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ERRONEOUS
VIEWS OF
OUR LIFE

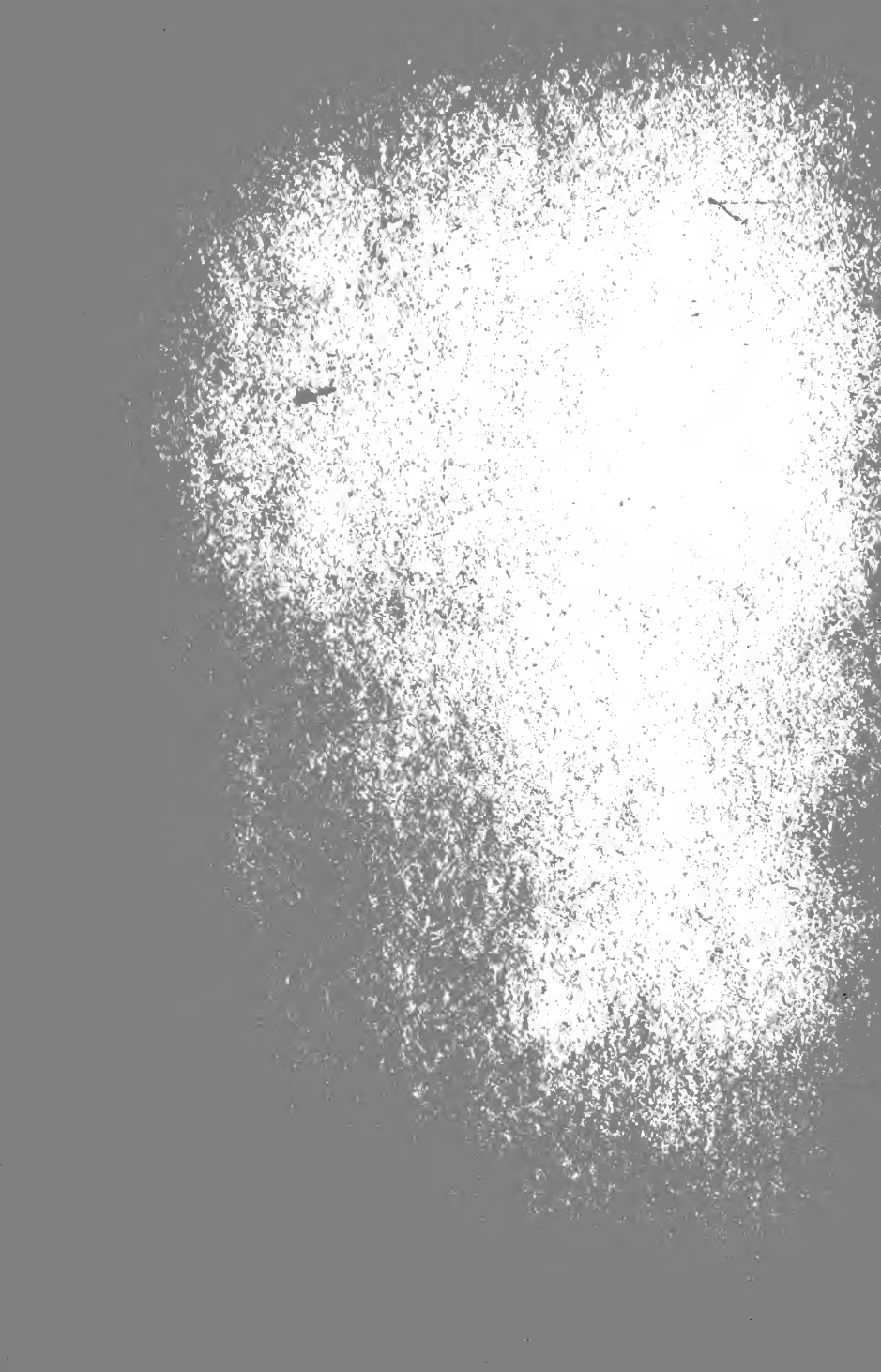
CARL N. CONRAD





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Erroneous Views of our Life



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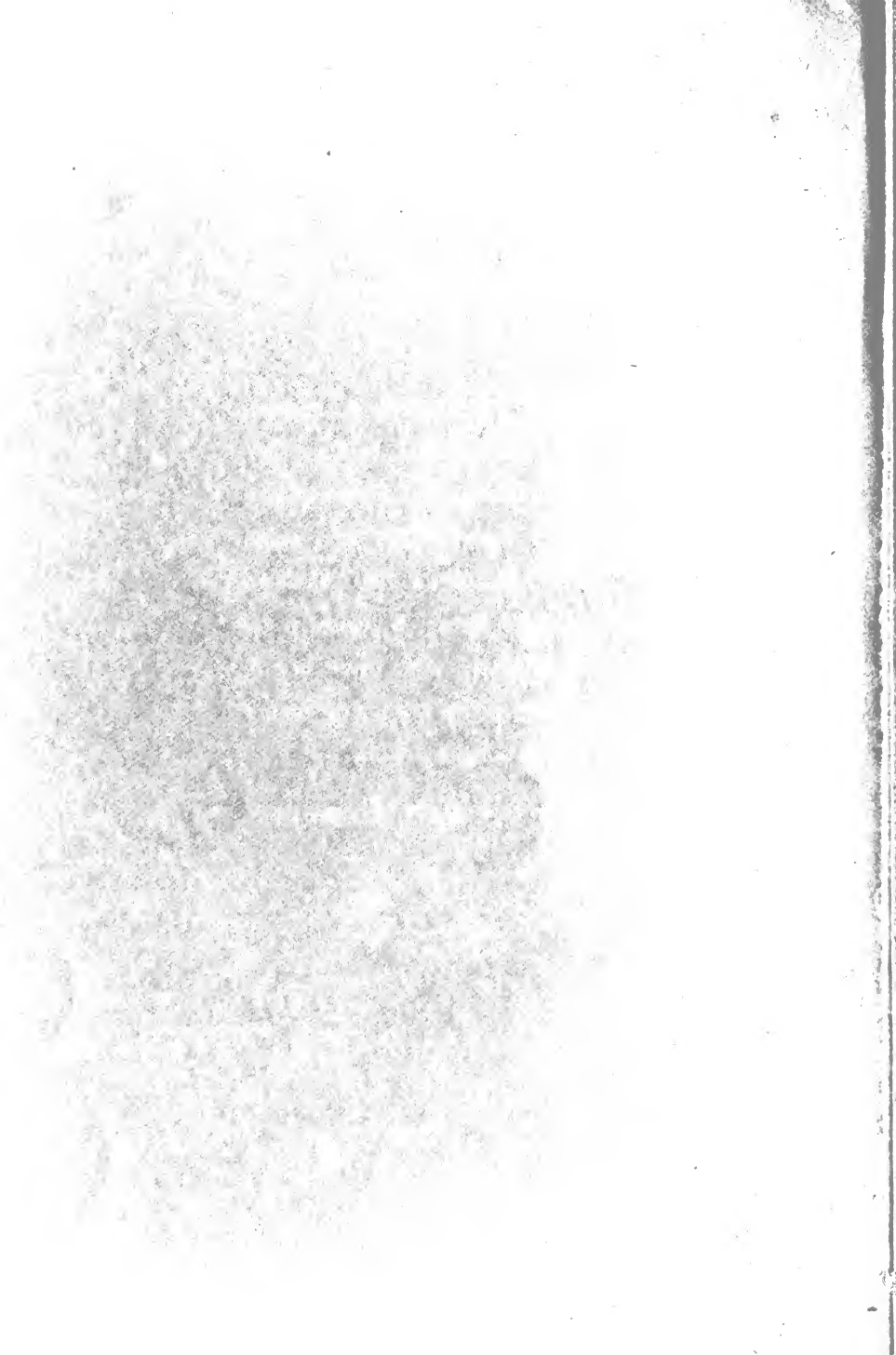
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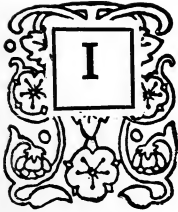
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*"To the law and to the testimony, if they
speak not according to this word, it is because there
is no light in them."*

—Isaiah viii., 20.



