condense our definition of success in life into the words *noble character*! He who leaves life with noble character has succeeded in life.

In unfolding more fully, or analyzing the contents of this definition, it may make the subject more clear to consider success in life (1) negatively, and (2) affirmatively—in other words, to tell, first, what success in life is *not*, and, secondly, what it *is*.

Under the first head may be included certain popular *fallacies*, or false opinions respecting this question.

1. *The first fallacy is that success in life is money-making.*

The prevalence of this fallacy is wide and wonderful. The naked, unblushing statement that success in life is success in money-making is seldom heard, but in a disguised form it is heard as the undertone of half the talk in public and private.

Let us not be understood to despise or underestimate money as a mighty means to an end—whether that end be high or low, moral or immoral. Money-making is not to be despised.

Make all you can honestly, keep all you can justly, and give all you can generously. But money of itself, as the measure of success in life, is to be despised. When money-making is achieved by gagging conscience, that is not success. When, in getting money, a man loses his peace of heart, that is not success in life. When, to build up a fortune, a man breaks down his own fair fabric of character, that is not success. The cloth of gold may, for a time, cover the foul spot of character from human eyes, but it cannot remove that spot.

Money may purchase a little brief applause, but it

cannot purchase peace of conscience. Money may purchase reputation, but it cannot purchase character. You may with money buy a mansion on earth, but by no currency of earth can you win a mansion in heaven. With money men may buy gorgeous equipage and carriage, but no money can purchase a chariot in which to ride on a royal road to heaven! Money may purchase books, but it cannot purchase culture or wealth of mind. Many a man revels in outward wealth and luxury, who inwardly is pinched with lean, lank, poverty. With no wealth of heart, and mind, and soul, he is poor indeed—feeding on well-nigh the same food the swine do eat. Do you ask who is the poor man? He is the poor man who, surrounded with wealth of thought in nature, in books, in society, is perishing for lack of soul-nourishing knowledge. Surely he is to be pitied who is debarred from the feast of truth, to which all are invited.

Who is the poor man? It is he whose memory is empty of good deeds done and kind words spoken—who, owning his sections of land, yet owns no broad, fair fields of ennobling knowledge. He is the poor man, however great his luxuries, who knows not "the luxury of doing good." He is the poor man who, though owning earth's houses and homes, has no title to mansions in heaven, and finds himself homeless at last, and goes out of life into the desolations of eternity a wandering, homeless soul!

John Jacob Astor, whose wealth ranged from \$20,000,000 to \$50,000,000, who even gave to many

charitable purposes, when he was approaching the portals of eternity was asked how he viewed his life. His answer was: "*My life has been a failure!*"

II. THE NEXT FALLACY IS THAT POPULARITY IS SUCCESS IN LIFE.

Popularity is not to be despised as a means to an end. The desire of esteem is an original and ineradicable impulse of human nature, and is moreover appealed to in the Bible as a pure motive. The esteem of good men, and angels, and God, is in the Bible made a motive to well-doing. Moreover it may be said that a man may count on a select number who will esteem him however greatly good he may be, or however bad the mass of men may be; but to look on popularity as a measure of success in life, is to use an ever-varying rule and standard. Homer in the Iliad has an immortal popularity, but Homer in the flesh was comparatively unprized and unknown.

"Seven Grecian cities claim a Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

John Bunyan, the matchless dreamer, is a crowned king now in the empire of letters; but John Bunyan living was consigned by the populace to Bedford Jail. A man's popularity does not always begin till he lies silent in the grave. Christopher Columbus—abused in life and buried in chains—is popular now; but it is too late now. Martin Luther, whose monument of surpassing art a few years ago called kings, princes,

and the illustrious of earth to its dedication, did not reach his popularity till he reached the better land. John Wesley in life was the best-abused man of his time—meeting more mobs than ovations—and not reaching his fitting burial till the light of a hundred years has revealed his grandeur; and Westminster Abbey opens her doors to receive the ashes of the illustrious Reformer.

If success in life means popularity, what becomes of Paul, the preacher and apostle? While on earth his generation could afford him few better testimonials than chains and prisons and persecutions. "We apostles," he says, "are accounted," etc. But was Paul's life a failure? Paul's success was precisely in this: that he was not popular.

