

# SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

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J. B. BRINEY



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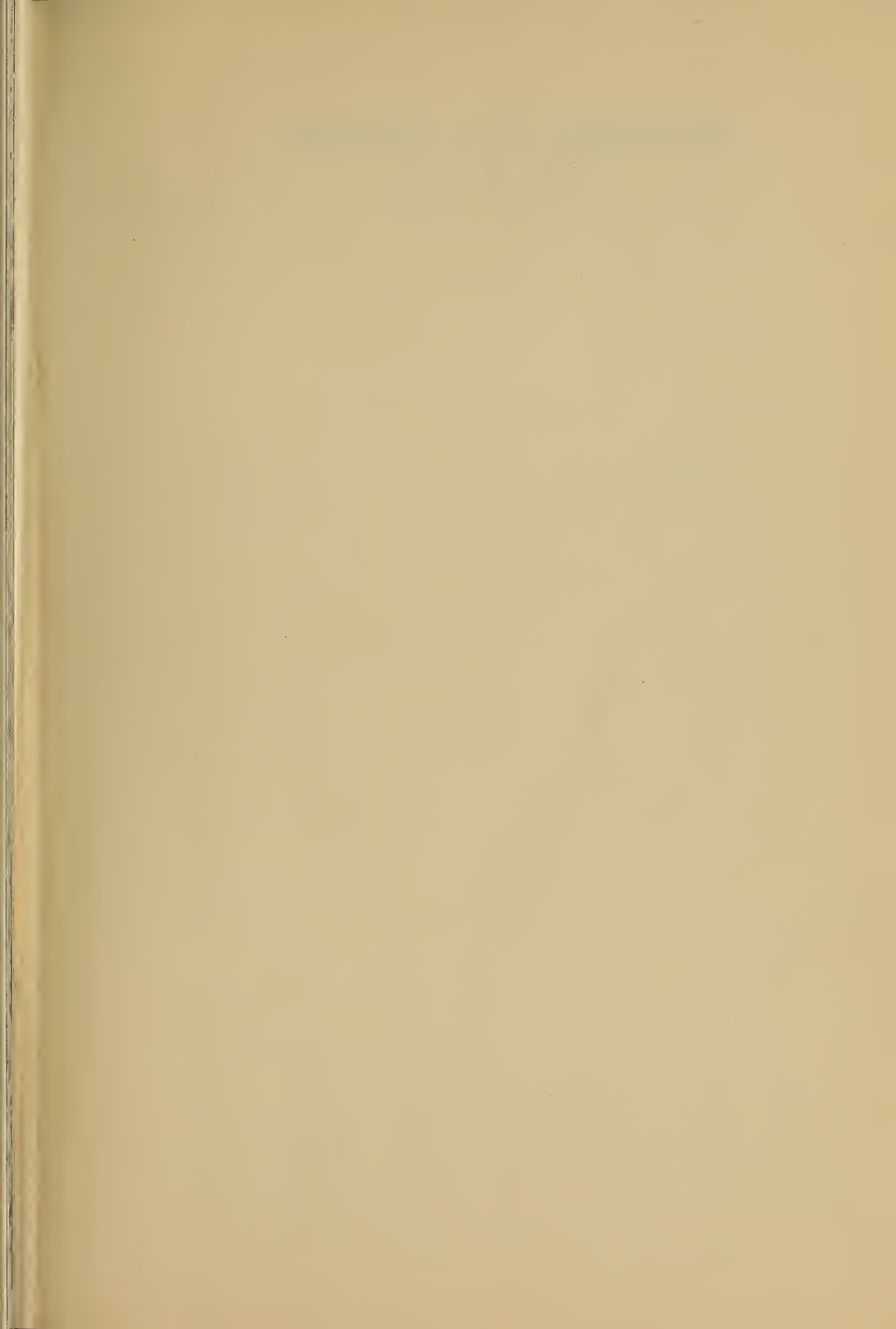
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BY  
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"The Form of Baptism," "Baptism and Remission  
of Sins," "Instrumental Music in Christian  
Worship," "The Temptations  
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CINCINNATI  
THE STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY

[1922]

BX7327  
.B1554

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The Standard Publishing Company

NOV 18 '22

©Cl.A686915

no 1

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS volume is the result of a purpose formed in my mind many years ago, and with reference to which I have largely shaped my reading and study. This purpose has been nourished and strengthened by numerous requests conveyed to me in various ways, both by individuals and groups of brethren whose wishes I have not felt at liberty to ignore. In these sermons and lectures I have aimed to conserve the results of the very best thinking I have been able to do upon the subjects treated, and transmit them to future generations, in the hope that, under the blessing of God, they may bear some humble part in promoting the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and in extending the borders of the kingdom of God. The volume is sent forth to occupy any place which God, in His gracious providence, may prepare for it.

J. B. BRINEY.





# THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.”—Heb. 11:1.

I HAVE combined in this text the renderings given in the Revised Version and the Common Version of the Scriptures. I make this combination because I believe it leads to the meaning of the passage more readily than either version taken singly. The Revised Version substitutes “assurance” for “substance,” and thereby, I humbly think, misses the idea the writer meant to convey. Faith is “assurance,” it is true, but in using the word here employed the writer is not defining faith, but is pointing out the *relation* of faith to something else, and definition comes a little later, as will presently appear.

In pretty much every passage of Scripture there are two or three words that may be regarded as key-words—words whose meaning unlocks the passage as a whole, and causes it to yield up its import to the student; and, in the study of a given passage, the first thing to do is to locate such words and discover their meaning. Unless this is done, any effort to ascertain the significance of the passage as a whole is like beating the air. Our text contains two key-words, the first of which is the term “substance,”

and our first exegetical task is to ascertain the import of that term. In the performance of this task we must resort to etymology. A living language is always in a state of fluctuation, old words becoming obsolete and dropping out of use, and new terms coming into use to express new ideas. Telegraph, telephone, phonograph, automobile, aeroplane, and the like, are comparatively new words invented to express the new ideas that they embrace.

The word "substance," as employed in our text, is not to be taken in the sense in which it is commonly used at the present time. As we now use the term it means the material part or parts of something. For instance, when we say that the substance of a document is so and so, we mean its salient points. Now, of course, faith is not the substance of things hoped for in this modern sense of the term, for that would make faith itself the essential part of things hoped for, which would be out of the question. Here etymology comes to our relief and solves the problem. The word "substance" is made up of two Latin terms—the preposition *sub*, which means "under," and the verb *stare*, which means "to stand." When combined, the resultant word "substance" means that something is standing under something else as a support. This idea is contained in all those words into whose composition the particle *sub* enters. The farmer talks about a "sub-soil," by which he means a stratum of soil lying just beneath the surface; the builder talks about a "sub-sill," by which he means a support for another sill; the financier talks about a "sub-treasury," by which he means a kind of sinking fund set apart to sustain the main treasury in cases of emergency. I am quite sure that

our word "foundation" is the term that we need in our text to exactly express the thought that the writer intended to convey. Here is the idea: "Now faith is the foundation of things hoped for." This makes hope concrete in the things that it lays hold upon. If it were put in the abstract, it would stand thus: "Now faith is the foundation of hope." But I have been reminded that my exegesis is based upon the Latin, while the text was written in Greek, but the etymology of the Greek is precisely the same as the Latin. The Greek word is *hupostasis*, which is composed of the preposition *hupo*, which means "under," and the verb *histeemi*, which means "to stand." Hence we reach the same conclusion through the Greek that we reach through the Latin, that "faith is the foundation of hope."

Now, this is a general principle that applies to all the relations and enterprises of human society. It applies to domestic life. A young man and a young woman fall in love with each other, and become engaged to be married. Hope paints their future in brilliant colors, and they promise themselves a life of happiness in the marriage relation. Upon what does their hope rest? What is it that in their hearts supports the fond anticipations that thrill their souls? It is their mutual faith. They believe in each other. Each believes that the other will be true to the solemn vows to be taken at the marriage altar, and as long as their faith stands firm their hope remains unshaken. If, however, in an evil hour one should lose faith in the other, or if perchance the loss of faith should be mutual, hope would become unsteady and by and by depart, leaving a family in ruins. This applies to the business walks of life. A capitalist invests his

money in a given enterprise because he believes in it. He hopes for returns from his investment because of his faith. But if he should become convinced that the enterprise is a failure, his faith would fail and he would lose all hope of profit. "Faith is the foundation of hope" always and in everything.

Now, Paul takes this general principle and gives it a special application to the circle of religious life and experience. Here, as well as everywhere else, "faith is the foundation of hope," and without faith there can be no such thing as hope in the true and Scriptural sense. Without faith in Jesus and the resurrection the hope of immortality and eternal life is impossible. I know that a celebrated apostle of agnosticism once, in delivering a funeral oration over the remains of a child of his friend, made this statement: "We, too, have our religion, and it is help for the living and hope for the dead." In the first place, it may be remarked that this is a bald plagiarism upon the gospel of the Son of God, for "help for the living and hope for the dead" are cardinal items of the Christian religion. In giving some of the events of the day of judgment the great Teacher says: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and

clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:34-46). Where do you find such teaching as this outside the glorious gospel of God's dear Son, or doctrine inspired by that gospel? This is "help for the living" sure enough. And the same gospel holds out "hope for the dead" most abundantly.

But when the agnostic orator just referred to says that he and his fellow skeptics "have hope for the dead," he practices upon himself and his friends the fallacy of construing a single element of hope as hope itself. Hope is made up of two essential factors; namely, desire and reasonable expectation. Now, the desire to live forever seems to be indigenous to the human heart. We naturally shrink from death, and cling to life with marvelous tenacity. We want to live on and on and on to all eternity. This desire



burns in the breast of an infidel the same as in the soul of a Christian, but the infidel can have no hope of immortality and eternal life, because he has no reasonable expectation, for reasonable expectation depends upon a reasonable promise. I might desire to own a gold mine, but I have no hope of ever coming into possession of such a treasure, because I have no reasonable expectation in that regard. If I were away from home, and were to receive a telegram informing me that a member of my family is lying at the point of death, I would start home *expecting* to find such a condition of things, but not hoping it, because not desiring it. In the former case desire was present, but reasonable expectation was absent, and hence there was no hope. In the latter case expectation was present, but desire was absent, and hence there was no hope. Hope is a child born of the union of desire and reasonable expectation in the human heart, desire being instinctive in the heart, and reasonable expectation springing from a reasonable promise; and with this agrees the proposition that "faith is the foundation of hope."

But faith is more than this, and here comes in the second division of our text; namely, that faith is "conviction of things not seen." This gives us clear, distinct and specific definition. Notice the forcefulness of the defining term here employed: Faith is *conviction* of things not seen. "Conviction" is one of the most energetic words known to human speech. The original word (*elengchos*) was applied by the Greeks to military affairs, and indicated a struggle between opposing armies. Faith is not a mere nod of assent to the truth—a mere consent that a proposition is correct. In religion it is the moral dynamo that

drives all the machinery of the life of the believer, and brings it into perfect harmony with the will of Him in whom faith is exercised. Its language is, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and it inspires the believer to sing:

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,  
I'll follow where He goes."

The ear of faith is always attentive to the divine mandate, no odds what it may be. If you find a man hesitating in the presence of a command of God, and wondering if he can't be saved without complying with it, you find a man whose faith is defective. He has not that faith which is conviction.

Here, then, is Paul's thesis, "Now faith is the foundation of hope, a conviction of things not seen," and a great thesis it is; and in its light the remainder of the chapter must be read to be understood, for it is made up of illustrations of the principles embraced in the thesis. The remainder of this discourse will be given to an inspection of some of these wonderful, interesting and instructive illustrations of the apostle's thesis.

1. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God." For a long time the ancient philosophers were perplexed by the problem of origins—how things as they saw them got started. They looked out upon the starry heavens and beheld multitudes of the most wonderful phenomena on every hand. They saw myriads of suns, stars and moons as they adorned the outlying heavens with attractive glory, and wondered whence they came; and no satisfactory answer was found till a man of God picked up his pen, dipped it in the ink

of inspiration, and wrote: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This short, but comprehensive, statement solved the problem in a most satisfying manner, and it enables men to say, by that faith which comes by the word of God, that that is just how it was.

2. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh" (verse 4). It is more than probable that the word "excellent" has no legitimate place in this passage. It is difficult to see how an animal as a sacrifice to God could be "more excellent" than an offering consisting of the "firstfruits of the ground." "More excellent" is the rendering of the single word *pleiona*, and the very first meaning that Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" gives of this term is "*more.*" "More excellent" is given under "2" in the definition, and there the lexicon says, "followed by the genitive of comparison," which is not the construction in the passage now before us. Here it is followed by *thusian* (sacrifice), in the accusative, and hence it does not come under Thayer's rule. The "Greek Lexicon" of Liddell and Scott does not give "more excellent" as a meaning of this word at all, and it not only does not belong in this passage, but its presence obscures the sense and force of this Scripture.

Exactly what the passage says is that "Abel offered unto God *more* sacrifice than Cain," and this embodies a great and fundamental principle in the divine economy. God required *two* offerings—one as a thank-offering, and the other as a sin-offering—and



here is where Cain made his fatal blunder. He made his reason, and not the will of God, his guide in the matter. I do not suppose he was a German, but he was the father of what is now called "German rationalism." He could see from the standpoint of reason that it would be appropriate to make a thank-offering to God of the fruits of the ground, for God caused their growth. But from that point of view he could not see why he should kill an innocent animal and offer it as a sacrifice for his sins. That the blood of such an animal could make an atonement for his sins was a proposition that he could not reason out, and where the light of reason failed him, there he stopped and made shipwreck of himself. Here is where rationalism has broken with God all along the line of His dealings with the children of men, from the time of Cain down to the days of modern Unitarianism, which denies that there is any efficacy in the blood of Christ to atone for the sins of men.

Instead of being a rationalist, Abel was a man of faith, and made the will of God the standard of his conduct, and hence he made the two offerings that the will of God demanded. His heart was swelling with gratitude to God, whom he recognized as the giver of every good and perfect gift, and when Jehovah told him to express his gratitude in a thank-offering, he responded most joyously. But he knew that he was a sinner, and longed to get rid of his sins, and when the Lord told him to slay an animal and offer it in sacrifice for his sins, he made haste and delayed not to comply with the holy commandment, without stopping to reason about the matter. So men of faith always do. That he made more than one offering is manifest from the statement that God

bore "witness in respect of his *gifts.*" Thus this man of faith, though he be dead, "yet speaketh," and in his speaking he says to the children of men, "Always do just what God says and *all* that he says," and this every man of faith will do whether he can understand all the whys and wherefores or not.

3. "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (verse 7). This is a most beautiful and instructive illustration of Paul's great thesis that "faith is the foundation of hope, a conviction of things not seen." Noah was "warned of God concerning things *not seen* as yet," and, although he did not see them, his faith made him as sure that they would come to pass in due time, as if he had already seen them. A good, practical, concrete definition of faith would be, "It is taking God at His word." Faith is valueless without action that makes it visible. Some people took a sick friend to our Saviour when he was on earth, and when they could not get into the house where the Healer was, on account of the dense crowd that was gathered about the doorway, they made their way to the top of the building, removed a part of the covering, and lowered the sick man into the presence of the Master, and Jesus, "seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven." These friends of the sick man showed their faith by their works, and that is what people who have genuine, living faith will always do.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved* with godly fear," etc. Noah

had a living, energetic faith that moved him to action, as that faith which amounts to *conviction* always does. Faith is a dynamic force that puts the machinery of mind, heart and body in motion, and subordinates it entirely to the will of the almighty One. Noah prepared an ark because that is what God told him to do. A rationalist might have done differently. He might have said: "Well, I think there is a better way of escape than that. Here is an abundance of stones at hand, and, instead of building a boat, in my judgment I think we had better build a great pyramid whose top shall reach above the water-line, and take refuge upon that when the flood comes." If Noah had done something like this, he would have condemned himself with the rest of mankind. But, being a man of faith, he took the plans and specifications given him by the Lord, and built an ark, adhering strictly to his divine instructions. God had told him how long, wide and high to make it, how many stories to put in it, and how many openings it should have. He was given specific instruction as to the materials he should use in the construction of the ark, and what to take into it with him. Noah proceeded according to his instructions and hewed to the line in every particular, without the least deviation, and therein was his safety. Here is a good lesson for our "open membership" brethren.

"Through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." This man of faith not only saved himself and his family by obeying God in building the ark, but he abandoned the world to the condemnation that it incurred by its wickedness, and *became* heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. He was not

an heir of this righteousness before he built the ark, although he was a believer before that. From this we see that faith alone does not secure the righteousness which is "according to faith," and this is a very important point in this illustration. It requires the obedience of faith to bring about such a result, and the believer can not claim this gracious blessing till he obeys God in all the appointments He has enjoined upon him. Faith may be said to be the enabling act, or the act that enables one to become something that he was not before. Noah's faith enabled him to become heir of the righteousness which is "according to faith," and without the building of the ark he would not have become such an heir. The following Scripture is very pertinent at this point: "He [Christ] came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11, 12). From this passage it is plain that faith does not make a man a child of God, but only gives him the right, or the moral power, to become such; and when he shows his faith by doing what God enjoins upon him, he becomes what his faith gave him the right to become—a child of God.

4. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Here is a most brilliant example of walking by faith. The presumption is that Abraham knew nothing about the land he was to receive as an inheritance, but God promised him such an inheritance, and he believed God, and his faith was a conviction that controlled him in the matter. He had a convic-



tion of things not seen, and his faith was a foundation of his hope that they would come into his possession. "By faith Abraham *obeyed* to go out." Of course, for that is what genuine faith always prompts the believer to do. He only waits to know what the will of the Lord is, and as soon as he obtains this knowledge, he bows in humble submission to the divine behest, no odds what it may be.

"And he went out, not knowing whither he went." What a marvelous example of faith this is! Would you, would I, have been equal to the occasion? Here is a man who is commanded to leave his country and his kin, his neighbors and friends, and go into a country that he knew not of. But this wonderful man, having the faith which is "conviction of things not seen," hesitated not one moment, but immediately arose and, tearing himself away from the associations of his youth and early manhood, started upon a journey whose end he knew not. That's faith for you! Sometimes you will find a man who says: "Well, there are so many things concerning God and the Bible that I do not understand. If I could see the end from the beginning, I would not hesitate to start to the promised land." Yes, but you would not start by faith, but by sight, by reason. The very highest plane upon which the drama of life can be enacted is the plane of faith, and we receive most of our information through faith. It is thus that we attain a knowledge of the facts of history, of science and of philosophy. The circle of our absolute knowledge is very narrow, and but for faith our stock of information would be limited indeed.

And it is also true that we accept and act upon many things that we do not understand. I do not

understand how my physical system takes the food that I eat and turns it into bone, muscle, nerve, brain, hair. But I am not going to refuse to eat because I can not understand the mysterious processes of nature in building up my body. I hold in my hand an object that is called an egg. Subject it to a certain degree of heat for twenty-one days, and it is a chicken. Now, I do not understand how that change is brought about, but I am not going to refuse to eat the chicken because of this lack of understanding. It is God's business to make chickens, and it is my privilege to eat them, and I must function on my side of the line, and let God take care of the things on His side. Take a young peach-tree and place its roots in the ground, cut off the twig and engraft the bud of a plum. When the tree resulting therefrom goes to bearing fruit you will witness some strange phenomena. The roots of that tree are peach, and they go to work to select materials from the soil to make peaches, for that is the business of peach-tree roots, and they attend strictly to their own business. But the body of that tree takes the materials that the roots selected to make peaches and turns them into plums. Now, I don't know how that is done, but I know what to do with the plum, and I am not going to decline to eat it because I do not know how it was made.

But he who would refuse to eat chickens and plums because he does not understand how they are made, would be no more lacking in common sense than he who refuses to accept salvation through the gospel because the process involves things that he does not understand. Indeed, we might reasonably expect to find mysteries in this sphere, but they are on God's

side of the line, and we can well afford to leave them in His hands, as we do in the domain of nature. The things that are on our side of this line are very plain, and it is our business to attend to them, and if we do that we will have our hands full. Suppose I do not understand all about the virgin birth of Christ, shall I reject the well-authenticated fact because my poor, finite mind can not grasp and comprehend the profoundest and deepest things of God? You need not go to the virgin birth of Jesus to find mysteries, for they are involved in every birth that takes place in this world, and no man can understand or explain them. We live and move and have our being among mysteries, and if we start out to reject whatever we can not understand, we will have to discard pretty much everything in heaven and on earth, including our own existence!

5. "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back" (verses 17-19). Among all the victories of faith known to human history, perhaps a brighter example than this can not be found, and with profit and delight we may dwell upon it. When Abraham was about seventy-five years old, and Sarah, his beloved wife, about sixty-five, God promised them that a son should be born to them. Time passed on, and months multiplied themselves into years, and the coming of the promised boy was delayed. Abraham, however, did not despair, but lived on in hope whose foundation was faith in God, who made the promise.

The redemption of the promise came when Abraham was about a hundred years old, and Sarah about ninety, and a baby boy came into their tent. It was a day and an occasion of joy, and they called the baby Isaac, which means "laughter." He was the life, the light and the hope of his parents and of the world, for in him were all the families of the earth to be blessed.

The child grew into a fine specimen of splendid boyhood, and was the delight of parental eyes and the idol of parental hearts. But when he was in his teens a strange and trying thing occurred. God appeared to Abraham and said: "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Was ever another mortal man put to such a test? Could any other mortal man have endured the trial? Abraham must take this son of his old age and of his love, this child of promise and of hope, and slay him with his own hand, and burn him as an offering to God! "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth." But Abraham staggered not through unbelief, neither did he rebel against the command of his Lord and Master. So one morning, as I imagine, he was astir betimes, and, arousing Isaac from his sweet morning repose, and selecting two trusty servants to accompany him upon his melancholy journey, he stole away in the early twilight, without letting Sarah know the purpose of his going. If she had known that her husband was going to take her boy way off into the wilderness, and kill him and burn his body, there would have been some scenes in and about that tent that morning. Her motherly



instincts would have thrown her between her child and his father, and with tears in her eyes and emotion in her voice she would have plead for the life of her darling boy. "Abraham," she would have said, "are you going to tear my only child from my bosom, take him a three days' journey from home, and with your own hand slay and burn him? Abraham, you are beside yourself! Abraham, you must not do it!" So, to avoid such an additional trial, as I suppose, he quietly started upon his journey, leaving Sarah in blissful ignorance of the terrible task he had in hand.

What emotions, like the billows of a mighty ocean, must have surged to and fro in his heart as he pursued his mournful journey toward the fatal spot where he was to enact the greatest tragedy, save one, known to human history! Could he sleep at night? Or did the shadow of coming events drive nature's sweet restorer from his eyes, and leave him to spend the livelong night in fearful forebodings as to what was to take place in the land of Moriah? Or if a little fitful, troubled sleep was his portion, did it cause him horrible dreams of a struggling boy, of flowing blood, and of ascending smoke from the altar upon which he was to burn his child? But on he went, and some time during the third day's travel a range of mountains began to jut above the horizon, and by and by the range begins to break up into individual peaks, till one peak stands out to itself in bold relief; and God says, "Abraham, that's the place." Is not this enough to break the heart of even this hero of faith?

But Abraham braces himself for the final ordeal, and begins to make preparation for the climax of the

fearful experiences that he is undergoing. For the same reason that he stole away from home, as I imagine, he left the servants at the foot of the mountain while he took the lad and started up the hill to perform the finishing act of the trying series. If those faithful servants had been present when Abraham began to bind Isaac preparatory to slaying him, they would have interfered to prevent the tragedy. They would have said: "Abraham, our mistress will expect us to return her boy to her safe and sound, and we can not go back to her without him. Abraham, you must not do this." So, to avoid such a complication, he left the young men behind, while he and the boy went up the mountain alone. Is Abraham's heart serene and quiet? or does it palpitate with tumultuous palpitation? Let any loving father answer. With his own hands Abraham builds the altar and lays the wood thereupon, and now comes this heart-breaking question from the precious lad: "Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" This query must have gone like a knife to the very soul of this man of God as he stood there and gazed fondly upon his son whose life he, as he supposed, was about to take.