PREFACE.



IN offering in a printed form this lecture on *Erroneous Views of our Life*, which has been delivered in various churches of our State, I conform to the request of many who have heard it, and especially to the wishes of members of my own congregation.

C. N. CONRAD.

Rochester, N. Y.

July 1, 1906.

Erroneous Views of Our Life

“**H**EAVEN lieth around us in our infancy!” is the beautiful language of the poet. But, here we are always in our infancy, and these are the elements which make a heaven around us, even amid the shadows of time, and which draw music, as from hidden harps, over the darkest and loneliest solitudes of life.

We cannot accept the saying of the poet: “the light which led astray was light from heaven!” No light from heaven ever led any man astray; “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and

good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

That, surely, is not light which leadeth astray, and whatever light does so, proves itself, by the very fact, to belong to the wisdom which is not from above, but from beneath, even hell itself.

The unity of our life, too, is sustained by these scripture representations. It is no longer a confused and meaningless thing, giving rise to the question, “Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?”

Vain, indeed, would be the eye and wings to the eagle, if he were never to rise above the slimy things of the earth; and vain would be that eye of reason in man, and whose wings of intelligence, imagination and faith, by which he can “look before and after,” can reconnoitre the universe, and sustain himself in the contemplation of the

infinite, if sense is to be his world, and matter his god, and the sepulchre his goal.

To use the language of a living writer, "every man's life is a plan of God, which he is to take up and work out to its uttermost possibilities." He may not be able to prearrange the circumstances, but, by the help of our Heavenly Father, he may and will conquer them, and subdue them to much good. No two ships have precisely the same path, and are struck, at the same angle, by precisely the same winds, but the helmsman accomodates himself to this, and makes the most of the winds which the Supreme Ruler is pleased to send. One thing is certain, that the main business of every human soul is to find its right place in the world, and, in view of the great future, to work its right way through it. That way, indeed, lies often in the dark.

Like one who is treading some mountain-pass, and striving to reach some mountain-height, we are always encountering some perplexing obstruction, and always supposing that when that is surmounted, the way will be clear and the pinnacle apparent.

We need not complain of our ignorance of the future; for sufficient is revealed for all practical purposes. Its minor incidents may be wrapped in obscurity, but its final issues all may know,—they are left with ourselves, and we are working them out at every moment, according to the saying of St. Paul, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” It has appeared to me that our view of the subject would ^{not} be complete, without a cursory glance of *some* of those erroneous views of false theories which abound in the world, and which, both

in their nature and tendency, stand out in such unfavorable contrast with those which are given in God's Word. There is much wrong living in the world which does not proceed from any recognized theory—not that there is not some theory at bottom—some basement principle of which the manner of life is the natural outgrowth. But, apart from this, there are various erroneous modes of life which have assumed a definite, theoretical shape, and which men have not only adopted in practice, but are ever ready to plead for as philosophically true.

At some of these let us now look!

There is the Epicurean or Pleasure theory. This derives its name from a celebrated philosopher of Greece, and the fact that it still exists as a theory, proves that it has struck its roots very deeply into some part of our nature. Contrary to what we

might have expected, the philosopher referred to was, humanly speaking, a virtuous man. For while his theory was this, that pleasure was the foundation of virtue, and its ultimate reason and test, he, at the same time, denied that there was any pleasure in vice, and he endeavored to show his sincerity in this by living a careful and moderate life. We know that this is not the meaning which is attached to Epicureanism now. We apply it to a life of sensual indulgence, that is to say, to the life of those who may hold, indeed, that pleasure is virtue; but who are very far from holding, with Epicurus, that virtue is pleasure. Hence there are some who maintain that it is not just to Epicurus to apply his name to such a low and sensual theory of life, that it is a misrepresentation of his views, and that it gives an entirely false

impression of the man. We are not very sure of this, however. It is very seldom that traditional phraseology is essentially wrong, and we do not think that it is so here. It may, possibly, give a wrong impression of the man, since it has associated the name of one who was personally temperate, with a life of animal indulgence and sensual gratification. But we question the right to complain of this, since it is just the price which he has had to pay for propounding a theory of life which was not only false, but essentially low, yea, mean. For what did he do? He shifted the ground and reason of virtue from the nature and will of the Creator to the will or pleasure of the creature. And the moment he did this, the foundations were all out of course. The application of the theory was simply a matter of taste. He

might apply it in an elevated way, and say that, while pleasure was the foundation of virtue, virtue was, at the same time, the only pleasure. In making pleasure the rule of life, he must allow every man to judge for himself as to what pleasure is. One may place it in virtue, another may place it in vice. One may find it in the sphere of the intellect, another may find it in the sphere of the senses. The disciples of Epicurus were by no means careful to follow their master further than suited their tastes, they accepted his theory, but they refused his application. This opened the flood gates for *every* vice. The creed of the Epicurean of the present day is: "Dum vivimus, vivamus," whilst we live, let us live. "Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Now, let us see how this Epicurean creed narrows down

our life to a *very* point. It takes all soul out of it. For the soul is its enemy, and a regard for its interests would be the very death of such a life. The soul goeth upward, God is its portion and heaven its home. But this is a down-going life, where our Heavenly Father is forgotten, and heaven is despised. It is a life which has its stronghold simply in the flesh, and it goes outward only to those objects which minister to that. The whole life of the man is a gratification of those fleshly lusts that war against his soul. But it takes all heart out of our life. The sensual man is of necessity selfish. He is often said to be "his own worst enemy." No doubt he is, but he is every body's enemy as well as his own. Wife and children, friends and neighbors— all must yield to the master— passion, over and over again, to selfish

pleasure. He is an enemy of society, the propagator and patron, yea, pattern of evil. But it also takes the intellect out of our life. For its own sake, at least, there is no recognition of it. It may be employed as an instrument to devise new forms of pleasure, and new modes of carrying them into effect, but nothing more. It is the minister of sense, the convenient purveyor for its appetites, the demon in the herd of swine, impelling us down the steep of ignominious concession, into the foul sea of sensuality and indulgence. Goethe, the German poet, is a striking example of a man devoting his life to seeking his own culture with all the energy of commanding genius, but Goethe was an Hedonist, an Epicurean. Great as are the works of his genius, he missed that which is of highest worth, and the light of his intellect reveals

more clearly his moral deficiencies. Intent on personal culture and enjoyment only, he took little interest in the great political movements of his time, which were changing the destiny of Europe and America and affecting all the interests of humanity. In Napoleon's invasion he fawned on the conqueror of his people. Unlike Fichte, the philosopher, who, as the enemy approached, dismissed his class with the inspiring words: "Gentlemen, we shall resume these lectures in a free country." The track of his life was strewn with crushed and cast off loves, like orange peels thrown away after he had sucked out all the sweetness. Great and lustrous like an iceberg, floating deep and towering high, moving majestic with the strength and swell of the ocean, effulgent in the sunshine, a mountain of light, but also a moun-

tain of ice. Plainly, he never attained the true good. This estimate of himself, he, himself pronounced when in his old age he said: "I have ever been esteemed one of fortune's favorites; nor can I complain of the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and now in my 75th year I may say that I have never had four weeks of genuine pleasure. The stone was ever to be rolled anew. My annals will testify to the truth of what I now say."

These are the words of Goethe, an Epicurean, an Hedonist. Let us contract this with St. Paul's review of his life of self-sacrificing love. "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day."