III. THE NEXT FALLACY IS THAT SUCCESS IN LIFE IS A LIFE OF PLEASURE.

There is a class in whose estimation gaiety and pleasure are the "*summum bonum*" of life. To live a life of fun, frolic, mirth, and voluptuous ease is the chief end of man, in the estimation of such minds. Nothing, perhaps, is more fatal to true success in life than this philosophy of the Epicurean. The pursuit of pleasure is fatal to the heroic spirit which must be ever ready for duty, if duty be linked with danger and death. Self-sacrifice is the soul of heroism and magnanimity of character. God will see to it that duty shall ever bring its sweet undercurrent of joy, deep and sweet. But when men aim at pleasure

rather than duty, it eludes their grasp like the "will-o'-the-wisp," or the treasure at the foot of the rainbow, dreamed of by childhood. Success in life may lie in the path of pain and sacrifice. Where to dodge pain is to dodge duty, where to fear sacrifice is to lose the supreme chance for life's final success.

Earth's grandest successes have been achieved by suffering souls who have chosen the path of sacrifice for conscience' sake and Christ's sake. You can scarcely mention an illustrious benefactor of earth who has not been called to sacrifice and suffering. The great Master Himself, so far from being a pleasure-seeker, was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but was He not successful?

One of the conditions of success is to be ready and willing to barter away a present light-fleeting pleasure for "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

IV. THE FOURTH FALLACY IS THAT SUCCESS IN LIFE IMPLIES A CONSPICUOUS LIFE.

The passion for conspicuous life is well-nigh universal and all-consuming. Students partake of the general fever. In essay, in oration, in private and in public, the overmastering passion of the student for conspicuous life is the uppermost idea. Watch the productions of students for five, ten, twenty, twenty-five years, and you shall see the ever-present passion for public life struggling to express itself. From these essays, orations, and other utterances of students, you

may easily see that the ambition is to do some work that shall arrest the attention of the great public. Now, a passion so mighty and universal must have in it a substratum of Divine impulse, and must constitute an original propension of the human soul: *abused, abnormally developed and perverted*, but containing an element of human nature, pure, innocent, and beneficent, when regulated, sanctified, and directed toward a worthy end.

We always assume, in discussing all elements of human nature, that they are essentially and originally right, and then depraved or perverted. Now, this desire for public position, honor, power, is implanted. This desire of glory and honor, so far from being rebuked in the Bible, is appealed to in the Bible, but the promise of its gratification is always coupled (1) with duty enthroned in the heart and life, and (2) the future rewards of the faithful. Men are ambitious to "shine." To such the Bible says: "The righteous shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have turned many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Men read of the majesty of kings and of their glittering crowns, and the human heart strangely thrills in contemplating the scene, and a vague longing seizes the soul in its hidden depths. To this deep, quenchless instinct of the human soul for power and honor, God addresses Himself, saying: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Why does the Holy Spirit use the symbol of a crown if this

passion for crowns is base and sinful? But neither in reason nor revelation is there any promise of honorable, high position on earth to all who would succeed in life. Life's work may be very obscure, and the honor come at the close of the struggle.

First, it is evident that all are not capable of public positions, however they may be qualified in a future state. It is evident, secondly, that all cannot occupy conspicuous positions, as there are manifold more men than positions. All cannot be captains, and colonels, and generals. To compensate for this, there are two infinite advantages:—

1. Divine Providence has a work for each, which, however obscure now, eternity will reveal to be infinitely important and necessary, reaching in its results to the unknown and infinite future.

2. A reward inconceivably great, and adapted to the capacities of the immortal soul, is promised to him who, by "patient continuance in well-doing," achieves his life's work, however unnoticed it may be on earth.

In view of this immeasurable wealth of reward in the future, God commands men to humble themselves now that they may be "exalted in due season."

Success in life, with the mass of men and women, must be achieved under circumstances where the humble soul works on, on, on—"Little and unknown, (and perhaps) loved and prized of God alone."