With quivering voice Abraham makes answer, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son," probably speaking wiser than he knew. And now comes the crucial test. Abraham binds his son, his son Isaac, and lays him upon the wood upon the altar, and stretches forth his hand, and takes the knife to slay his son! What a scene for men and angels to look upon! There stands a father over his son with knife in hand ready to bury it in some vital part of the child's body—a scene that is

calculated to challenge the skill of the most expert painter that ever wielded an artist's brush. And here the attitude of Isaac elicits attention. He was a stout, athletic boy, and could have broken away from his father and made his escape. But as soon as he discovers his father's purpose he falls into the scheme and willingly permits himself to be offered up as a burnt-offering. What a beautiful and appropriate type of Him who, some two thousand years later, and near the same spot, offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The knife is lifted, and gleams in the sunlight that is bathing the top of Mount Moriah in a sheen of glory, but before it has time to do its bloody work a voice is heard from on high, saying: "Abraham, Abraham, . . . lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Words are inadequate to describe the feelings of relief and gratitude that this message must have sent into the heart of faithful Abraham. In his wild delight he "lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." Here we have another striking type of the substitutionary sacrifice that Christ made for the children of men.

What was it that sustained Abraham throughout this dreadful ordeal? It was his hope which was supported by his faith in the promise of God that Isaac would live and have a posterity in which all the families of the earth should be blessed. His faith was a conviction that mastered him thoroughly, and never did he stagger through unbelief. It was his

fixed purpose to slay his son and burn his body, but he believed that God would raise him from the dead, and redeem the promises that He had made concerning him. From the time when the Lord commanded him to make a burnt-offering of Isaac, to the time when God stayed his hand, he was "accounting that God is able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back." It is not at all astonishing that this remarkable man is called in Scripture "the friend of God, and the father of the faithful." His conduct marked him for such distinction, and right nobly does he wear the honor as a crown of glory. Of all the heroes of earth, not one surpasses Abraham in point of fidelity to convictions of duty, and he will continue to stand at the head of his class till the end of time.

And what supported Abraham in his pilgrimage in this world, and gave him the victory over all his trials, is what sustains all the people of God in all ages as they trudge along the pathway of life, and encounter trials, difficulties and temptations that would be overwhelming but for the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Him whose they are, and whom they serve. This blessed heritage of the children of God is what sustained martyrs when their flesh was being roasted in the flames of diabolical persecution, and enabled them to sing songs of joy in the hour of the most excruciating pain. This legacy of that faith which is the foundation of hope is the richest and most precious possession that men and women can have in this world, and it should be guarded with the utmost care and vigilance. Allow no philosophy, no speculation, no criticism, to shake your faith in God or in His word. The Bible and

its promises have been the stay of men and women from time immemorial, giving them strength and consolation in life, and assurance and hope in death. They really inspire weary pilgrims to sing, "We are going up the valley toward the rising sun," instead of, "We are going down the valley toward the setting sun." Truly *"faith is the foundation of hope, a conviction of things not seen."*



# THREE KINGDOMS OF GOD

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet. 1: 10, 11.

**I**N the fullness of His grace and benevolence God has provided three kingdoms for the enjoyment and salvation of the children of men. These kingdoms may severally be denominated the kingdom of nature, the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, and each of these kingdoms, according to divine arrangement, is entered by means of a birth, and each has its own peculiar blessings and salvation, although some blessings are common to them all.

### THE KINGDOM OF NATURE.

Into this kingdom we enter when we are born into this world, and we then enter upon the enjoyment of its blessings and salvation which consist of the mercies and favors that come into our lives through the providence of God. In this kingdom we “live and move and have our being” in God, from whom comes every “good gift and every perfect boon” that we enjoy from day to day, and we find enough here to lay us under weighty obligation to take God into our lives and recognize Him in all our ways. It is

a very grave mistake to suppose that our only obligation to the heavenly Father grows out of the provision that He has made for our salvation from sin through the atoning blood of His Son. We may set this aside for the moment, and still there is enough left of His goodness to cause us to call upon our "souls and all that is within us" to praise and magnify His holy name. The stars that twinkle above us by night, and the sun that shines by day; the tiny dewdrop that glistens in the morning sun, and the placid lake upon whose bosom floats the graceful swan; the rippling brook that irrigates meadow and heath, and the rolling river that carries the world's commerce on its way to market; the tinted rose that delights the eye, and the ripening corn that satisfies hunger; the dry land that supplies seed to the sower and bread to the eater, and the mighty ocean that sends up its vapor to moisten the earth that it may bring forth its harvests; the strength of body that enables us to attend to the daily duties of life, and the intelligence of mind that qualifies us to properly direct the affairs of our several vocations; the clothing that we wear by day, and the couches upon which we rest our weary bodies by night—all these blessings, and a thousand others, call upon us to look up to God with praise and gratitude in our hearts, and adore Him for that kind providence that saves us from death day by day, and satisfies our every real need.

The salvation of this kingdom is a universal salvation, as is explicitly taught in the following Scripture: "For this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). Two salvations are here mentioned—one gen-

eral, and the other special. "All men" partake of the general salvation which belongs to the kingdom of nature, and from this viewpoint the doctrine of universal salvation is true and Scriptural, and in that fact we have great reason to rejoice, and praise our good Father above. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" concerning the goodness and philanthropy of God in His dealings with the children of earth, and he must be very thoughtless or very hard-hearted who can constantly partake of all of His benefits, and at the same time ignore and forget their gracious Giver. Anciently God laid in this complaint against His people: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:2, 3). One of the saddest features of our weak humanity is its liability to forget God, and disregard Him in the ongoings of our lives. Men might profitably make the ox and the ass their teachers in this regard. If beasts of burden show signs of dependence upon their benefactors, and manifest indications of gratitude to those who provide for their wants, should not man, who ranks himself far above animals that are governed by instinct, and who prides himself upon his intelligence, feel and exhibit gratitude to Him who so richly supplies him with every needed blessing? "How like a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child," some one has said, and the saying is based upon the experience of many parents. Men should be grateful to God for his fatherly care and protection, just as children should be grateful to their



earthly parents from the same point of view. The kingdom of nature rules over all, and all are partakers of its blessings and salvation.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GRACE.

The kingdom of nature makes no provision for the forgiveness of sin, and whoever violates a law of that kingdom must pay the penalty sooner or later, and there is no escape. A violation of the laws of health brings on sickness, and if you leap from a precipice you suffer the penalty of bruised muscles and broken bones. It is the kingdom of grace that provides for the remission of sins, and he who would enjoy the blessing of forgiveness, must seek it under the laws which pertain to that kingdom. In other words, a sinner who would secure the blessing of the remission of his sins, must enter into the gracious kingdom that provides for this important event. And this kingdom, too, is entered by means of a birth, according to the plain teaching of Jesus, the King of this kingdom. One night in Jerusalem a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus by name, came to the Saviour for a private conference upon things pertaining to the new kingdom that was approaching. He introduced the conversation in a very patronizing way, by saying: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do the signs that thou doest, except God be with him." From the point of view occupied by Nicodemus, this statement received from the Master a curious and perplexing response, in these terms: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is absolutely no logical connection between the language of Nicodemus and the Saviour's reply—

nothing in the former to call out the latter—and this makes it necessary that we study the case with scrutinizing care.

The last two verses of the preceding chapter contain the following language: "But Jesus did not trust himself to them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." Evidently this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus was recorded just where it is as an illustration of the startling declaration just quoted. The Master knew what was in the mind of Nicodemus, and he replied to that rather than the statement he made in words. Nicodemus supposed that Jesus was going to lead a great social, moral and political revolution, and set up a kingdom for himself over which he would rule as king, and, being a shrewd politician, he wanted to take time by the forelock, and curry favor with the coming king in advance. He wanted place and position in the new kingdom, and he was basing his expectations upon his natural and Jewish birth. He supposed that he would be entitled to citizenship in that kingdom because he was born of Jewish parents. It was to that thought that the Teacher addressed his reply, and not to the words that fell from the lips of his interviewer. In effect he said, Nicodemus, don't you come knocking at the door of my kingdom, expecting admission into it because of your fleshly birth, for that will avail you nothing here. Although you are a child of Abraham by virtue of your Jewish birth, that fact gives you no passport into the kingdom which I came into the world to establish. So far from it, you must be born anew—born over.

This statement filled Nicodemus with astonishment, inasmuch as his mind was wholly occupied with a birth of flesh and blood, and he demanded to know how this could possibly be. In response to this very natural inquiry the Saviour said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This emphatic and important statement should receive the most careful attention at the hands of the student of the word of God, who wants to know the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and the investigation should be conducted according to the generally recognized rules governing the interpretation of human speech. One of the most important of these rules is that words are to be taken in their generally accepted meaning, and such a meaning of a word is not to be withheld in a given instance of its use, except for the most cogent reasons. Blackstone says: "The words of a law are generally to be understood in their usual and most known signification, not so much regarding the propriety of grammar, as their general and popular use." Greenleaf deposes thus: "The terms of every written document are to be understood in their plain, ordinary and popular use." Thomas Hartwell Horne testifies as follows: "The received signification of a word is to be retained, unless weighty and necessary reasons require that it should be abandoned or neglected." Bishop Middleton lays down the following rule: "It is better to understand phrases in their obvious import, even though we should be compelled to leave the proof of their fitness to more fortunate inquiry. When once we begin to withhold from words their ordinary and natural signification, we must not complain if infidels charge

our religion with mysticism, or its expositors with fraud." Dr. Bloomfield gives us the following sensible principle of interpretation: "Words and phrases must not be taken in some *recondite* sense which men of learning and ingenuity, in support of an hypothesis, may devise; but in the ordinary sense of the words, wherein the persons addressed, whether by preaching or writing, would be likely to understand them." These rules come from past masters in the art of the interpretation of language, two of whom (the first and second) are brilliant lights in the legal profession. If these rules are adhered to, one is not apt to go far wrong in one's conclusion as to the meaning of a given word.

With these guiding principles before us, let us take up for inspection the word "water" in the passage last quoted. Perhaps no word known to human speech is more commonly used than this term, and there is never any doubt as to its meaning in common parlance. No one needs the aid of a dictionary to find out the meaning of this word. Now, when the Saviour used it in the passage that we are considering, what did He mean by it? There is no indication whatever that He attached to it a meaning with which the people were unacquainted, and if we are to take words "in their usual and most known signification," as Blackstone says, and not "in some *recondite* sense which men of learning and ingenuity, in support of an hypothesis, may devise," as Bloomfield says, there can be no doubt that the Master meant the fluid that is commonly meant when the word "water" is used, when He said to Nicodemus: "Except one be born of *water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This position is rendered doubly strong



when it is remembered that the language at present under consideration is itself explanation. It is particularly important that the words used in explaining something be taken in their usual and most known signification, otherwise the explanation fails to explain. If the Lord did not mean water when He said water in explanation of what He had previously said, no one knows or can know what He did mean, and we are left at sea without chart or compass with respect to one of the most important subjects of divine revelation; namely, the new birth. The Master places water between a sinner and the kingdom of God, and in entering into this kingdom the sinner must make some use of water, or, in other words, he must pass through water.

The next step in our investigation is to discover what relation water sustains to the kingdom of God by divine appointment, or ascertain where the two come in contact with each other, and it takes but little research to find out that they meet in Christian baptism, and nowhere else. It is wholly unnecessary to dwell upon this point, for it is perfectly obvious, and there is no diversity of opinion about it. From these principles the conclusion is inevitable that to be born of water is to be baptized, and in regard to this there is remarkable agreement among Biblical expositors. A few examples will suffice upon this point: "That the term *hudatos* [water] must be understood of *baptism*, is quite plain from Tit. 3:5, and other passages" (Bloomfield). "By *water* here is evidently signified *baptism*" (Barnes). "There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the word, that *to be born of water* refers to the token or outward sign of baptism—*to be born of the Spirit*,

to the thing signified, or inward grace of the Holy Spirit. All attempts to get rid of *these two plain facts* have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped" (Dean Alford). "There is not any one Christian writer of any antiquity in any language but what understands it [born of water] of baptism. And if it be not so understood, it is difficult to give an account how a person is born of water, any more than born of wood" (Wall). From the standpoint of the principles governing the interpretation of language, and from that of scholarly exegesis, "born of water" in John 3:5 means baptism, and that question may be regarded as closed.