I pass now to another erroneous view of our life directly the opposite, and which, although not quite so mean, is certainly false, and undeniably opposed to the teaching of Holy Writ. That is:

The Ascetic Theory. The first thing that strikes us here is that the former theory robbed life of the future, this one robs it of the present. The one makes the body everything, the other makes it nothing. But both body and soul are the workmanship of God, and neither can be placed under the ban without violence and sin. And yet what are the facts? According to this theory the whole glory of life consists in the willful and purposeless depression of the body. Ingenuity has been racked for

the invention of tortures, and nature has been outraged in frantic attempts to extinguish all its sensibilities. Such individuals have fled from society, they have rushed to the cloister, they have buried themselves in deep woods, they have burrowed with the wild beasts in dens and holes of the earth, they have lacerated and macerated their bodies, they have stood in one posture till their sinews were shrunk, they have held out their arms till they could not draw them back, they have undertaken pilgrimages to the ends of the world, everything in short of the nature of material or physical endurance, and all in the way of propitiating that Being who says: "Go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

This is, in my estimation, an entirely false view of our life. We do not find it

prescribed. The Deity that made us does not require it. He does require self denial and suffering, even unto death, in the path of *duty* however. But not out of *that* path, not for his own sake. The Lord, our Heavenly Father, must prescribe it, not we ourselves, and it is enough that we, His children comply when He prescribes it. Anything beyond that is worse than idle, yea, it is presumptuous and sinful. It springs from self-righteousness, and is deeply rooted in spiritual pride. For what is it after all but the purchase money of heaven. It is simply the old penance-system of religion by which so much suffering was supposed to cancel so much sin. It stands in the room of our Saviour, and that is sufficient to condemn it, since we are perfectly certain that the meritorious work of the Saviour needs no *such* buttress, and

that "it is not by works of righteousness" we have done; but according to His mercy He saves us, by regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is true that our own Luther obtained the first glimpses of truth while immured in his convent at Erfurt. But, what was even Dr. Martin Luther until such time as, having emerged from his convent, he proceeded to carry his just principles into practical effect? He oscillated, we are told, not a little between the new and the old, and it was only as he entered into the heart of his enterprise that his strength came, his character grew and towered in its majesty over every obstruction, his trust, not in himself, but in his God, guiding him forward to action, and every successive action still deepening this trust in his God.

There is nothing which gives a man such power for anything as just doing it, "he is, however, only made great through difficulties." Our views may be correct, and our principles sound, but if we allow them to lie dormant in our bosoms, they will give little elevation, and still less strength to the character. The benefactors of the world, the true spiritual heroes of all times, have grown up together with their enterprises, and in the midst of their labors, and by means of their labors, have become mighty men, and men of renown. The grand thing to be considered is that man is to fulfil the great end of his being, not by the suppression of his faculties, but by their proper cultivation; not by the extinction of any part of his nature, sensational, intellectual or spiritual, as it were, but by the control of the whole, in subservancy

to the glory of God and the good of man, and according to the principles laid down in His blessed word. Away with Asceticism, this theory to my mind is erroneous and false, yea, it is injurious to our very souls!

I now proceed to another view of our life, still more fantastic than either of the two preceding, but not less false in its nature, and not less mischievous in its effects. I refer to:

The Pantheistic Theory. The Pantheistic theory is not without eminent names for its support, and numerous partisans, both in Europe and America. Popularly speaking, this theory consists in the denial of a personal God, and in maintaining, on the contrary, that there is some subtle essence underlying and pervading our universe, and indeed constituting the universe, and that

this is God. It is not a person, it is not anything that we can conceive of as existing apart from the universe, but only a certain abyss of being which is supposed to underlie, and give unity to the whole. Now, it is not to be expected that I should go into any discussion of this as a philosophical, or metaphysical theory at this time. Dr. McCosh in an admirable work entitled: "Intuitions of the mind," classifies and elucidates Pantheism very intelligently. I glance at the subject simply to put young men and young women on their guard against its insidious influence, for it is generally dressed up in a manner which makes it very bewildering, if not positively attractive to the ardent temperament of youth. I shall merely advert to some of its more obvious practical effects.

Pantheism destroys all individual

responsibility in man. We formally endeavored to show you that there is nothing on which the Scripture in its manifold representations of life, more frequently and more emphatically insists, than this, that to his own master everyone stands or falls; that everyone must prove, or bring to test, his own work, since, "every man must bear his own burden."

But, according to the theory of Pantheism, this is absurd; for God is the universe, and the universe is God; its great soul is one and indivisible; but what we call individual life is not individual but only a particular manifestation of the parent essence, projected for a time into the region of the actual, or rather the phenomenal, but still a part of that parent essence, and destined to be absorbed into it, as a rain-drop into the ocean. Alas! much of our secular

poetry of the present day, very often, is of this very nature. Here, then, is the axe at once laid at the root of all that is distinctive in man. His individual will, his individual importance and his individual responsibility. All are gone at a stroke, and we suddenly find ourselves nothing in the world, nothing more at least than a ship, or a tree, or a clod of the valley. Well might the late Dr. James Robertson of Glasgow, when commenting on Pantheism, in an able book which he published shortly before his death say: "If this be so, we may suffer our children to walk in any way in which they decline to go. Henceforth, 'evil, be thou my good.' Let vice be cultivated; crime patronized, and instead of regarding with mingled pity and horror, the ravings of blasphemy, the shouts of drunkenness, the wailings of remorse, that

come up from the reeking and bloody dens of imbruted humanity, let us hail them as so many excelsiors, uttered by magnanimous spirits struggling after perfection, as the jubilant shouts of a divine nature climbing pinnacle after pinnacle of bliss."

Another false view of our life is that which depreciates virtue and extenuates vice, by ascribing too much importance to:

Circumstances. Now, in looking at this theory, it were foolish to deny that circumstances have a very material influence upon us. It is impossible to prevent this. They must have a certain modifying effect upon us. Hence the different types of character which are visible in different nations and in different classes of the same nation and in different families of the same class. And hence the reason why we pity some more than others, and we should all en-

deavor, as a matter of sacred duty, to place ourselves in circumstances most favorable to a religious life.

Thus far, my friends, we are perfectly willing to go. But then there are individuals who would go a great deal farther, and would impute *everything* whatever to circumstances. They virtually tell us that they may have done wrong at such and such a time, but then they were so circumstanced that they could not have done otherwise. Now this is a view, to my mind, of our life which is evidently mischievous and erroneous. In the first place, it goes very far towards making God the author of sin, since it makes sin a necessity, and a necessity of that providence which is under the control and direction of God. It is, in short, just a renewal of the old accusation. "The woman whom *thou* didst give me to

be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." God never placed any man under the necessity of sinning, and it is mean as well as impious to endeavor, in this way, to transfer our guilt from ourselves to Him. How often are we ourselves responsible even for the very circumstances which we make our excuse. How often are these of our own creating; how often do we go into temptation which we might have avoided; how often do we foster habits which ultimately form a net-work of circumstances around us, from which we find it all but impossible to escape.

How often, for example, do we find a man launching out into an extravagant manner of living that he may seem to compete with some richer neighbor. This style of thing, (having once begun it) he must keep up. It will not do to let down the

prestige of his family ; and the consequence is, that he betakes himself to one doubtful practice after another until he ends in public disgrace and ruin. Such an one may talk of himself as the victim of circumstances, but the circumstances, even in so far as they did precipitate his fall, were entirely of his own creating ; and although it were otherwise, there is no such tyranny in circumstance as to make sin a necessity. They may bring out character, but they do not force it ; and we must beware of accepting any such view of our life as tends either to extinguish our own responsibility or to cast the blame of our conduct on God. "He will be clear when he speaketh." "Let God be true and every man a liar." "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Be determined to conquer circumstances should temptation arise ; when tempted to evil,

withhold your *consent*, and all is well. It is perfectly possible to do so; neither angel nor devil can *compel* you to sin. If Noah could stand firm alone in a world of sinners, much more may you, through Jesus, in the comparatively favorable circumstances in which you are placed. If circumstances could not conquer him, surely there is no reason in the universe why they should conquer you.