This lesson must be learned by the noble soul—*"Learn to labor and to wait."* The obscurest work is not always the least important. On the ocean steamer

the captain is the most conspicuous man, and by his loud voice and trumpet in hand he arrests the attention of the passengers as the vessel starts and steadily steams out of the harbor. But go with me down to the palpitating heart of the moving monster of the deep, and there see the engineer whom the public eye sees not. But let him fail in faithfulness one-half hour, or even one-half minute, and the proud steamer is a wreck. There, too, are the firemen, blackened in face but unstained, it may be, in heart, plying their humble but needful vocation, and performing a part without which the wheels would stand still. Again, why does not the giant steam, with his Titanic strength, break his prison walls and escape from the massive boiler? Hear the monster hiss, and groan, and roar at the doors of his iron-bound prison! How the walls quiver under the roar of his wrath! He would escape and hurl all to ruin, if an obscure man, unknown to fame, had not been faithful in his humble office of hammering well the rivets of that boiler.

This same providential plan you may see everywhere in human enterprise, in every department of human effort—moral, intellectual, spiritual, domestic, social, and political. The most important of human achievements are not always before the eye of the public. This morbid craving for conspicuous work is reined by reason, by nature, by Providence, and by revelation. When nature would do a vast thing, she has a way of keeping the agent out of sight—manifesting a magnificent work, but concealing the worker. When

nature would bring a force to twist and uproot the giant oaks and prostrate miles of mighty forests, she brings the unseen wind, maddened into a hurricane, whose breath we feel, whose voice we hear, but thou canst not see it, nor "tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." The most stupendous effects we witness in nature, as the ebb of the tides, the storm on the ocean, the motion of the earth, and the flight of the planets—all are the effects of subtle agents that work out of sight. What does modern physical science teach us more than this—as the final lesson—that all the wonderful changes and motions of nature are the effects of forces no human eye has ever seen? Men love to be seen when they lift the hand and put forth the force, or open the mouth and utter the word that shall astonish the world with its effects. But in nature's silent and unseen forces God seems to symbolize the lesson of silence, modesty, and humility, and rebuke man's greed of publicity. We see it not, but it is true that earth's greatest deeds are unheralded and unsung by orator or poet. In human hearts are battles as great as that of Waterloo and Marathon. Heroes there are unknown to fame on earth, who shall meet an ovation of angels, and be crowned with immortal laurel. Earth knows little of its kings, princes, conquerors and illustrious souls. We know little of great deeds, till we see final results in eternity. He who has overcome the world's dread laugh and faced unmoved its frown; he who has not swerved a hair's breadth from the straight line of

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perceived duty; he who could no more be coaxed from the path of duty than a planet can be coaxed from its orbit; he who, against wind and wave and tide, has kept steadily on, daring once, twice, again and always, to do the bidding of Christ and conscience; that man will be higher than earth's potentates; that man shall be so honored that no human title could add one gleam to his glory, and no diadem of earth could add grace to his brow.

Men must consent, then, to wait for some of their glory. They can afford to do it. The corner-stone of a public building is very conspicuous, and laid with much ceremony; but no more useful than the corner-stone underground and out of sight. And in the temple Christ is rearing on earth it shall be infinite honor to be found underground—aye, even acting the part of the steps of the temple, on which men trample and bestow no honor. He shall never be a glittering minaret on this great temple who is not willing, for Christ's sake, to be a step on which others look down, or even trample. But have you aimed at a lofty ideal, and already do you see that circumstances are against you, forbidding you to succeed? Then there is something better than attaining earthly honors and offices,

“Tis not in mortals to command success;
But we'll do more, Sempronius, WE'LL DESERVE IT.”

This is success: building up character—noble, imperishable character. This implies all success. Not only is building noble character the highest success,

but it is the only success, without which all else is a mockery, blighting eternal failure. Success in life is carrying out of life immortal riches, honor, bliss, and glory. This comprehends and includes all else. Would you have success in amassing earth's riches? You may have more. You may carry away from earth riches of soul that no thief can steal. Do you aspire to be a conqueror or military chieftain? You may be more; for he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. Is the artist successful whose sculptured marble is praised by men? How much greater is that artist who chisels his character into immortal beauty fit to adorn the temple above! Are you ambitious to live in poetical numbers? You may do more. You may shape your character and life into an anthem of perpetual praise. Do you aspire to possess power, position on earth? You may do more; for "he that overcometh shall inherit all things."

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SERMON XX.

THE PEACE OF FAITH.

REV. J. S. COFFIN,

Chaplain to the Army and Navy, Hamilton, Bermuda.

—
“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.”—*Isa.* xxvi. 3.