This striking figure of speech is based upon the well-known and well-understood fact of the natural birth, and, like the fact that underlies it, the new birth, or regeneration, consists of two essential parts; namely, the begetting and the coming forth. In the begetting the Holy Spirit is the active agent, and the word of God, or the gospel, is the instrumentality through which the begetting is accomplished, or the truth of the gospel is the seed which, being deposited in the human mind, results in the begetting. And this brings us to an examination of the following important declaration: "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). This passage has been a field of battle among theologians for a long time, and various and conflicting theories have been propounded in efforts to explain it. This conflict of exegetical opinion has largely resulted from faulty translation of two or three words



in the statement. The American Standard Edition of the Revised Version of the New Testament contains the following alternate rendering in the margin: "The Spirit breatheth;" and that this is the correct rendering there can be no doubt on the part of any careful student of the Divine Word. The Greek word for spirit (*pneuma*) occurs five times in this immediate connection, and four times it is rendered "spirit" in all translations, so far as I know, while in this single instance it is rendered "wind." If the word is correctly rendered "wind" in this one instance, it should be so rendered in the other four, and if it is correctly rendered "spirit" in the four cases, it should be so rendered in the remaining one. Consistency is a jewel even in translating the Scriptures.

Furthermore, the word occurs about 384 times in the Greek New Testament, and it is uniformly rendered "spirit" throughout, with the exception of the instance now under consideration, and one other case found in Heb. 1:7, where we have the following rendering in the American Revised Version: "Who maketh his angels *winds*." This is in a passage quoted from the Greek Septuagint, where the word is frequently used for the wind, but it is never so used in the New Testament. Moreover, the translation now under examination recognizes the wind as having both voice and volition, and we know that it has neither. "The wind bloweth where it *will*." This represents the wind as choosing its own courses, whereas we know that the wind has no option in the matter, but is governed by the inexorable laws of the material world. "And thou hearest the voice thereof." Voice is not predicated of the wind, except by

poetic license, and the passage before us is not poetry. The wind makes a sound, but does not utter a voice. In Acts 2:2 it is said, "And suddenly there came from heaven a *sound* as of a rushing mighty *wind*," the proper word (*eechos*) for sound being used, and not *phonee*, which means voice. The word "voice" (*phonee*) occurs about 128 times in the New Testament, and it always indicates the use of the organs of speech, and never the sound of wind. "The Spirit breatheth" (marginal rendering). This same word occurs in Acts 9:1, which says, "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," etc. The idea is that Saul uttered threatening and slaughter in intelligent speech, such as could be understood by his fellow men. These criticisms, which I have made as brief and simple as possible, justify the following translation: "The Spirit breathes [speaks] where he will, and thou hearest his voice. . . . so is every one begotten of the Spirit." *Gennao* means either to beget or to bring forth, and the subject-matter in this case indicates that it should be taken in the former sense. The Spirit speaks or breathes forth the gospel, and one hears or reads what He says, and in this way one is begotten of the Spirit. In 1 John 5:1 the writer says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God," and in his letter to the Romans Paul tells us, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," and this all tallies most beautifully with the teaching that we find in the third chapter of John. One who through the inspired word of God believes that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God, and it only remains for him to be brought forth or be born anew, and this is con-

summed through water in baptism. This relieves the new birth or regeneration of all mysticism, and lifts it to the high plane of common sense and intelligence.

This birth inducts a person into the kingdom of God, where he enters upon the enjoyment of the blessings of that kingdom, the first of which is the forgiveness of sin. In presenting this kingdom with its salvation to the citizens of the kingdom of nature, God proposes to increase their blessings. In their induction into the kingdom of grace they lose no blessing that belonged to them as citizens of the kingdom of nature. "Religion never was designed to make our pleasure less." In coming into this new kingdom God does not ask us to leave behind any blessing that is from Him. He only calls upon us to forsake those things that are from the evil one, and injurious to the children of men. We may bring with us our hands and feet, our hearts and brains, our muscles and bones, our gold and silver, our stocks and bonds, our flocks and herds, our houses and farms—in a word, every good thing that we possess in the kingdom of nature. God wants us to use all of our possessions for the promotion of the kingdom of grace, and the advancement of its interests in the world. This kingdom is a sieve to separate the wheat from the chaff, and conserve the former and destroy the latter, thus setting apart the twice-born man to the service of God in a pious walk and godly conversation. It is a call to the most beautiful and useful life that is possible here on earth, while at the same time it presents the highest attainable plane of human activity. It is heaven's lure to induce men and women to "cease to do evil and learn to do

well," and he is a wise person who yields to the drawings of the love of God and enters upon the new and better life in which there is "joy unspeakable," and that is "full of glory."

It has just been said that the first blessing that comes to one who is born into the kingdom of grace is the forgiveness of past sins, which is an item of the salvation that is peculiar to this kingdom, and does not belong to the kingdom of nature. The Saviour's teaching in regard to the new birth may be expressed in terms of the Great Commission, which says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This is the proclamation that the messenger of the cross is enjoined to make to "the whole creation" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who puts baptism between a believing sinner and salvation, as He puts water between men and the kingdom of God. This teaching is in evidence throughout the New Testament, to a few examples of which I desire to call attention. After commissioning the apostles to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation," the Master told them to remain in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high, and under this injunction they tarried in the designated city during the ten days preceding the first Pentecost after the Lord arose from the dead. On that memorable day they were endued with the power for which they were to wait, and began their gospel ministry by preaching Jesus and the resurrection, and convicting many of their hearers of sin, who said: "Brethren, what shall we do?" In response to this earnest and vital inquiry the apostle Peter made answer as follows: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto



the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Thus began the administration of the law of the kingdom of grace which makes provision for the forgiveness of sin and the enjoyment of salvation therefrom. The apostle's answer to the question of these convicted and earnest inquirers is clear and explicit, so that the wayfaring man, though unlearned, may not err with respect to the way of life and salvation. The inquirers were already believers, made such by the preaching of the word of Christ by which faith comes, and hence they were not told to believe. One of the many beauties of the gospel is that it begins with a man just where it finds him, and leads him on in the way of duty to the blessing contemplated in the divine economy of grace.

A fair and legitimate interpretation of the language just quoted from Peter leaves no room for doubt as to its meaning. Indeed, the language needs no interpretation, for its meaning floats upon its surface, so that he who runs may understand it. The people were told to "repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins," or that their sins might be blotted out, and that is about as plain as language can make a thing. But almost as a work of supererogation I will introduce in this connection what some of the world's best scholars and critics have said as to the meaning of the important passage now before us. The pivotal word in the passage, the word upon which the meaning of the passage principally turns, is the Greek term *eis*, which is rendered "unto" in the Revised Version of the Scriptures: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto [*eis*]

the remission of your sins." "Unto the remission of your sins" translates the Greek phrase *eis aphasis hamartioon humoon*, which it is necessary to know in order to understand the quotations that I am about to make.

Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon," which is the standard for New Testament Greek, says: "*Eis aphasis hamartioon*, to obtain the forgiveness of sin, Acts 2:38."

Meyer's Commentary easily heads the list of critical commentaries on the New Testament, and that great work, commenting on Acts 2:38, says: "What a definite and complete answer and promise of salvation! . . . *Eis* denotes the *object* of the baptism, which is the remission of the guilt contracted in the state before repentance."

Prof. Horatio B. Hackett was a member of the Baptist Church, and a member of the American Committee on the Revision of the Scriptures. In his "Commentary on Acts" he says: "*Eis aphasis hamartioon*, in order to the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28; Luke 3:3), we connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other."

Perhaps the Presbyterian Church in America never produced a greater scholar and critic than was Albert Barnes, as all know who are acquainted with his monumental work entitled "Barnes' Notes." In a letter to me, dated August 18, 1870, that distinguished commentator said: "But it seems to me that the word *eis*, in the passage referred to (Acts 2:38), relates to the *entire previous sentence*. 'Repent, and be bap-



tized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ'—*eis—unto*, or *in order to*, or *with reference to*—'the remission of sins,' etc. That is, the repentance and baptism *both* have reference to the remission of sins; or the entire process, so to speak, in the divine arrangement for the remission of sins, *embraces* this, or this is the *complete* process appointed by God *in connection with* the pardon of sin."

Perhaps the Baptist Church never produced a greater scholar and critic than was Prof. J. R. Boise, Ph.D., LL.D., of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary. In a letter to me, dated May 8, 1884, this distinguished scholar says: "In Acts 2:38, we find *repentance, baptism in faith* (leading *into the remission of sins*). 'In the name of Jesus Christ' can only mean *faith* in Him; and so it is understood by all the best commentators. *Eis aphen*, etc., belongs with the two verbs preceding. We have, then, *repentance, baptism in faith, the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit*, all in regular sequence."

In a letter to R. T. Mathews in 1876, Professor Harkness, of Brown University, a Baptist institution, said: "In my opinion, *eis*, in Acts 2:38, denotes *purpose*, and may be rendered 'in order to,' or 'for the purpose of receiving,' or, as in our English version, 'for.' *Eis aphen hamartioon* suggests the motive or object contemplated in the action of the two preceding verbs."

This list might be extended to include such expert exegetes as Professor Tyler, of Amherst College, Mass.; Professor Packard, of Yale University; Professor Cameron, of Princeton College; Professor Foster, of Colby University; Professor Flagg, of Cornell University; Professor Proctor, of Dartmouth

College, and many others, but it is entirely unnecessary. As a matter of scholarship and critical exegesis, the question may be regarded as closed. Through baptism a penitent believer enters the kingdom of grace and receives the remission of his past sins, and is saved from their guilt and condemnation, and is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GLORY.

To this new creature God says, I am not done blessing you yet, and places before him the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and tells him how to gain admittance therein, in the following language: "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Here the citizens of the kingdom of grace, those who have been born anew, have placed before them the kingdom of glory, the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, and are instructed as to the path that leads into that kingdom.

In effect God says to those who "have escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust," I have something more and better for you yet, unto which you may attain if you "give diligence to make your calling and election sure"; and then He lays down the program by which they may enter into the eternal kingdom of glory. This program contains plans and specifications for the building up of such a character as, under God through Jesus Christ, will fit one for the enjoyment of the citizenship of that kingdom. The program begins with faith, for only believers are contemplated as citizens of the kingdom of grace. The gospel is "out of faith into faith" (*ek pisteos eis pistin*)—Rom. 1:17. The Christian life begins in faith, advances through faith, and is perfected by faith. It is bounded on every side by faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." On this foundation the superstructure is erected, and the first stone laid thereupon is courage—courage to "dare to do right," and to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." Then comes knowledge, which is a very important item in one's equipment to "fight the good fight of faith." This suggests the necessity of reading the word of God, for that is the main source of the knowledge that every soldier of the cross needs in the battles of life. One must know the Bible and understand how to use it, in order to come off a conqueror over the Christian's enemies. We must "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls."

Next comes temperance, which is one of the most precious and valuable traits in Christian character. It means self-control in all things, and it brings one

under the benediction which says: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." It prevents one from becoming a slave to habit, and delivers one from the tyranny of an evil custom. It prompts one to be moderate in the use of those things that are advantageous and helpful in life, and to wholly abstain from those things that are only hurtful to their users. After this comes patience, which, so to speak, is the balance-wheel in the machinery of the Christian's make-up, and without which he is liable to become the plaything of passion. It is needed in all departments of life—in the family, in the schoolroom, in the church, in business, in social relationships, etc. Next to this stands godliness, or likeness to God. The service and worship of God constantly tend to clothe one in the characteristics of the Father of our spirits, and impress upon one the divine image, and a Christian should strive all the time to become more and more like God in life and character. God is the model by which he should aim to direct his conduct and shape the issues of his life. Then succeeds brotherly kindness, or love of the brethren, and this is really the test of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," said the great Teacher, and this teaching is reinforced by John, the apostle of love, who says, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him," and the same writer also says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." And now comes the grand climax in universal love—the love of God and man; and in this Christian character is



perfected, and one stands forth in the likeness of the blessed God who "so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." What a glorious thing the Christian life is! and what splendid fruit it brings forth!