I beseech you, my friends, to cast aside all those false views of our life and return to the simple and solemn teaching of the Bible. That is an old book, and with some, it has become very fashionable of late, to assail it, and talk and write of it lightly. They are speudo-theorists, false prophets in the land of our God. Holy Writ is the only book we have yet seen that answers our purpose, it is in fact, a remarkable book,

the only book that carries the impress and superscription of God; the only book, we maintain, which speaks with authority to the human soul, and which sheds a satisfactory light over the mystery of our being. That good book assures us that our life, yea, that every man's life is a sacred treasure, an awful responsibility, which is to make him, or mar him forever.

There is much truth in the saying of John Picus, Prince of Mirandola: "Philosophy seeks the truth, theology finds it, religion possesses it." But healthy religion does not want to possess the truth blindly; it also wants to understand and comprehend what it possesses. The impulse of religion is both to produce faith and knowledge, the so called Pistis and Gnosis.

True philosophy, true theology and true religion have as their basis and foundation,

God's Holy Word only. There are those who imagine that denying the Scriptures is a mark of profound wisdom and learning. He who openly attacks the Bible is very often applauded as a great hero. However, it is neither wisdom, nor heroism that moves men to despise or even publically ridicule God's Holy Word; only profound ignorance and deep spiritual blindness can lead to such things, for it is the fool that presses the matter a little farther and says in his heart: "There is no God." Psalm 14, 1. "About 12,000 children are said to attend infidel Sunday-schools in Chicago. The following is a specimen of what these innocent children are taught: God is only a term denoting a supernatural being which has been invented to suit the fancy of men. God has never revealed Himself; there is no God. Man has no soul; the soul is

simply a figment of the Church. Prayer is not necessary and only a waste of time." How deplorable, how sad! No wonder, anarchism is at times rampant in the godless city of Chicago. In which city also "it is said are more than 10,000 sun worshippers." God's word only can enlighten a misguided people.

Editors, writers, and statesmen duly appreciate the Bible's literary value, and keep it constantly at hand. A Western editor, Mr. Walter Williams, in stating what he thought were the best dozen books for editors, is reported by Newspaperdom as saying: "The Bible comes first, in the list I have made, as it should come first in all our libraries, small or great. In the many volumed catalogue of the British Museum, with its thousands of books, the first on the list is the Bible. Catalogues

made this arrangement, not from sentimental reasons alone, but because there is no book of such importance in human literature, whatever we may think of the faith taught by this Queen of books, whatever we may believe as to its inspiration, no one can be a well educated man, no one can attain the highest usefulness as an editor who is unfamiliar with the Scriptures. Because it is in itself a library."

A few scientific men are unbelievers, infidels, agnostics. They have never been converted; have never been taught of God; they have in most cases lacked religious education, not understanding "the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man," and know little or nothing of the history of the church, or rather the grounds on which a true Christian's faith reposes. Hence ignorant and unlearned skeptics, who know

nothing whatever of science, claim that all scientific men are atheistic, or agnostic, and feel no interest in religious matters. This claim is founded in ignorance and urged with impudence. The great mass of scientific men, I maintain, acknowledge and revere God. If you please, where are the infidel astronomers? Not Copernicus, not Kepler, not Newton, not Herschel, not Brewster, not Mitchel, not Sechi,—these men believed in God. Where are the infidel geologists? Not Lyell, not Buckland, not Dana, not Hitchcock, not Hugh Miller, not Geikei, not Dawson,—these men believed in God. Where are the infidel orators? Not Patrick Henry, not Gough, not Webster, not Spurgeon, not Henry Ward Beecher, not Darbin, not Milburn, not Stockton, not Dr. Joseph Seiss, not President Theodore Roosevelt. Where are the

great infidel poets? Not Chaucer, not Milton, not Shakespeare, not Byron, not Lowell, not Longfellow, not Tennyson, not Holmes, not Watts, not Wesley, not David. Where are the great infidel scientists? Not Boyle, not Priestley, not Faraday, not Lord Kelvin, not Clark-Maxwell,—these men believed in God, our Heavenly Father, and looked to Him. Where are the great infidel inventors? Not Arkwright, not Stephenson, not Watt, not Davy, not Whitney, not Franklin, not Morse, not Edison. It is not necessary to speak of Gladstone's faith, of the ringing triumph in the writings of Henry George, the social teacher, or of Abraham Lincoln, who prayed with Beecher during the dark days of the Civil War, or of Gordan, who died in faith in Khartorum or Robert Livingstone, the great naturalist and missionary, who died in

Central Africa. The infidels at the present time of *marked* ability and eminence are so few that a child can write them, and a man can number them on his fingers. One of the most eminent scientific men of this or any age was Prof. Louis Agassiz. When the summer school was opened at Perikise, in Buzzards Bay, July 8, 1873, Agassiz had arranged no program or exercises, trusting to the interest of the occasion to suggest what might best be said or done. But as he looked upon his pupils, gathered there to study nature with him, by an impulse as natural as it was unpremeditated, he called upon them to join in silently asking God's blessing on their work together.

God's word is the Christian's weapon in life's battle against the world, the flesh and the Devil, as well as all false theories of our life, and lead us ever on to victory.

When would-be wise men are running to and fro in the land, denouncing the good Book, as a book of fables, and faith in it as foolishness, the truly wise, the brightest minds the word produces, reverence not only God, as we have heard, but also the Scriptures and ever delight in being known as fervent admirers of that ever sacred work. A few citations, my friends, from the Golden Censer will show what tributes of praise the old Bible has received from some of the noblest and most cultured of men.

“There are no songs,” says Milton, “comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach.” “The pure and noble, the graceful and dignified simplicity of language,” says Pope, “is nowhere in such perfection

as in the Scriptures. The whole book of Job, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds, beyond all comparison, the most noble parts of Homer."

"Intense study of the Bible will keep any one from being vulgar in point of style," says Boyle, "not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored." "There never was found, in any age of the world," says Bacon, "either religion or law that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible." "It is the window in the prison of hope," says Dwight, "through which we look into eternity." "How admirable and

beautiful," says Racine, "is the simplicity of the Evangelists! They never speak injuriously of the enemies of Jesus Christ, of His judges, nor of His executioners. They speak the true facts without a single reflection. They comment neither on their Master's mildness, nor on His constancy in the hour of His ignominious death, which they thus describe: "And they crucified Jesus." "Men cannot be well educated without the Bible," says Dr. Nott. "It ought, therefore, to hold a chief place in every situation of learning throughout Christendom."

"I am of the opinion," says Sir Wm. Jones, "that the Bible contains more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they have been written."

“I will answer for it,” says Romaine, “the longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you will get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ.”

“I find more sure marks of the authenticity of the Bible,” says Sir Isaac Newton, “than in any profane, i. d. secular history whatsoever.”

Newton, was as a youth a decided unbeliever, but in later years he investigated the witnesses of Holy Scripture carefully and became as decided a Christian. When the similarly famous astronomer, Dr. Edmund Halley, expressed his unbelief before him, Newton said to him: “Dr. Halley, I always like to hear you, when you talk on astronomy, mathematics and such things, for these you have studied and understand.

But you should not speak on the Bible, for you do not understand it, because you have not carefully investigated it. I have examined it, and am certain that you know nothing of the matter." This admonition suits to most skeptics and unbelievers of to-day. Yea, advocates of the so called higher criticism. They simply speak of sacred things without a thorough prayerful investigation, they write and speak of things of which they know nothing. And a little learning is, at times, a very dangerous thing.