WHATEVER occasion there may have been in the political circumstances of the Jews—as contemplated by this striking section of prophecy—to call forth the ascription of adoring gratitude and praise to God, which marks the beautiful song in the midst of which the text occurs; that the prophetic vision sweeps onward to a grander and more glorious epoch, and that exults in the grace that should shine in the reign of Messiah, and in all the arrangements of redeeming mercy on behalf of a lost world, is, to the devout student, inspiringly evident.

The text itself contains a truth, relevant alike to every situation and age of life: complete consecration to the Lord and unswerving trust in Him the great and only condition of perpetual peace. Having already discussed the nature and bearing of the condition

specified, it is to the blessed promise given that I would now direct your thoughts.

The peace of God! that balance of a thousand forces in the human heart which the Lord Jesus Christ restores to all who rest in Him! The peace of God! that precious legacy that Jesus left to His people, and which, by the provisions of His grace, is the inalienable right of every trusting heart. The peace of God! that heavenly calm which pervades the soul when we confide in the atonement sufficient and the Saviour true! Divine Spirit! speak it to-day to all our hearts!

It will be proper to observe, in the opening up of this subject, that, up to the point of honest and entire surrender to Christ, our state, however marked by recipient and gracious feelings, is one of antagonism to every condition of genuine peace. If we look within, we find a law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. If we recall the past, we are met with the heart-breaking retrospect of misspent years and squandered opportunities; of grace so precious resisted and despised; so much of open and shameful wrong; so much more the outward whiteness of which was but a cover to the corruption that rankles beneath; until we can only cry, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for my iniquity is increased over my head, and my trespass has grown up unto the heavens." And thus is made evident the dreadful fact that the whole character and life are in rebellion

against the throne of God—a rebellion which, by the divine decree, as inexorable as it is just, dooms us to the dread experience of that wrath which is “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” Oh, it is only in an unconditional surrender to the Lord Jesus that the cessation of this awful conflict can be found! It is, then, “being justified by faith we have peace with God,” and are made to cry, “O Lord, I will praise Thee; for though Thou wast angry, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me.” Here, also, we are made to feel that He has blotted out our transgressions, and, by His precious blood, sprinkled our hearts from the distressing consciousness of ill-desert because of sin. And here, too, in close and inseparable affinity with divine pardon, do we find “the Spirit’s law of life divine” implanted within, breaking down and abolishing the tyranny of the law in our members, giving ascendancy to the law of our mind, and “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Here, then, is the starting-point of the peace of God in us; and from this spot and time its pathway is “as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

There is a very interesting and remarkable reading in the margin bearing upon my text, and which develops with great force and beauty the compass of this holy calm, which comes of faith in Christ: “Thou wilt keep him in *peace, peace*”—peace multiplied; peace upon peace; boundless peace. Let us devoutly

note a few of the qualities of the wonderful blessing promised to faith. It is *peace*, not *ecstasy*; peace, calm, satisfying, and serene; the soul reposing quietly within the all-embracing arms of the all-sufficient God. We shall do well to note this distinction. There may be—there will be—times when the trusting soul shall “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” But such is not the normal experience of the Christian, and it is well for us it is not. It would tire us, it would wear us out, it would send us home before we should have become prepared for the “fulness of joy,” which is in the presence of God. But this *peace*! It comes so quietly; it stays so contentedly; it never exhausts our strength; there is such a calm, deep sense of soul-rest in its experience! Yes; if my God will sometimes overwhelm me in ecstasy and joy, I will adore His grace, and look to Him for help to bear it. But I will pray that in me “the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.”

It is *perfect peace*. It comes “from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” “My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you.” The world will start you in pursuit of pleasure, fame, and wealth, promising you thereby repose, but giving you care, anxiety, and remorse. All its pledges, and the devices by which it would secure them, are but an *ignis fatuus*, luring you to the bogs and the darkness of disappointment and woe. But Christ’s promised peace is an indwelling

reality, experienced *now* by every faithful soul. It *rules* in the heart. It is master there.

Worldly men salute you with empty words, feigned and insincere. It is possible for the words of a man to be smoother than butter while war is in his heart. But Christ's word of peace is not so. He has set the love of His heart, and the heart of His love, upon us. Oh, He is honest with us! His professions of love are the outgushings of a heart that bore our griefs and carried our sorrows until it broke under its weight of woe. And He could no more prove false to us than He could cease to be God.