It is in this way—that is, by building these several qualities into one's character—that we attain to the rich "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and certainly this appeals to the very best that is in a human being. The gospel promises men the very best things that belong to this world, and eternal life in the world to come; and certainly a stronger lure to action could not be presented to the children of men. Instinctively we cling to life and shun death, and for the former we are willing to give up everything else. The kingdom of glory is called an eternal kingdom in contrast with the kingdoms of this world, which come to naught. Human history is crowded with the wrecks of kingdoms, empires, thrones and dominions, and every page of it bears a reminder that all things earthly must come to an end. How refreshing and comforting, then, the assurance that there is an attainable kingdom that shall last for ever and ever! Even the kingdom of heaven in this world is continually changing its citizenship on account of death. One generation succeeds another, for we have no abiding-place here that continues. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching"—marching on to the tomb; and, shrink from it as we may, death lies in wait for us, and sooner or later will seize us and drag us one by one down into his dark dominion.

But on the other side stands the eternal kingdom, where joy reigns forever more, and where there is life everlasting. No more tears, no more breaking hearts, no more farewells!

“O blessed day, O glorious hope,  
My soul rejoices at the thought  
That in that happy, holy land  
We'll take no more the parting hand.”

And here comes to view the third birth, for this eternal kingdom, in its fullness and completeness, is entered by means of a birth from the grave. Jesus was the firstborn from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that sleep in the cold and silent grave, and His resurrection stands as a pledge of the resurrection of those who sleep in Him. That will be a glorious day when, at the coming of Christ, those that are His shall rise from the dead with bodies fashioned according to His glorious body, and enter with Him into His eternal kingdom to go out no more for ever. Then lift up your head, weary pilgrim, and rejoice in the light that betokens the breaking of an eternal day of bliss and glory, when the true immortelles shall bloom never to fade. Amen and amen!



# THE HOLY SPIRIT

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.”—John 16: 7-14.

THE work of the Holy Spirit in the matter of human redemption has always been a question of deep and vital interest in Christian theology, and it has given rise to much and sometimes to wild speculation, and considerable fanaticism. This sermon is to be a calm, but earnest, study of this important subject in the light of the teaching of the inspired Scriptures, for this is the source of all knowledge with respect to it. All we know or can know about the Spirit of God we must learn from the revelation of divine truth that He has given us, and whenever we leave that we enter the field of unbridled specula-

tion, and are liable to be led into the most grotesque and fanciful conjecture and even superstition. In this field of thought caution is necessary.

The first query that naturally and logically presents itself for consideration in this investigation is, "What is the Holy Spirit?" and, as has just been indicated, the answer to this question must come from the word of God. The language of our text clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person. The personal pronouns "he," "him" and "himself" are applied to Him, and this of itself clearly indicates personality, and it is said of Him that He speaks, and this necessarily implies that He thinks. In John 3:8 it is said, when the passage is correctly translated, that the "Spirit breathes where he will." This shows that this thinking speaker has a will by which He is governed, and here we find another characteristic of personality. The Holy Spirit, then, is a thinking, speaking, willing, self-determining person, as much so as either God or Christ, and it is of great importance that this truth be borne in mind throughout this discussion. It is in place to remark here that a person, whether divine or human, must be somewhere in particular, and not simply everywhere in general. Popular theology makes God and Christ and the Holy Spirit one and the same person, God being one manifestation of that person, Christ another manifestation of that same person, and the Holy Spirit still another manifestation of that same person, and along with this goes the speculative doctrine of "the divine immanence," whatever that may be. The best I can get out of it is that this divine person is in everything everywhere, but nowhere in particular—which is a glaring paradox, for no person, either

divine or human, can be at more than one place at the same time.

Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," and this other Comforter is declared to be "the Spirit of truth," or the Holy Spirit. Here we have three separate and distinct persons, as clearly differentiated from each other as any other three persons in the universe of God. Jesus (one person) was to pray God (another person), and He would send the Spirit (a third person). Translated in terms of popular theology, it would run about thus: "I [one manifestation of the Divine Being] will pray God [a second manifestation of the Divine Being], and he will send the Spirit [a third manifestation of the Divine Being]." It is a great pity that the scheme of redemption has to be burdened with such a handicap as this, but it is an absurdity for which divine revelation is not responsible. It is to be charged up to human speculation. Let it be remembered that the Holy Spirit is a person, and as such is one and indivisible, must have local habitation, and can be at but one place at the same time.

The next question that presents itself for consideration is, "What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and salvation of men?" and to this question we have a full and definite answer in the language of the text.

He was to convict, or convince, the world of sin because it believed not on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. From this we discover that it is a sin, a grievous sin, not to believe on Him whom God sent into the world to save men from their sins, and bring them to eternal glory. The Master said, "He

that disbelieveth shall be condemned," and that this is a just sentence there can be no reasonable doubt. To refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is, in view of the overwhelming evidence that God has furnished in support of the proposition that Jesus of Nazareth is His Son, is to manifest the greatest perversity and stubbornness of the will, and it plainly indicates that the heart is in a state of rebellion against God. The Master said: "If any man willet to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17). The human will should always be in a state of submissiveness to the divine will, constantly ready to believe what God says and do what He commands, and no mind that is in that condition can refuse to believe the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. Of this great sin the Holy Spirit was to convict, or convince, the world.

The Holy Spirit was also to convict the world of righteousness; not its own righteousness, of course, but of the righteousness of Christ. The Lord was accused and, in a way, convicted of sin in both an ecclesiastical and a civil court, and upon that conviction He was condemned to the death of the cross. But He appealed His case to the highest court in the universe, the court of high heaven, and in that court the lower courts were reversed, and He was vindicated and declared to be righteous in all His claims. This the Holy Spirit was to make known to the world, and thus convict it of the righteousness of Jesus, and of its own sin in rejecting Him and having Him put to death. A few weeks after He was crucified He ascended into heaven, where He was before He came into this world, and as He ascended a cloud

received Him out of the sight of the disciples who stood gazing after Him, and they knew not what was done with or to Him after that, till the Holy Spirit revealed it to them. Speaking of the Spirit whom He would send, the Lord said, "He will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father," and ten days after He went to the Father to have his case reheard before the infallible court of final resort, the Holy Spirit was sent down to make the decision of that court known to the children of men. In announcing that decision on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit said, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified," and when that announcement was made the disciples learned what became of Jesus when He passed out of their sight in His upward flight. This is the explanation of the passage which says: "And no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). Had not the Holy Spirit proclaimed on the day of Pentecost that God made Jesus Lord, no man could ever have said that He is Lord.

And the Holy Spirit was to convict the world "of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." The "prince of this world" is most likely identical with the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience"; that is, the devil. When he rebelled against God, and started a revolt in heaven, God judged him, condemned him, and expelled him from the courts of glory; and as He judged him, so will He judge his followers. God has shown Himself to be the supreme Autocrat of the universe, and as He has judged and condemned Satan, so will He judge and condemn



the children of disobedience in whom He works; and the only way to escape such judgment and condemnation is to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." The Holy Spirit has made this perfectly clear, and men should give heed to His teaching, forsake their sins, and obey God, for Jesus Christ became the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey him (Heb. 5:9).

And here this question emerges: How does the Holy Spirit accomplish the work assigned Him by the Saviour as specified in our text? And here again the text gives a full and explicit answer: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." This shows that the Spirit was to do His work by revealing truth to the world, and hence He is called "the Spirit of truth," and the truth was to be spoken. "For he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." The Spirit was to come as a teacher, instructing men in things pertaining to the will of God, and thus convicting them of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and without this teaching it is impossible for one to come to God for salvation and eternal life, as the following Scripture plainly indicates: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44, 45). A man must both hear and learn from the Father to be saved. Some hear, but do not learn because they do not hear in a teachable state of mind. They hear



with indifference or in a hostile state of mind, and hence fail to learn the truth that makes men free and brings them into the liberty of the sons of God. There are those who read the Bible as adverse critics, for the purpose of picking flaws in it, and they are in no condition to "receive with meekness the ingrafted word of God which is able to save their souls." We are admonished to "take heed *how*" we hear, for, unless we hear in the proper spirit and intent, the hearing will profit us nothing. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," indicates the proper attitude of mind in which a man must hear in order to be benefited by what he hears.

To one who hears the word of God with a desire to understand it, and with the intention of walking in the way it points out, the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and with such an individual it never fails. He who can not be moved by the story of Jesus and His love, to accept salvation on the terms of the gospel, is beyond the reach of the moral means that God has ordained for the salvation of men, and we have no intimation that the good Lord will bring other means to bear for the salvation of such. The word of God is said to be "living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12), and the heart that this "sword of the Spirit" can not pierce must be as hard as adamant—made so by the love of sin. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe," declares

the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:21), and the same apostle in the same connection says: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." From this language we learn that the preaching of Christ crucified is both the power of God and the wisdom of God in the matter of human redemption, and to look beyond this, or to depend upon anything aside from this, for salvation, is to rely upon a broken reed. But let us hear the great apostle once more upon this vital theme: "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved [being saved] it is the power of God." These passages, with many others that might be quoted, make it abundantly evident that the Holy Spirit does His work of converting and saving men through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, and this gives point and meaning to the commission that says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

So far we have been considering the work of the Holy Spirit from the standpoint of abstract teaching, and from this point of view there seems to be no room for doubt or misunderstanding. But it will be interesting and instructive to examine that work as it is concentered in the ministry of the apostles and primitive evangelists of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can get a fairly good idea of a self-binding reaper from literature and verbal description, but if you go into the field where it is at work, and see it in operation, you can thereby get a better idea of that implement of industry in a much shorter time. And so it is with

regard to the work of the Holy Spirit, and to make certainty doubly sure let us go into the fields where men of God worked under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, and see how He did His work, for as He did His work then, so He does His work now. And it is not only appropriate, but important, that we begin at the beginning, and trace the matter through the ministry of divinely directed men.

This program takes us to the day of Pentecost when the Spirit commenced His work, that we may study it in the light of the first full gospel sermon that was ever preached. Just before the Saviour left His apostles He told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high, and under these instructions they remained in the city till Pentecost, when they received the promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit by which they were qualified to begin the work the Spirit was to do through them. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, they "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Peter, as the chief speaker, informed the multitude in his presence that what they saw and heard was the fulfillment of a prophecy made by Joel, and then proceeded to give a brief history of Jesus of Nazareth, showing that He was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and closing his argument with this astounding declaration: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." This thrust of the sword of the Spirit found its mark, for "when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart," thus furnishing a verification of the fact that the word of God is "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,

piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." With tremendous power the Holy Spirit is performing His mission of convicting the world of sin, and, under conviction produced by the wonderful speech made by the Spirit through Peter, people in large numbers cried out in deepest earnestness: "Brethren, what shall we do?" How admirably this concrete example of the Spirit's method of convicting men of sin corresponds with the abstract teaching of Scripture heretofore set forth! In this example we see the Spirit at work, and have an ocular demonstration of His method of operation.

Not long after the event just spoken of, there was another transaction of a similar nature, which took place at the "door of the temple which is called Beautiful." As Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, they encountered a lame man whom, in the name of Jesus, they healed. This wonderful miracle brought together a multitude of people in Solomon's porch, whom Peter addressed in his second recorded sermon, and a great sermon it was. He lifted up Jesus Christ in their presence. He charged upon those who heard him that they had "denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of life," following this charge with the declaration that God had raised Jesus, whose crucifixion they had procured, from the dead, in proof of which he presented the miracle that they had just witnessed. Again the arrow went home, for "many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand"—another sweeping victory for the gospel which is the power of God unto

salvation. In view of the triumphs of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, it is not wonderful that Paul, in that solemn charge that he gave his son Timothy, said: "Preach the word." He knew the wonderful power of the word of the truth of the gospel, and wanted Timothy, as well as all other preachers, to understand that his mission was to preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ, and not be corrupted from its simplicity. The task of the true gospel preacher is a very easy and simple one, and he should never allow himself to be swerved therefrom by the philosophies and speculations of men.