To take one other all-embracing sphere of human intellect, the sphere of science, in that region, too, the most eminent souls—men like Copernicus, Leibnitz, Descartes, Haller, Pascal, Ray, Hershel, Faraday, and many others—not losing sight of the Creator in the multitudinous marvels of His creatures, have looked not only to the Bible ;

but also to Christ as their Lord and their God. "A little philosophy," as Bacon said, "inclineth a man's mind to Atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." Among the "pillars" of Science two names stand supreme—Kepler and Newton whose names we have already mentioned. Kepler wrote of Christ with the profoundest reverence. The first mortal eyes which ever observed the transit of Venus were those of Jeremiah Harrocks, an humble country curate. He hurried to his telescope in the intervals between three Sunday services, and though his observation was of such consummate astronomical importance, he recorded in his diary that he broke off his work to go to the humble service in his little village church as of much greater weight than all scientific discoveries.

On one occasion a friend found Michael Faraday in tears; with his head bent over an open Bible. "I fear you are feeling worse," he said. "No," answered Faraday, "it is not that; but why, oh, why will not men believe the blessed truths here revealed to them?" An humble and reverent study of the laws which God has impressed upon the universe He has made.

"The pale-featured sage's trembling hand
Strong as a host of armed deities,
Such as the blind Ionian fabled erst:"

And yet of those sages, from Capernicus to Faraday, and down to the most eminent of our living students of science, the foremost have not only had faith in God's Book, but also believed in one of the greatest of all great doctrines, viz; the doctrine of the atonement, or divinity of our Saviour.

The strong take from the weak and perish into nothing—this is all that is offered us by those who reject and revile the Bible. Such have exceeding deep ignorance, exceeding ill manners, exceeding bad taste, and exceeding great folly.

Some time ago an article appeared in the Atlantic Monthly. It is sound to the core. I take pleasure in presenting it: "If there be any axiom which everyone has accepted without question, it is that, in all study of English literature, the ultimate standard of English prose style is set by the King James version of the Bible. If one were to figure the whole range of English prose in the form of an arch, he would put the Bible as the key-stone; and he would put it there not only because it is the highest point and culmination of prose writing, but also because it binds the whole

structure together." "For examples of limpid, convincing narrative, we go to Genesis, to the story of Ruth, to the quiet narratives of the Gospels; for the mingled argument and explanation and exhortation in which lies the highest power of the other side of literature, we go to the prophets, and still more to the epistles of the New Testament; and for the glow of vehemence and feeling which burns away the limits between poetry and prose, and makes prose style at its highest pitch, able to stand beside the stirring vibrations of verse, we go to the Psalms or the book of Job, or the prophesies of Isaiah, or to the triumphant declaration of immortality in the epistle to the Corinthians." "We fold our hands in the comfortable feeling that here, at any rate, one question of English literature is settled: the standard English prose style

is the standard of the authorized version of the Bible, and that style is so clear and so convincing that nothing more is to be accounted for."

"Cling to the Bible, tho' all else be taken ;
Lose not its promises precious and sure ;
Souls that are sleeping its echoes awaken,
Drink from the fountain, so peaceful, so
pure.

"Cling to the Bible, this jewel, this treasure,
Brings to us honor and saves fallen man ;
Pearl whose great value no mortal can
measure,
Seek and secure it, O soul, while you can.

Lamp for the feet that in by-ways have
wandered,
Guide for the youth that would otherwise
fall ;
Hope for the sinner whose best days are
squandered,
Staff for the aged, and *best* book of all."

My friends, I ask you to throw aside every false theory of our life, establish a good, Christian character, having our master, your only model and guide, as He is presented in the Bible. Let man go abroad with just, biblical, Christian principles, and what is he? A mighty power, an exhaustless fountain in a vast desert, a glorious sun-shining, ever dispelling every vestige of darkness. There is love animating his heart, sympathy breathing in every tone. Beneath his smiles lurk no degrading passions. Within his breast there slumbers no guile. A good man is abroad, the community in which he lives knows it and certainly feels it.

But you must heartily believe and be convinced of Divine Truth as exhibited in God's Holy Word. Allow me to quote Dr. Luther on this point: He says, "thou must

be certain that it is the word of God as thou art certain that thou livest and even more certain, for on this *alone* must thy conscience rest. And even if all men came, aye, even the angels and all the world, and determined something, if thou canst not form nor conclude the decision, thou art lost. For thou must not place thy decision on the Pope, or any other, thou must thyself be so skillful that thou canst say, God says this, not that; this is right, that is wrong; else it is not possible to endure. Dost thou stand upon Pope or Concilia? Then the devil may knock a hole in thee and insinuate, 'how if it were false, how if they erred?' Thou then art laid low at once. Therefore thou must bring conscience into play, that thou must boldly and defiantly say, that is God's word, on *that* will I risk body and life, and a hundred

thousand necks if I had them. Therefore no one shall turn me from the word which God teaches me, and that I must know as certainly as that two and three make five, that an ell is longer than a half. That is certain, and though all the world speak to the contrary still I know that it is not otherwise. Who decides me then? No man, but only the truth which is so perfectly clear that nobody can deny it." So much Dr. Luther.

Character is the sustaining glory of individual greatness, the Doric and splendid column in the majestic structure of a true and dignified manhood. To earth belongs his corruptible body, but to another and more enlarged sphere his soul stamped with divinity. It is not the false theory of Epicureanism, Asceticism or Pantheism, that I advocate, but the universal diligence

of a righteous Dr. Martin Luther, a Johnathan Edwards, a Bishop Butler, a Bunyan, a benevolent Howard, an enterprising Fulton and a Morse. But for such as they, many a heart would be cold as death, many a mortal languishing in distress. "Man is his own star, and that soul that can honestly believe is the only perfect man."

Honesty to me is like an anchor, not for calm days only, but for storms. The anchor may be decked with flowers at times, and in a harbor may rest at the bow and silently express its idea of usefulness. But when the vessel is out on its path, and there is a night of storm and darkness, not a single star appearing, then it is that the old mass of iron seems to glory in its ruggedness, and leaving its ideal festoons upon the deck, in the gloomy midnight, it drops into the deep and grasps the solid earth with its gigantic arms.

Whilst the church performs her labor on earth, the roaring gulf of human passion and hatred will eventually be calmed by the voice of peace. Activity and exertion are the crystal waters that turn the moral machinery of the universe. "Go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel," was a divine injunction.

But Heaven's temple on earth must be built by man that the fire of benevolence may burn on the altars of the human heart more vividly, and that faith in our Master, with her brightest blessing, might turn all the nations of the earth. A constant light is beaming into the souls of Bible-Christians who have been born into the true Kingdom, into the true light of our Saviour. When we come into that light, there is no error, we even understand our own life more clearly. Truly, all is light ; within that

heavenly light, there is peace, life and all things that man craves in his spiritual nature. It seems to me, however, that there was never before such an appreciation of the goodness and love of our Heavenly Father, I mean to the every day problem of our life. I am inclined to be optimistic in my views, however. Like Emerson, I can see "the beauty of the good." Indeed, to me, "there are more birds singing, more flowers blooming, more spring everywhere," simply and because, it is our Father's love toward his children. "He doeth all things well."