This peace is *perfectly adapted to our needs*. There is not a situation in which we can be placed in this life—which, alas, is so full of vicissitude—where the peace of God does not fit as light fits the eye. To doubt is human, and oftentimes the darkness before us may seem deathly in its opaqueness; but we step upon the void and find the rock beneath. And in this connection let me ask you to note the *pervasiveness* of this peace. Once received it mingles at once with every circumstance of life, and rules everywhere. You never find this feature outside the realm of God's peace. You may have perfect health, but business perplexities worry and wear out your life; or you may have an abundance of wealth, but disease makes your days wearisome and your nights bitter; or you may have health and wealth, but death smites the loved one at your side, and fills your dwelling with lamentation, and mourning, and woe. O, wherever we look at this

world's peace, it is indeed but one-sided and partial! But when you get God's great peace in your heart you have a principle there which lays its moulding hand on every circumstance and experience in life, and moulds all to your comfort. "For all things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!

This peace is *perfect in its abundance*. It "passeth understanding." "There's a wideness" in it "like the wideness of the sea." You know there are depths in the ocean that no tempest ever reaches; and however fiercely the storm may rage and the waves war and be troubled, away down in those deeper depths unbroken quiet reigns. You know that above us, in the clear, blue, tranquil heavens, there are heights far beyond the reach of cloud—heights before which the piercing lightning-flash falls back in impotent weakness; and when over and around you the tempest sweeps, and man and beast fly as fugitives before the blast, above all is the motionless ether and the stainless sunshine. Even as deep as is that sea, as high as is that heaven, so deep, so high is the peace of God. When David would grasp the fact of the ever-present providence and care of God, he cried: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there: if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead

me and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Beautiful picture of the *peace of God!* For the peace of God in the heart is the *God of peace* reigning there. "*I will be their God!*" Comparisons yield no illustration by which to delineate the fulness of that word. Here all is illimitable, unimaginable: "I will be their God!" And here is found the blessed secret of this all-sufficient peace. Christ becomes our peace by becoming our power. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." The firmest thing in all the world is a believing soul. By simple faith the weakness of man becomes linked to the omnipotence of Jehovah; and then the believer is in actual experience of the presence of Him at his side who hath said: "I will never leave you." "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings thou shalt trust: His truth shall be thy shield and thy buckler." Abounding peace!

Yet one more point: It is a *permanent peace*. The believer is *kept* in it; it is promised to "keep your hearts through Christ Jesus." "O, Thou hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldst Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night?" And such He is not to them that make Him welcome. "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto

him and make our abode with him." We accept with joy the friendship of earth, which, with a flood that knows no ebb, delights to pour upon us the wealth of its helpful solicitude. But there are sorrows that arise upon us which that love is powerless either to avert or assuage; and it can only stand by in mute distress, while its yearning sympathy would make our grief its own, but can do nothing to alleviate our anguish. And while it may follow us throughout all the mutations of life, lavishing upon us kind offices, at the cost of wealth, comfort, and even life, at the last death will assert his dominion; and in spite of all your clinging and your bitter cry, there comes the great, terrible moment, when nought is left to you but the remembrance of a sympathy once fondly cherished, but now to be yours no more; and, with head bowed upon your breast, you turn away from the new-made grave to face alone the pelting of the storm, and to grope in the darkness of sorrow's night, while you long

"—for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

But amidst all this desolation, and ruin, and death, we "look to the hills from whence cometh our help," and we rejoice that there is "a friend that loveth at all times," and "that sticketh closer than a brother." Jesus is that friend; and we cling to the thought of His sustaining, never-failing presence. Other thoughts and other hearts have failed us in our need. Faces that once were lovingly laid against our own, now greet

us only in mute smiles from the wall. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." And in "all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment," He will stand with us who has declared, "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee."