Let us now examine the work of the Holy Spirit in Samaria. In the dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem, that followed the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip went down to the city just mentioned, and proclaimed unto the people the Christ. This was the burden of the preaching of men of God during the apostolic age. Paul's experience in Athens taught him to know nothing in his preaching but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In Samaria "multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip," and "when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Thus the gospel went on, from conquering to conquer, as it always does when it is faithfully preached without any admixture of vain philosophy or speculation of men. In connection with the work of the Spirit among the multitudes in Samaria, let us now examine the case of the conversion of a single man on a public highway. When Philip was in the midst of his work in the populous city of Samaria, he received a special message from



God through an angel, to the effect that he should leave the city and "go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza." From the human point of view this was strange procedure. Why should Philip stop his successful work in the populous city of Samaria, where people were accepting Christ in large numbers, and go into a region where but few hearers were to be found? This is the question that rationalism would have asked, and in view of which it would have hesitated; but Philip was a man of faith, and such a man never stops to argue with a command of God, and hence he at once "arose and went." When he struck the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza he discovered a chariot moving along toward Gaza, in which the treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, was riding; and just at this juncture the Holy Spirit appeared upon the scene and said to Philip: "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." From this the man of God began to understand the message he received in Samaria. He was to preach the gospel to that Ethiopian, that he might believe and be saved.

But rationalism, which is always ready to find fault with the ways of God, would have propounded this query: Why did not the angel go to that one man in that southern country to convert and save him, and allow Philip to continue his successful work in Samaria? The answer to this question is that that was not God's way of converting and saving men. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and no angel was ever commissioned to preach the gospel. We have this "treasure in earthen vessels," and men are to carry it to the lost children of earth, and in His wisdom God made choice of Philip to carry the

glad tidings to this Ethiopian traveler. It is worthy of special remark that when the Holy Spirit appeared in the transaction, He came as a speaker having something to say, and He said it to the preacher, and not to the man to be converted and saved. A certain brand of theology would say, Why did not the Spirit go to the man that was to be saved, and do the work that was necessary for his conversion? and again the answer is, That was not God's way of converting men. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," and it also pleased God that the preaching should be done by His people on earth. It is said that Philip, under this further instruction from the Holy Spirit, "ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet." This man, in preparing for his long journey to Jerusalem to worship, provided himself with the word of God, and as he rode along in his chariot he was reading that beautiful and pathetic poetical description of the suffering and death of our Saviour contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. When Philip overtook him and discovered that he was reading the Scriptures he said to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?"—rather a bold question for an humble footman to address to such a dignitary as was this Ethiopian officer of state. But he was a man of a "good and honest heart," and was in search of the truth, and was willing to receive light from any source; so he invited the preacher "to come up and sit with him." Accepting the invitation, the man of God seated himself in the chariot by the side of this distinguished traveler, and proceeded to "preach to him Jesus."

And what a sermon that must have been! No doubt the preacher went back to the time when Jesus

was with God as the Word, clothed in all the glory that belongs to the throne of the almighty One, and told how He emptied Himself of all the riches of this sublime environment, and came down into this sin-burdened world of ours to be a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; how He went about on earth doing good and blessing suffering humanity; how He was despised and rejected of men; how He was betrayed by one who had been numbered among His closest disciples; how He was finally crucified for the sins of the world; how He was buried and rose again from the dead; how He ascended up on high and was coronated in the midst of the heavens as King of kings and Lord of lords, and how He ever lives to make intercession for His people. Can you imagine with what interest the Ethiopian listened to this wonderful story of Jesus and His love? and how it dawned upon his mind that the prophecy he had been reading was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, of whom this stranger was telling him? No doubt the thrilling story quickened the blood in its courses through his veins, and caused him to experience sensations that were heavenly and indescribable. Presently they "came unto a certain water," and the eunuch looked upon it with an interest that no body of water had ever generated in his soul before, and with delight he exclaimed: "Behold, water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Where and how did this man get the idea that it was his duty and privilege to be baptized? It is simply said that Philip "preached unto him Jesus," and from this preaching he learned his duty to obey Jesus in the ordinance of baptism. This clearly implies that preaching Jesus includes preaching baptism. Commenting on this inter-

esting case of conversion, Isaac Taylor Hinton, a Baptist, in his "History of Baptism," makes these timely remarks: "Clearly, the 'whole counsel of God' has not been preached, however fervently repentance and faith may have been urged, if the sinner is left uninformed of his immediate duty as soon as he does truly believe; and it is time that the primitive practice of preaching baptism, as constantly and as simply as repentance and faith, was revived amongst all who know the truth. . . . I know that many will cry out, 'Sectarian spirit!' All that I have to reply is, Brethren, there are my instructions, here is my model. Both are divine; whether it be better to obey or please God or men, judge ye." Well and judiciously said, and these wise sentences are commended to the careful and serious attention of those who are constantly crying out against "preaching baptism."

In answer to the eunuch's question Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest," and in reply to this the Ethiopian said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon this confession the chariot was stopped, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and the former baptized the latter, and then "they came up out of the water." From these facts and circumstances it is perfectly obvious what baptism was in those days. The eunuch continued his journey rejoicing in the new hope that the Spirit through the gospel had planted in his heart, and the Spirit reappears and directs Philip to other fields of labor. Thus it is plain to be seen how the Holy Spirit did His work in the apostolic age, and as He did it then, so He does it now, for we have the same gospel that He caused to be preached then, and it is as powerful

now as it was then. "Preach the word!" Lest some one might think that I am not aware that the Revised Version omits the thirty-seventh verse of the eighth chapter of Acts, which includes the eunuch's confession, I will state that I am aware of that fact, and yet I am perfectly satisfied that the verse was originally there, and that it was omitted from a few early manuscripts by an oversight in copyists, as frequently happens in copying. It is manifest that something belongs where this thirty-seventh verse is, and it would be difficult to think of anything more appropriate for that place than what the Common Version puts there. Among the external evidences of the genuineness of the passage is the fact that Irenæus quotes it, and he lived about two hundred years earlier than the date of the oldest Greek manuscript known at the present time. That shows that this ancient writer had a copy of the New Testament which contained this verse. I quote it as inspired Scripture without the least hesitation.

When Paul and Barnabas visited Iconium, it is said that "they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." Those people believed as a result of hearing Paul and Barnabas speaking the word of God, and this accords precisely with Paul's statement that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." When Paul left Athens and went to Corinth, where he determined to know nothing in his preaching but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, it is said that "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." It has now been shown, as I believe, to a demonstration, that the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work of convincing or



convicting men of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, by addressing to them words of teaching whereby they see themselves to be sinners in the sight of God, and come to know that they are under the guilt and condemnation of sin, and in need of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Men are responsible moral agents, and God deals with them as such by bringing to bear upon their understanding reasonable motives to induce them to forsake their sins and accept the offers of mercy that are contained in the gospel of His grace. Men are reasonable beings, and hence God says to them, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:18-20). Thus we find in the Holy Scriptures line upon line and precept upon precept showing that in conversion the Spirit of God works through the gospel, and not by direct impact upon the sinner's heart. This is so plain that the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err in regard to it.

Hitherto our examination has had reference to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the unregenerate, and it now remains to study the teaching of the word of God in regard to the relation of the Spirit to Christian people; and here it is expedient to consider some Scripture that I am quite sure has been pretty generally misinterpreted and misapplied. In the fourteenth chapter of John we read as follows: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give

you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you." This is commonly construed as a general promise made to all Christian people for all coming time, but I think that a careful study of the passage in the light of its context will show that this construction is erroneous. Jesus had just told His apostles that He was soon to leave them and go to the Father, and this filled their hearts with profound sadness, and He sought to cheer them by promising to send them another Comforter, who would not leave them as He was going to do, but would abide with them "for ever," or as long as they lived. "For ever" simply covers the whole period of time involved in the subject under consideration. Concerning servants the law of Moses provided that under certain circumstances the master should "take an awl, and thrust it through his [the servant's] ear, and he shall be thy servant for ever"; that is, as long as both servant and master lived. The law ordained that certain parts of an animal offered in sacrifice should belong to the priest "as a due for ever," or as long as that dispensation lasted. In returning to Philemon his runaway slave Onesimus, Paul said, "For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever," or as long as both Philemon and Onesimus lived. Passages almost without number might be quoted to show that the meaning of "for ever" is as I have said. While the Master was to leave the apostles, the other "Comforter," the Holy Spirit, would remain

with them "for ever," or throughout their entire lifetime.

But it is said in the Scriptures that the Spirit of God dwells in His children, in such passages as the following: "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:8-11). There are other passages of like import, but this passage is sufficient to bring before us the teaching of the word of God on the subject. Let us give earnest and discriminating study to this teaching. Does it mean that the Holy Spirit in his own proper person dwells in Christian people? It will aid us in finding an answer to this question to remember that Christ is in His disciples, and common intelligence promptly says that this can not mean that the personal Christ is in His people on earth, for personally He is in heaven, and there He will remain till His second coming. In Eph. 3:17 Paul says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith," and this explains to us how Christ dwells in us. Faith in Christ dwells in our hearts, and by a well-known figure of speech Christ Himself is said to dwell in us. Upon the same principle God is said to be in His children, but this can not mean that God personally lives in His people. The love of God and faith in Him reside in our souls, and by the figure of speech just referred to God Himself may properly be said to be in us, but not personally. Upon the same principle an earthly father

may be said to dwell in the hearts of his children, but no one would conclude from such a statement that the father personally dwells in his children. The children love the father and believe in him, and so it can be said that he lives in them, and no one is misled by such a statement. In the affairs of this world we usually keep our wits about us, and look at matters from the standpoint of right reason and good common sense, but in things pertaining to divine revelation we too frequently lose our heads, and take up conclusions that have no support either in reason or revelation.

Here it is proper to recall some things said in the beginning of this discourse as to what the Holy Spirit is. It was there shown that the Holy Spirit is a person, and as such is one and indivisible; and from this point of view it is perfectly plain that He can not personally dwell in millions of hearts at the same time. To satisfy the demands of the theory of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit there would have to be as many Holy Spirits as there are Christians in the world. The Holy Spirit does not and can not divide Himself up and distribute Himself around by piecemeal, so that every one may receive a little of Him. Nor can the Holy Spirit, as a person, be at more than one place at the same time, as was pointed out in the definition. In considering things relating to divine revelation, God intended that we should make use of the mental faculties with which He has endowed us, and which make us akin to Him. The Bible is to be studied just as any other body of literature is studied, and no unreasonable conclusion is to be drawn from its teaching if a reasonable conclusion is possible.

In what sense, then, does the Holy Spirit dwell in the hearts of the people of God? In the same sense in which God and Christ themselves dwell in the hearts of Christian men and women; that is, by the faith and love which He produces in the Christian heart through the word of the truth of the gospel of God's grace. In Col. 3:16 we have the following admonition: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." Did any one ever have a correct religious thought or have a real Christian experience that the word of God can not give? I do not suppose that anybody would give an affirmative answer to this question. If an affirmative answer may be correctly given, then the sacred writings are not "able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," nor do they make the man of God "complete, furnished completely unto every good work," as the apostle Paul declares. The following passage is full of helpful and instructive suggestion along this line of thought: "Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:24).

An analysis of this passage brings out several very important truths. In the first place, it teaches that



grace and peace are multiplied unto Christians "in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord," and of course this knowledge comes through the inspired word of God. In the second place, it teaches that God has granted unto us "*all things* that pertain unto life and godliness, *through the knowledge of him that called* us by his own glory and virtue." This knowledge also comes through the Scriptures which the Holy Spirit inspired. In the third place, it teaches that by these inspired promises we "are made partakers of the divine nature." This truly makes the man of God "complete, furnished completely unto every good work," and fully arms and equips him for the warfare of life. What more does a Christian soldier need? These written promises fill the heart with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, paint the future in the radiance of a glorious morning, and give assurance of an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Glory to God in the highest heavens!

# WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

## *A SERMON*

**I** SHALL begin this discourse without a text, but will introduce a number of texts in the development of the theme. This is the most interesting, important and far-reaching question that ever fell from human lips, and it deserves the most careful, patient and thorough consideration that men can bestow upon it. A few preliminary remarks are in order. The question is supposed to be asked by one who has never obeyed the gospel, and is therefore an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise. The question implies that the inquirer realizes that he is under the condemnation of sin and hence is lost. It also implies that the querist understands that he must do something to be saved. The correct answer to the question must come from the word of the living God, for no one is competent to solve the problem but the one against whom sin is committed, and who can take into consideration all the interests that are involved, and so adjust the matters that are concerned that there will be no conflict between justice and mercy. The answer to the question requires the exercise of infinite wisdom and love, and this limits qualification to answer to almighty God.