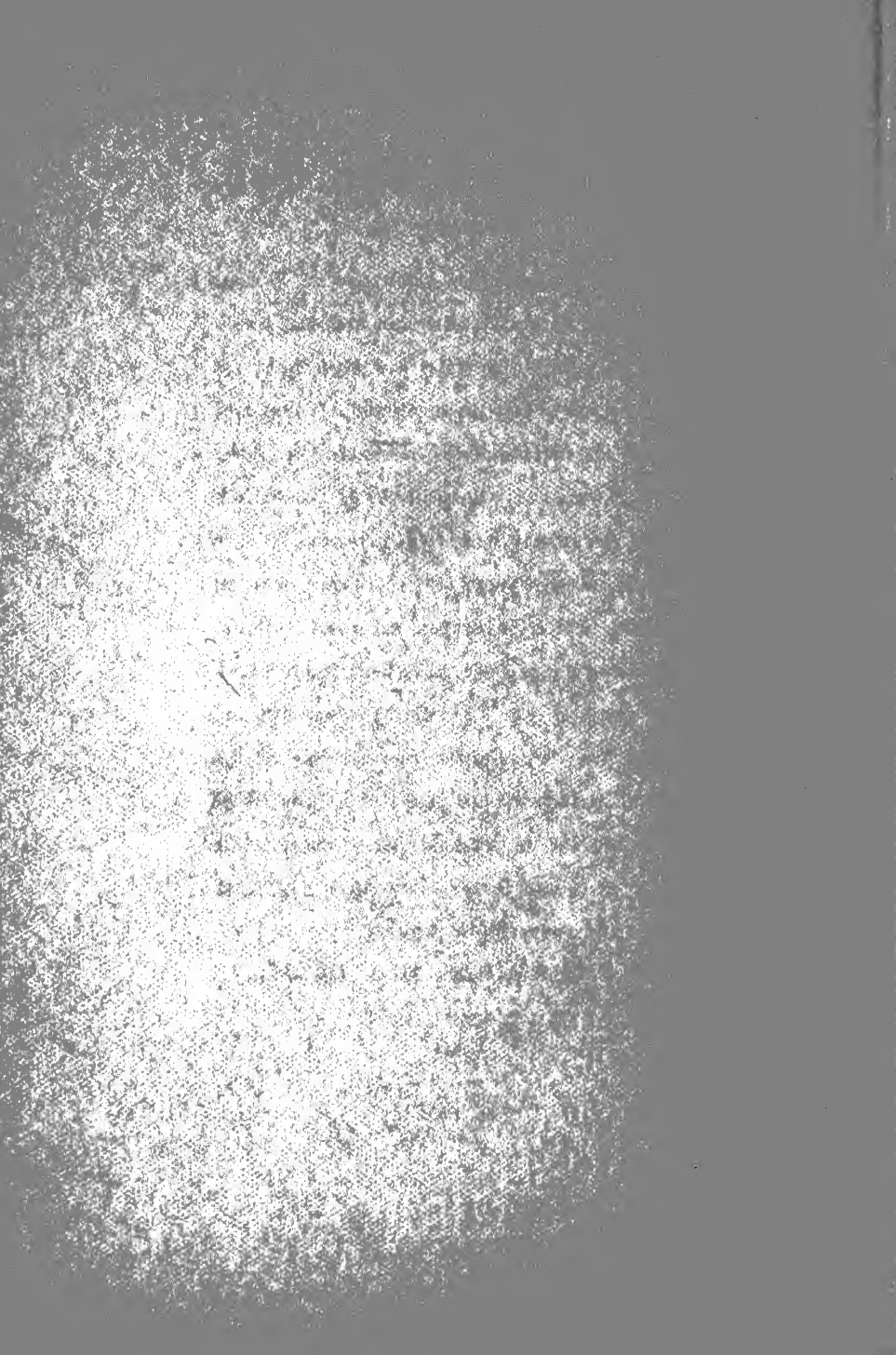
In the solemn ecstasy of a Kepler we may exclaim:

"Oh! God! I read Thy Thoughts after
Thee!"



*"Life believe, is not a dream,
So dark as sages say;
Oft a little morning rain
Foretells a pleasant day."*

—Charlotte Brontë.

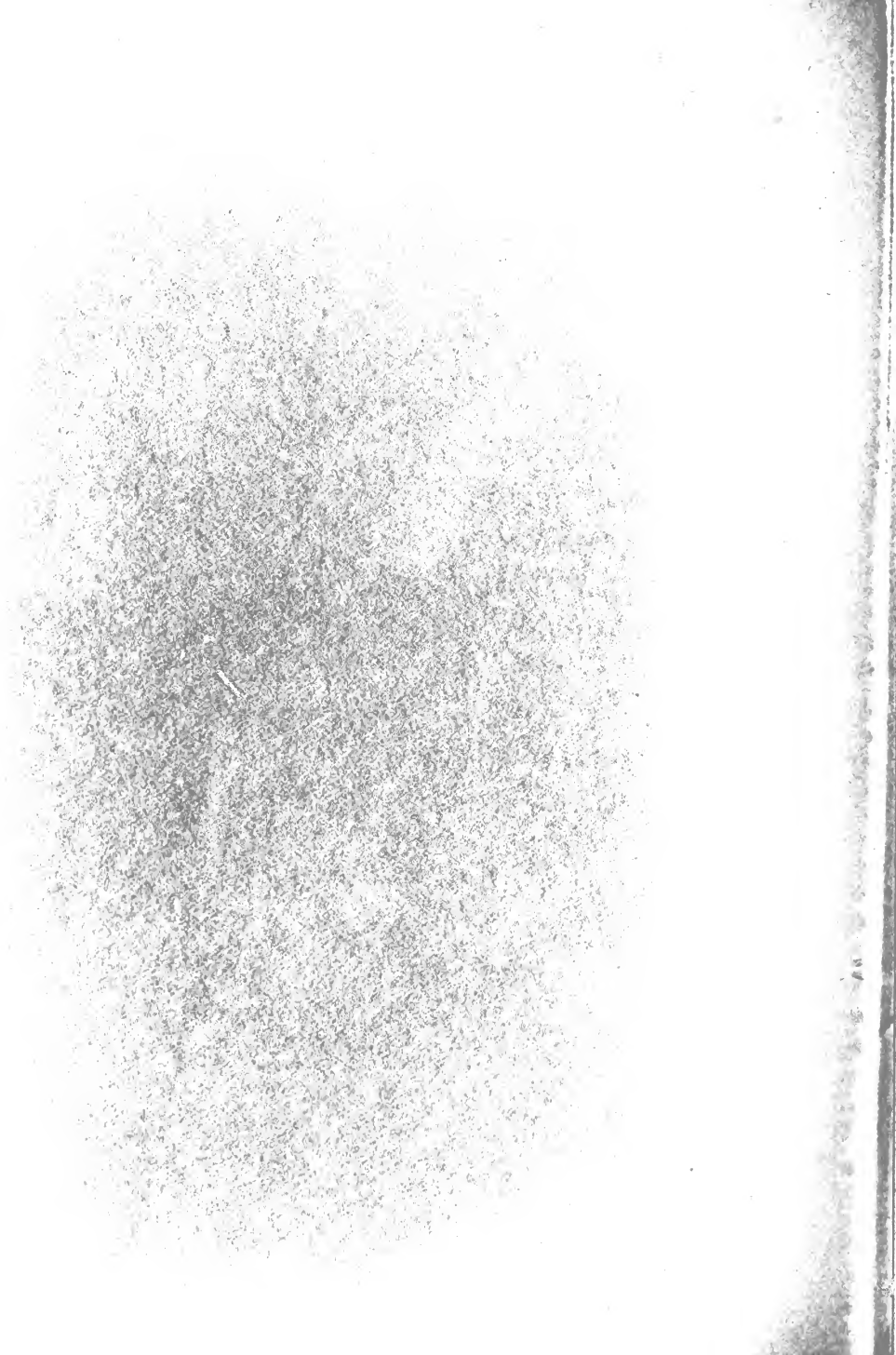


Conversations With God.