We may learn from this subject *the nature of true religion*: it is peace present and eternal. It is deeply to be deplored that the service of Christ should ever be represented in a light calculated to leave the impression that it is a hard and toilsome experience, made up chiefly of self-denial and cross-bearing. The Gospel is not a message of gloom, but an anthem from the harps of angels; and, before I can receive that it is more burdensome to serve the Lord than to follow out a life of sin, I must reject the Bible as a revelation from God, and cast aside the brightest revelations that God has made of Himself in me. Looking into these divine oracles, I find it declared of true religion, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "This is the love of God, that ye keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." And my Lord and Saviour, who never stoops to gain the homage of any heart on false pre-

tences, has said of the service which He would impose, in contrast with the burdens that others bear, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." If, then, it be harder and more painful to live a holy life than it is a life of sin, these statements—and hundreds more of like import—of God's book, are false and misleading; and, if these statements are true, then it is easier to serve the law of God than it is the law of sin. Look! Can it be true that the God, who is infinite in His every perfection, has promised to be with me alway; to protect me by His might; to supply all my need out of His riches in glory; to bruise Satan under my feet; to keep me in peace; to be to me more than all implied in the names of sister, brother, father, mother; can it be that, with such promises, and such a God to make them good, it is still a more toilsome thing to live to Him and for Him than it is to serve the devil and sin? The tribulations of the present time are too often spoken of as though they are the lot of the elect alone; and men forget the cheer of the word of Jesus to His suffering people, "I have overcome the world," and "Lo! I am with you." Self-denial does not pertain to Christian discipleship alone: it is a condition of success inexorably demanded in every department of human aim and strife; and it is not remitted because "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" is held out as the prize to be grasped at last. And as for these crosses which religion imposes, has the miser or the libertine or the drunkard no cross to bear? Do not men suffer more to be lost than they do to be saved?

Remember, I do not say that we have no crosses to bear for Jesus; but I do say that, in the heaviest cross that was ever borne after Him, there was more of heart-peace given under it than the votary of sin ever dreamed of. I do say this: True religion is peace possessed, and peace in prospect. Its yoke is the symbol and pledge of freedom. The sheen of wings flashes from beneath its burdens. Its crosses carry him who bears them. Its losses here become glorious gains. Its self-denials are invested with all the luxury of self-indulgence. Its mortifications are transmuted into occasions of holy pride. If, for its sake, we are called to endure grief, suffering wrongfully, by that mysterious interworking of "joy that mixes man with heaven," we are made to rejoice at being partakers of Christ's sufferings. And amidst the trials inseparable—wisely—from the sacred discipline of life, where the worldling cries "All things are against me," the Christian is sure that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Where the worldling's lip quivers with a speechless woe, the Christian utters forth the song of love and trust. Where the worldling goes mad under accumulated disasters, the Christian glories in tribulation. Where the worldling cries in bitterness, "God is departed from me!" and, with the stroke of his own hand, sinks out of life into the gloom of a starless immortality, the Christian, with his eye of faith looking to the recompense of the reward, exults in the assurance that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with

the glory that shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

But I must meet here the demand, Why is not this religion such a spring of peace to all who profess it? Dear brother, avowing the Lord to be your God, abiding in the uncertain experience of a peace easily ruffled and quickly destroyed; alas! that *cherished heart-sin* should turn aside our firmer trust, and the more perfect realization of Christ's purifying power! O, what an infinite difference one relic of corruption, allowed to linger in the heart, will make here! Even as one discordant string will convert into a pain the otherwise ravishing harmony, so the least of that hateful thing called sin, suffered to abide in the heart, will defraud us of unutterable peace, and make to us the restful religion of Jesus a burden to bear. To the fountain of cleansing, then, let us fly; and, with a surrender that shall know no reserve, and a faith in the blood of sprinkling that will admit no limit to its efficacy, let us cry:

" 'Tis done, Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace."

Do I address one soul who is destitute of this peace of

God, but who is seeking to supply the lack with ought the world can give? Fruitless search! That soul of yours God made to be His home, and only God can meet its yearnings. And here you are to-day, sad proofs that outside the rest of faith all is like the troubled sea—ever in motion, never at rest, and ever liable to be tossed into a fury of tumult. Oh, what supreme unaccountable folly to live thus when you might have the beautiful peace of God resting upon your brow! I hold it up before you now; and, in the power of my divine commission, I beseech you be reconciled to God, and the precious boon shall be yours. And living the life of perfect consecration and trust, you, too, shall prove the blessedness of peace upon peace; of peace like the gliding waves of the ocean, following one another with steady, grand, successive sweep; but, unlike them, never to break or die on any shore.

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