These things being premised, I approach the discussion of the subject in hand through the following

statement: The Scriptures plainly teach that men must be saved from their sins according to the terms of a covenant established by divine authority between God and men. And here it is pertinent to remark that a covenant between God and man is different, in the making, from covenants established between men. In the latter the parties to the covenant are equal, and each has something to say as to the terms of the contract. But in the former such is not the case, and God dictates all the terms of the covenant, while man does nothing but accept or reject what God prescribes. And this is well, for it precludes the possibility of error in the make-up of the covenant, and gives ample assurance that compliance with the terms of the covenant on the part of man will infallibly lead to the desired results.

Just here the following question emerges: Under what covenant are we to seek salvation now? God has made several covenants with the children of men, and it is important that we ascertain which of these covenants is in force at the present time, and unless we do this we can not proceed with a proper degree of certainty. And here, as all along the line of our investigation, we must make our appeal to the inspired Scriptures, for they alone can furnish us the information we need. A long time after the death of Moses, Jehovah, speaking through a prophet, said:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their

inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. 31: 31-34).

Here we have a striking contrast between the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai, and the one He afterwards promised to make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This prophecy Paul quotes in his letter to the Hebrews, and applies it to the new covenant which was sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. (Read Heb. 8: 8-12.) The old covenant was made and mediated through Moses, but the new covenant was made and mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ. The old was written upon tables of stone, but the new is written upon fleshly tables of the heart. Many were embraced in the old, who knew not the Lord and had to be taught to know Him, but all those embraced in the new know Him, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them." Under the old, sins were forgiven only provisionally, but under the new they are forgiven absolutely: "Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more." The old was a temporary covenant, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away," but the new is an eternal covenant, "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant," etc.

Thus it plainly appears that the covenant under which we must seek and find salvation is the new

covenant which is mediated by Jesus Christ, and which makes provision for the absolute forgiveness of sin, and eternal life for those who are embraced in it. This being the case, it becomes necessary for us to ascertain when that covenant went into effect and became operative in the accomplishment of its gracious purposes. This matter is set forth with remarkable clearness and force in the ninth chapter of Hebrews in the following language:

“And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth” (Heb. 9: 15-17).

In this passage the writer shows that this covenant of grace which God has made with the children of men is based upon a principle that prevails among men with respect to testaments or covenants or wills. A covenant is a testament and a testament is a will, and any one of these synonyms may be used to designate the contract which God has made with men in regard to salvation, and Paul uses two of them in the passage just cited; namely, covenant and testament; or, rather, the translators use these two words, for but one word (*diatheekē*) is used in the original. That principle is that a will or testament, in the sense in which these terms are used in the foregoing quotation, does not go into effect and become operative till after the death of him that made it. This well-known principle the inspired writer applies to Christ and His will or testament, and thus shows that



His will did not go into effect or become operative till after His death. While a man lives, though his will may be made and put away for safe-keeping, he can dispose of his property as he pleases. If he chooses to give a daughter a piano or a son an automobile, he can do so, and no one may say him nay. But when he dies his will becomes the instrument according to which his property is to be disposed of, and nothing that he may have done before cuts any figure in the administration of the will. Whatever his children get out of his estate now they must inherit according to the terms of the will, and no special gift that he may have bestowed upon any one beforehand is any precedent for inheritance under the will.

This same principle applies to Christ and His will, and if this were generally understood, there would be less confusion with regard to the terms of salvation under the will or testament of Jesus Christ. While He was living He had authority to forgive sins, and could do so on any condition or no condition, according to His own option. This He made plain in the case of the paralytic to whom He said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee," on account of which he was accused of blasphemy by the Pharisees. In defending Himself against this charge, he said: "But that you may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God" (Luke 5:24, 25). In several other instances He exercised His prerogative to forgive sins, as in the case of the

thief on the cross, to whom He said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," thus implying that his sins had been forgiven.

But these are cases that took place while the Saviour was still living, and hence they are not precedents for those who live under the will of Christ, which was made operative by His death. The question is, "What must I do to be saved?" under the will or testament of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not, "What did a dying thief have to do to be saved while Jesus was still living on the earth?" The Master had the advantage of all others in that He could make His will after His death, because He arose from the dead and lived for a time again in this world, and it was during this time, but before He left the earth, that He made His will, and this is all that was necessary. We are now ready to open the archives of divine truth, and make a search for the precious document that makes provision for the salvation of men at the present time. After the Saviour arose from the dead He made the following proclamation: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This is a most wonderful enunciation, and it puts behind the Lord's commands universal authority, so that they are as secure and stedfast as the throne of almighty God. In a general way this language tells us how to come into that relation to the august name of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the

Holy Spirit the Comforter, in which salvation is secured. Those who are sufficiently disciplined to Christ to believe in Him as the Son of God are to be baptized into that name, and thus brought into the relation of salvation to the great triumvirate of the universe, so that God becomes their Father, Jesus Christ their High Priest and Advocate, and the Holy Spirit their Comforter. The matter is presented somewhat more specifically in the following language: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15, 16). This presents the will or testament of Christ in very plain and specific terms, and it corresponds to the following prophetic description of the way of the Lord: "And a high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Is it possible to make a plainer or simpler statement than that? In this pronouncement salvation is promised to a baptized believer, and promised by Him who is possessed of "all authority in heaven and on earth," and who can be depended upon to fulfill His promise to the letter.

This promise is so plain in itself that it would be extremely difficult to make it plainer by explanation. The statement that two and two make four needs neither explanation nor proof, for it is axiomatically true. The same is the case with respect to the declaration that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here belief and baptism stand between

a sinner and salvation, and to reach the salvation the sinner must pass through both faith or belief and baptism. Perhaps an illustration will serve a good purpose at this point: A man of large wealth and abounding benevolence dies and leaves a will in which he makes certain citizens of the town in which he lives heirs to his estate. The clause in the will, that makes this provision, reads thus: "He that can read and write shall have one thousand dollars." Here ability to read and write is placed between the prospective heir and the inheritance, and every rightful claimant must possess this ability, and it seems that there is no room for misunderstanding about it. But through some strange idiosyncrasy a claimant appears who can read, but can not write, and demands a thousand dollars under the will. But he is told that he is not an heir according to the terms of the will; that the will requires that a rightful claimant must be able to both read and write. "But," says the claimant, "I do not understand the will that way. As I interpret the will, one who can read is entitled to a thousand dollars, whether he can write or not." "But," says the trustee, "your understanding of the will has nothing to do with the distribution of this estate. The will speaks for itself, and you are entitled to nothing under it unless you can both read and write." "But," says the claimant, "I do not interpret the will that way, and, unless you give me a thousand dollars under that will, I will sue you for that amount." "But," says the trustee, "it is not your province to interpret this will, and you can get nothing under it, and if you think you can collect your claim by law, go ahead." And he goes ahead and brings suit. Is there a court on the face of the

earth that would sustain that claim? Certainly not; but the terms of this will are no plainer than those of the will of the Lord Jesus Christ which says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

When Jesus Christ made His will He put it in the hands of the apostles to be administered under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, telling them to abide in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high, or until they should receive the Spirit that was to guide them into all the truth. It will help us, in our study of the subject in hand, to examine the preaching of those Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided men who spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. Let us, therefore, begin at the very commencement of the apostolic ministry, and thus ascertain how those inspired men of God answered the important question that we are considering. According to their Lord's instruction they tarried in Jerusalem till they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and were thus qualified to enter upon the work of administering the will or testament of the risen and glorified Son of God. "When the day of Pentecost was now come" this wonderful phenomenon occurred, and the apostles were equipped and qualified to begin their great work. This they did by preaching for the first time in all the world that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. They set forth with telling effect the great facts concerning the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ—which facts, according to Paul's analysis of the gospel as given in the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, constitute the gospel that men are to believe in order to be saved. Peter's marvelous discourse convicted many of his hearers of sin, and



caused them to exclaim: "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Of course these convicted inquirers wanted to know what they should do to escape the guilt and condemnation of their sins, and the question demanded an explicit and plain answer—an answer that would leave no room for doubt or misunderstanding—and here it is: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The gospel, in answering the vital question before us, always begins with inquirers just where it finds them. Let it be noted that these inquirers were not told to believe, for the simple reason that they were already believers, as their pointed and searching question clearly indicated. The first thing that Peter told them to do was to "repent," and this brings to view an item in the Saviour's will that is not expressed in the Great Commission, though it is clearly implied there, and is expressed in the following language addressed to the apostles after His resurrection, and recorded by Luke: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." From this we see that repentance is one of the terms or conditions upon which the gospel offers salvation to the children of men. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Jesus Christ, and we find Peter adhering to this program with exactness. He says, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in *the name* of Jesus Christ," and this the inquirers were to do "unto the remission" of their sins.

This is a very plain and explicit statement, and misunderstanding seems quite out of the question. Those believers were to repent and be baptized that their sins might be remitted or blotted out. In other words, they were to comply with the terms of the Lord's will that they might attain the salvation which that will or covenant bequeathes. The Greek here rendered "unto the remission of your sins" is *eis aphasis toon hamartioon*, and it will help us to a proper understanding of the phrase as it occurs in another connection. When He instituted the Lord's Supper, the Master, in speaking of the fruit of the vine, said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many *unto remission of sins*"—*eis aphasis hamartioon*. Of course there can be no controversy as to the import of this expression in this connection. The blood of the Lamb of God was poured out in order to the remission of sins, or that sins might be remitted. We have this identical expression in Acts 2:38, and identical expressions must have identical meanings unless there is something in a context that requires it to be otherwise. In the absence of this principle no reliance can be placed in human speech as a safe medium of communication between intelligent minds. There is absolutely nothing in the context of Acts 2:38 to require *eis aphasis hamartioon*, as there used, to mean anything different from what it means in Matt. 26:28. If the blood of Christ was poured out in order that sins might be forgiven, then believers were told on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized in order that their sins might be forgiven.

The consensus of modern scholarship abundantly sustains the position just enunciated. Perhaps Amer-

ican Presbyterianism never produced a greater expositor of the Scriptures than Dr. Albert Barnes. In studying this subject in 1870 I wrote to Dr. Barnes and asked him to give me as a scholar, without any reference to its theological bearing, his understanding of the meaning of the Greek preposition *eis* as used in Acts 2:38. He replied in the following courteous and satisfactory manner:

PHILADELPHIA, August 18, 1870.

REV. J. B. BRINEY:

*My Dear Sir*—I received your favor this morning. My knowledge of Greek is very imperfect, and no great value should be attached to my opinion on a question of Greek criticism. But it seems to me the word *eis*, in the passage referred to (Acts 2:38), relates to the *entire previous sentence*. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" *eis—unto, or in order to, or with reference to*—"the remission of sins," etc. That is, the repentance and baptism *both* have reference to the remission of sins; or the *entire process*, so to speak, in the divine arrangement for the remission of sins, *embraces* this, or this is the *complete* process appointed by God *in connection with* the pardon of sin. Whether a man can be saved *without* baptism is a question not connected with the exegesis of the passage; but the design of Peter, as I understand it, is to state what is the *complete* divine arrangement in order to the forgiveness of sins. (Compare Mark 16:16.)

I regret that I have not a copy of the Syriac Bible to answer your other question. I sold my library, and, of the few books that I have, I have no Syriac books among them.

I am, very truly yours,

ALBERT BARNES.

This is a very explicit and lucid explanation of the passage before us, and brings out its meaning with remarkable force. The modesty of Dr. Barnes led him to disclaim having accurate knowledge of the Greek language, but every well-informed person knows that he was a fine scholar. Along with Dr. Barnes

may be ranked Prof. H. B. Hackett, an eminent Greek linguist of the Baptist Church. In his "Commentary on Acts of the Apostles" he says:

—*eis aphenin hamartioon, in order to the remission of sins* (Matt. 26:28; Luke 3:3), we connect, naturally, with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other.

This is a very clear exposition of the passage, and makes its meaning as lucid as light itself.