(German)

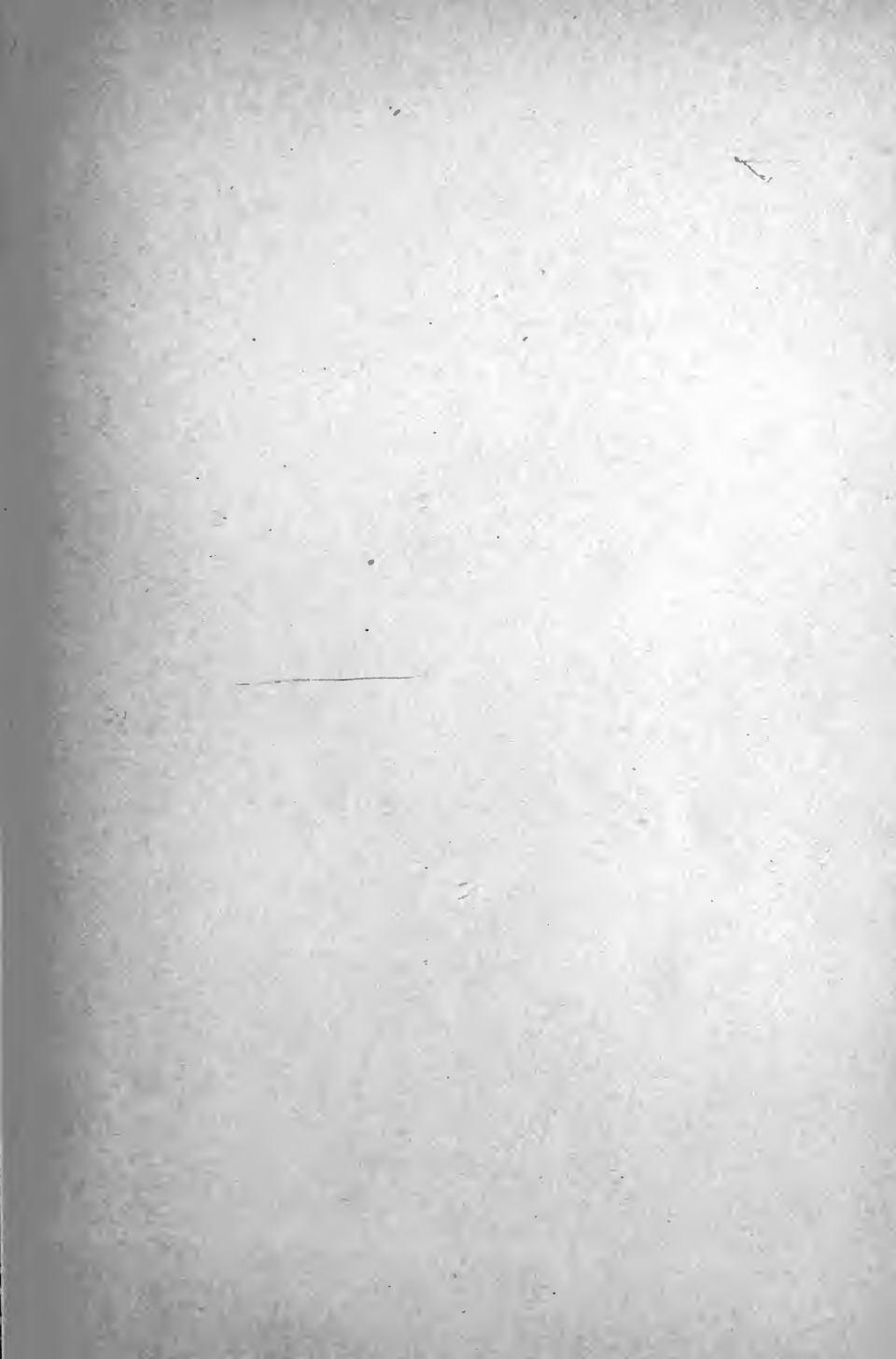
Pastor C. N. Conrad, of Rochester, N. Y., has gathered from approved Lutheran sources, a collection of prayers for personal and household use and issued them in this little volume. It contains prayers for the morning and the evening of all the days of the week, for the festivals of the church year, and circumstances of the Christian life. The old and approved prayers of the devout men of our church, which have been hallowed by long, continued and general use, have been freely taken for this purpose But the prayers are admirable, they are simple, devout, full of the unction of the Holy Ghost, and well adapted to be of much service in personal use. "Gespraech mit Gott," will be a blessing wherever used with an earnest and prayerful disposition.

(Rev. B. M. Schmucker, D. D., Lutheran.)

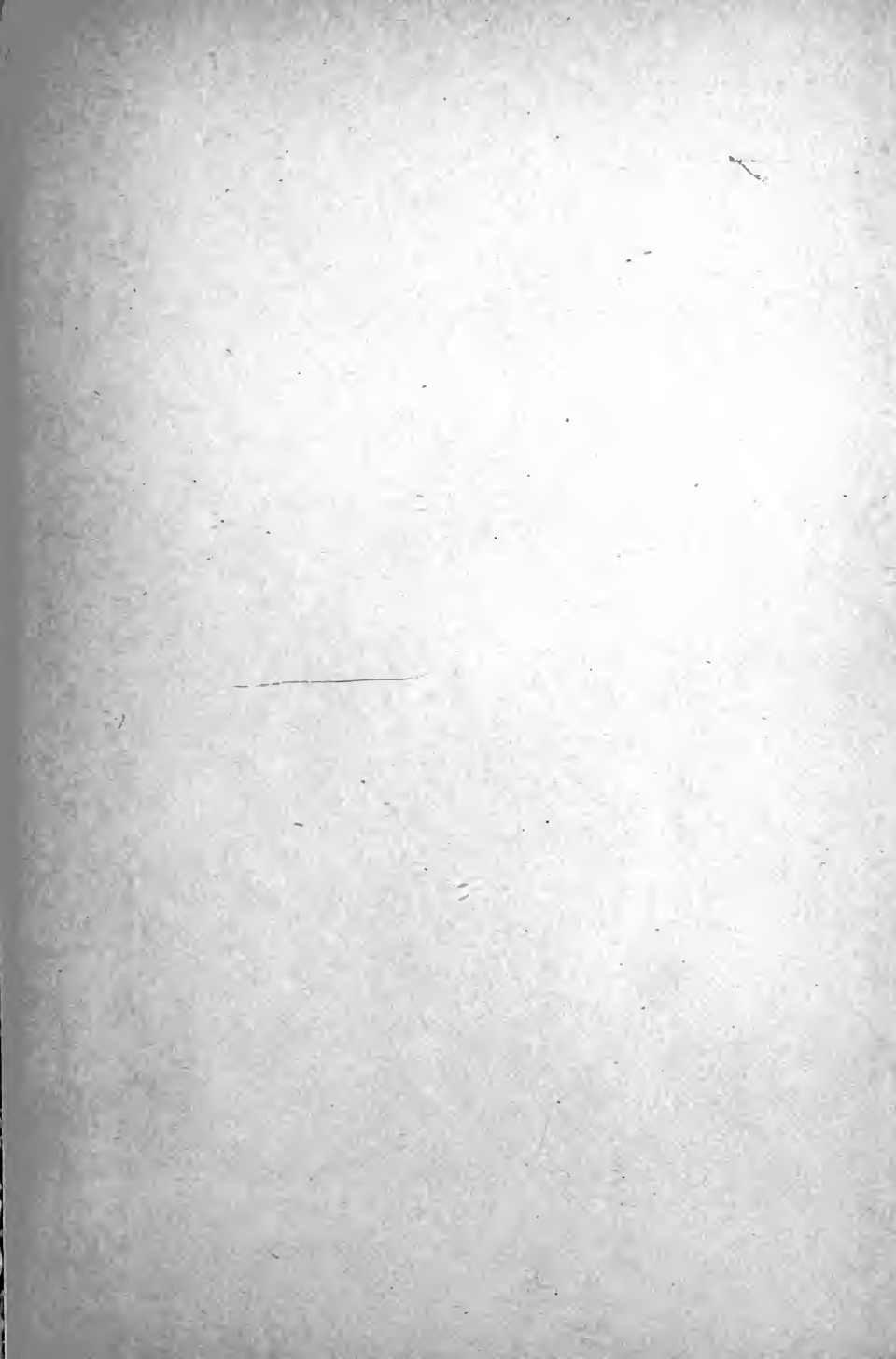




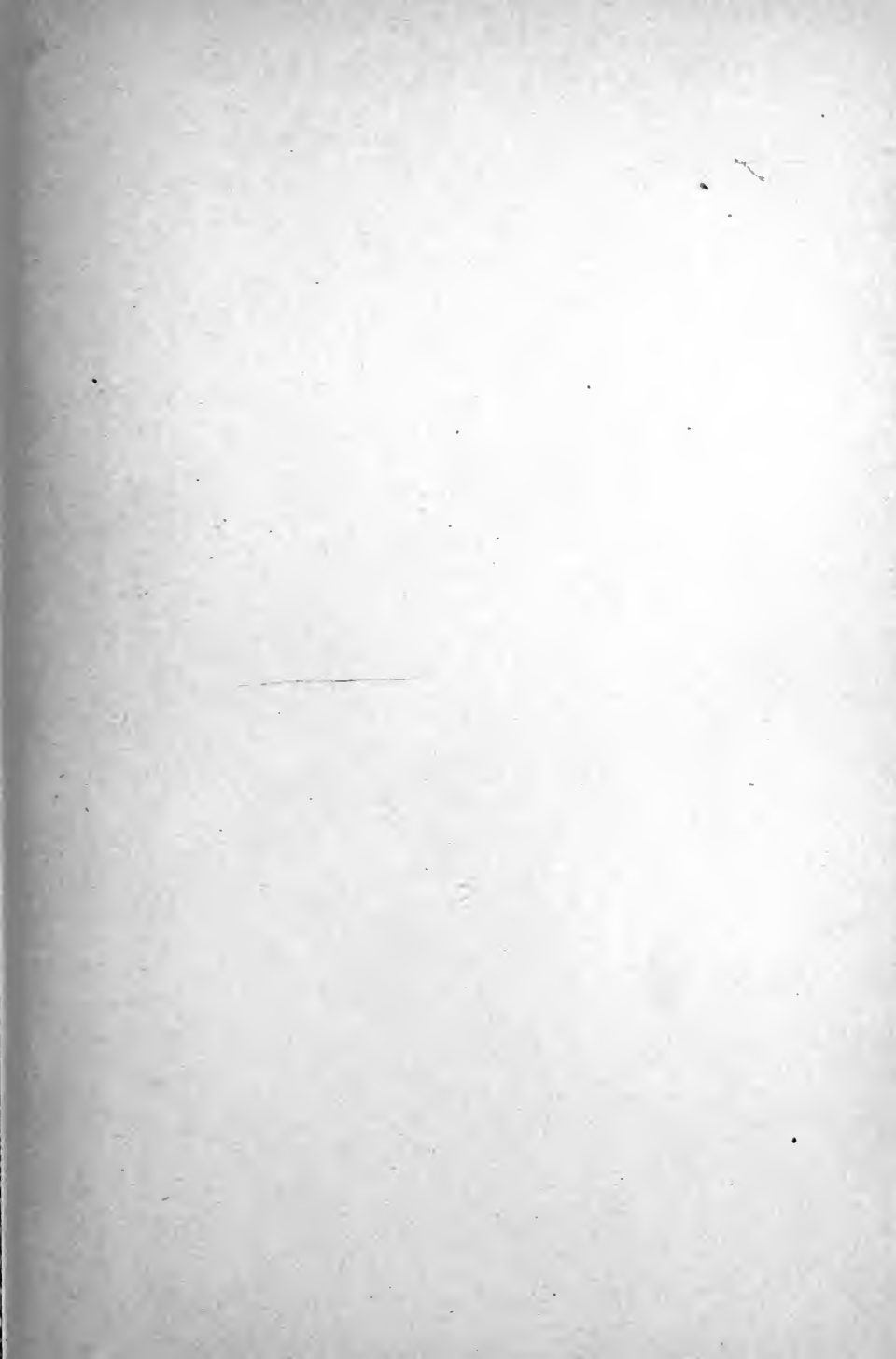




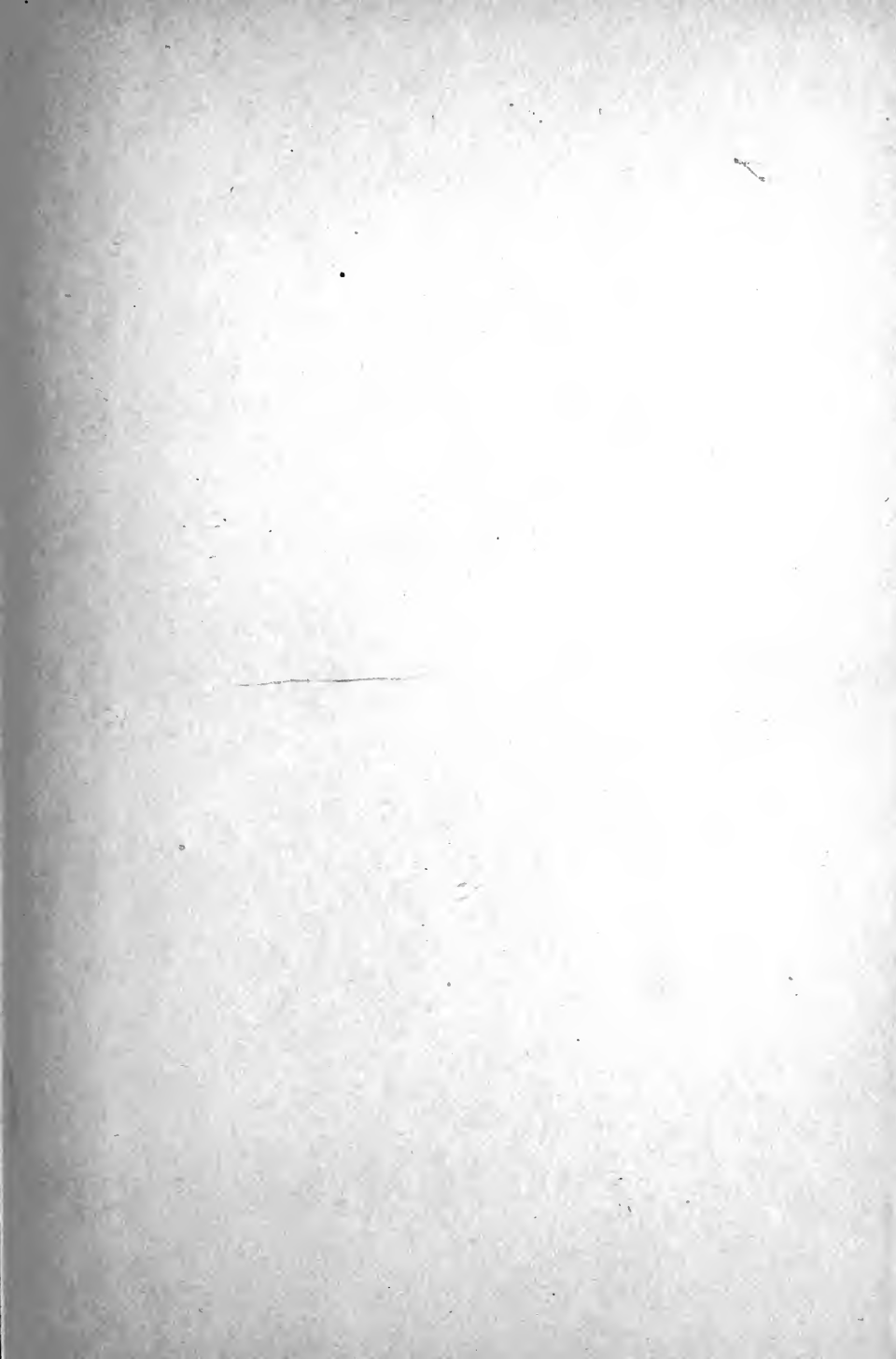












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