The standard Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament at the present time is that of Professor Thayer. In regard to the passage in hand this great author makes the following pointed statement: "*Eis aphenin hamartioon, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38.*"

In a letter to me, dated May 8, 1884, Prof. J. R. Boise, Ph. D., LL. D., of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, in response to a letter of inquiry from me, said:

In Acts 2:38, we find *repentance, baptism in faith* (leading into the remission of sins). "In the name of Jesus Christ" can only mean *faith* in Him; and so it is understood by all the best commentators. *Eis aphenin, etc.*, belongs with the two verbs preceding. We have, then, *repentance, baptism in faith, the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit*, all in regular sequence.

Referring to another passage of Scripture, the same distinguished scholar says:

In 1 Pet. 3:21 we have *baptism* described, not as a mere outward cleansing, but as something demanded by a good conscience towards God. This means Christian experience. The order of thought, then, is *Christian experience, baptism, salva-*

tion. Thus my argument is stated briefly. I honestly think I am right grammatically, logically, doctrinally.

In 1876, Robert T. Mathews, then Professor of Greek in Eminence College, Eminence, Ky., addressed the following query to the professors of Greek in a number of the universities and colleges of this country:

Will you be so kind as to give me your translation of the preposition *eis* in Acts 2:38, and your opinion, as a Greek scholar, as to what grammatical relation it expresses between the predicates of the verse and the phrase *aphesin hamartioon*? I shall be obliged for your answer in the light of scholarship, aside from all theological applications of the verse.

To this request Professor Mathews received answers from quite a number of the finest Greek scholars of the day, some of which I present in this connection:

Yours of the 9th inst. is just received. I shall translate Acts 2:38 literally thus: *Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in (or on) the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins.* The preposition *eis* seems to denote the object and end of the two verbs which precede in the imperative. In other words, the remission of sins is the object and end (or result) of repentance and baptism. The meaning may, perhaps, be more definitely and unequivocally expressed thus: *Repent, and let every one of you be baptized to the end that your sins may be forgiven.*—PROFESSOR TYLER, of Amherst College, Mass.

In answer to your inquiry about the force of the preposition *eis*, in the passage of the New Testament to which you refer (Acts 2:38), I should say that it denoted intention or purpose, "with a view to," much as if it had been written, "so as to obtain the remission of sins." I speak, however, wholly from the standpoint of classic Greek, not being familiar with the changes introduced by the Hellenistic. As to any theological bearings that the subject may have, I am wholly indifferent.—PROFESSOR FLAGG, of Cornell University, N. Y.



In my opinion, *eis*, in Acts 2:38, denotes *purpose*, and may be rendered "in order to," or, as in our English version "for." "*Eis aphasis hamartioon*" suggests the motive or object contemplated in the action of the two preceding verbs.—PROFESSOR HARKNESS, of Brown University, R. I.

It is my opinion that *eis* is to be connected with both predicates, and that it denotes an object or end in view. I am inclined to think that the phrase, "in the name of Christ," though grammatically limiting only *baptistheeti*, does, in thought, modify the connection of *eis*, the ideas standing logically in the following order; viz.: Having been shown your ill behavior against the Messiah, put faith in (the name of) Christ; on the basis of that faith, repent, and (confess), be baptized, and then be forgiven—*eis* connecting *aphesis*, not with the two predicates separately, but with the whole preceding part of the sentence.—PROFESSOR PROCTOR, of Dartmouth College, N. Y.

In reply to your inquiry, I would say that, in my judgment, the preposition *eis*, in the verse referred to, expresses the relation of aim or end in view, answering the question, *eis ti* (for what?), and to be translated by "unto," "in order to," "for." This sense of *eis*, as you doubtless know, is recognized by Liddell and Scott for classical, by Winer for New Testament, usage.—PROFESSOR D'OOGHE, of Ann Arbor, Mich.

If a question in Greek criticism can be settled by scholarship, it is surely settled that Acts 2:38 teaches that believers are to repent and be baptized that their sins may be forgiven; and this is in strict accord with the will or covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and shows us how the apostles understood that document.

Dr. J. W. Willmarth, a learned Baptist theologian, uses the following language in regard to the meaning of Acts 2:38:

It is our business simply and honestly to ascertain the exact meaning of the inspired originals, as the sacred penman

intended to convey it to the mind of the contemporary reader. Away with the question, "What *ought* Peter to have said in the interest of orthodoxy?" . . . As to Campbellism, that specter which haunts many good men and terrifies them into a good deal of bad interpretation, shall we gain anything by maintaining a false translation, and allowing the Campbellites to be the champions of the true, with the world's scholarship on their side, as against us? . . . When the Campbellites translate "in order to" in Acts 2:38, they translate correctly.

Perhaps Dr. Willmarth is to be excused for his use of the epithet "Campbellites," on the ground that he was unconsciously dominated by profound prejudice against a large body of respectable Christian people; and this shows that he had no intention of promoting the doctrinal position of the disciples of Christ in regard to the design of baptism. His scholarship simply drove him to the admission that the phrase in question should be translated "in order to the remission of sins," and he had the honesty to confess that the "world's scholarship" has so decided. No one has anything to gain by attempting to resist this conclusion, fortified as it is, on every side, by the learning of the world, and why any one should desire to resist it is a curious problem.

Let us now consider the case of Saul of Tarsus. He was an unbelieving Jew who "persecuted the church of God and wasted it." He was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus with a commission from the high priest to arrest "any that were of the Way, whether men or women," and "bring them bound to Jerusalem." As he journeyed, and when he drew near to Damascus, he had a most wonderful and thrilling experience. A light from heaven brighter than that of the noonday sun shone round about him, and he heard a voice saying unto him: "Saul, Saul,

why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." In astonishment Saul said: "Who art thou, Lord?" A better rendering of this would be, "Who art thou, sir?" for Saul did not know who it was that spoke to him. The answer, however, made it known to him who the speaker was: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Now Saul knows who the august speaker is, and he exclaims: "What shall I do, Lord?" That vital question received no immediate answer, but the Lord said: "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." The Master had made His will once for all, and put it into the hands of men to be executed, and He did not propose to nullify that will by telling people what to do to be saved, in person. If He had done that in Saul's case, others would have had ground to expect the same thing, and confusion would have been the result. Saul had to inherit the blessing of salvation according to the provisions of the will, the same as others. Jesus appeared to him for a different purpose altogether, which he expressed in the following language: "But arise and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." Saul was to be an apostle and bear witness to the resurrection of Christ, and hence it was nec-

essary for him to have personal knowledge of that fact, and this he could not have without seeing Him after He arose.

Under instruction thus received, Saul went into Damascus and put up in the house of one Judas on Straight Street, and there spent three days fasting and praying. At the end of this time a man named Ananias, under specific divine instruction, found him and told him that the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto him in the way as he came, had sent him to tell him (Saul) all things that were appointed for him to do, and that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul was then a penitent believer, and Ananias began with him from that point of view. He neither told him to believe nor to repent, for he had been believing and repenting for three days. He simply told him to comply with that part of the will of Christ which he had not yet obeyed, and said: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." A better translation would be, "Having called on his name," for the participle (*epikalesamenos*) is an aorist and denotes past time. Saul had been calling "on his name" in prayer for three days, and now his further duty is pointed out to him, and he is told to complete the process appointed by the Lord in His will or testament, whereby salvation from sin is secured. "Arise," said the man of God, "and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, having called on his name." Saul was to go on and fully comply with the will of Him on whose name he had been calling, in order that his sins might be blotted out. It is useless to call on the name of the Lord, and not obey His commandments. He Himself says:



“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” And He further says: “Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon a rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.” Saul arose and was baptized, and thus reached the salvation promised by the Lord in His will which says: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

Let us now consider the case of the Philippian jailor as it is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten with many stripes, cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. At midnight they prayed and sang praises to God, and there was an earthquake that shook the prison, opened its doors, and loosed the bands of the prisoners. This occurrence awakened the jailor, and when he saw the situation, supposing the prisoners had escaped, he was about to kill himself. But Paul prevented the rash act by assuring him that all the prisoners were there, and being thus assured, and knowing that what had happened was the result of some divine intervention with which Paul was connected, he sprang into the presence of the apostle, and brought him and his companion out, and said: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The jailor was a pagan unbeliever, and Paul answered



him from that point of view, and said to him: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Faith would open the way for him and his family to salvation, and that was the first step that they had to take, and as faith comes of hearing the word of God, Paul "spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house." In speaking to them the word of the Lord, the apostle presented to them the Lord's will concerning salvation, and the jailor "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately." Thus we see that regularly and systematically the apostles preached the gospel according to the will or testament of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, according to the Master's command, told those to whom they preached: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This they did whether in Jerusalem, Samaria, Corinth, or on the public highway. On "the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza," Philip encountered a distinguished man from Ethiopia who was reading a beautiful portion of the word of God; and, being invited to do so, he began from the same Scripture and "preached unto him Jesus" as they rode along in the Ethiopian's chariot. Presently, and while Philip was preaching Jesus to the eunuch, "they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Dr. Isaac Taylor Hinton, a prominent Baptist minister, in his book entitled "A History of Baptism," in dealing with this case, says, "We see from this that preaching Jesus includes preaching baptism," and that is a self-evident proposition, for in no other way could the eunuch have learned that it was his

duty and privilege to be baptized. Apostolic practice was uniform in this matter, for the apostles and primitive evangelists were always faithful and loyal to their commission, and they were neither ashamed nor afraid to preach a full gospel.

From the foregoing investigation it appears to be abundantly clear, in the light of God's word, that salvation is promised in the gospel to those who believe with all their hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, earnestly repent of their sins, and are baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We are especially interested to know what God has covenanted to do, and, having ascertained that, we should be in haste to comply with the conditions upon which He has promised to save men. And this we should do without question, feeling assured that God's wisdom is infinitely superior to that of man. Doing this, we may stand upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and rejoice in the hope of immortality and eternal life. Jehovah makes no mistakes, and when we do what He says the matter of our salvation is put beyond a peradventure. We know by His will that we are children of God, and, if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and glorious Redeemer.

## THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

### A SERMON

THERE is a class of creatures in God's universe that are called angels. This term is not descriptive of nature or character, but of function. The word means a messenger, and is applied in the Scriptures to men, and even to inanimate objects. John the Baptist is called an angel in the passage which says, "Behold, I send my messenger [*angelos*] before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee;" and it is applied to the winds where it is said, "Who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." The meaning of this passage can be brought out a little more clearly by a little transposition, as follows: "Who maketh winds his angels, and a flame of fire his ministers." God makes wind and fire His messengers and ministers to execute His will. He used the wind to send locusts into Egypt, and fire to destroy Sodom, thus employing these agencies to accomplish His purposes. But the term is constantly used in the word of God to indicate a numerous class of intelligent beings that continually wait upon God as His messengers to go hither and thither to carry out the will of Jehovah, of whom it is said: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" This passage may be regarded as the text for this sermon.

Angels have borne a conspicuous part in the dealings of God with the children of men. When sin entered into the world and made it necessary for man to be kept away from the tree of life, that task was assigned to a class of angels called "the cherubim," who stood guard about that tree with "the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." The fruit of that tree contained the elixir of life, and if man had been permitted to continue to eat of that fruit, he would have lived forever as a sinner. He had hitherto been allowed to eat of that fruit, and its virtue was in his system and was transmissible, and this is probably the explanation of the great longevity of people in the early years of the human family. Adam and Eve had the virtue of that fruit in their systems, and transmitted it to their posterity till by natural processes it was eliminated, and men and women were made subject to the laws that govern animal life. This view of the matter, which I verily believe to be correct, relieves the fact, so abundantly stated in the Scriptures, that the ancients did live to be several hundred years old, one of them (Methuselah) reaching the age of 969 years of improbability. This is neither strange nor unreasonable in view of the theory that I have advanced.

Angels are said to be possessed of great wisdom, as one might naturally expect. When Joab sent a woman of Tekoa to King David to intercede with him in behalf of Absalom, who had committed a great crime against his sister, and David suspected that Joab had concocted the scheme and so expressed himself to the woman, she said: "And my lord [the king] is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel

of God, to know all things that are in the earth." Wonderful strength is also ascribed to angels in the word of God. David says: "Bless the Lord, ye angels of his: ye mighty in strength, that fulfil his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word." Both wisdom and power were often required of angels in executing the will of God, for many times difficult tasks were assigned to their hands. When a mob of Sodomites besieged the house of Lot, who was entertaining two angels unawares, intent upon doing them violence, and Lot was vainly trying to protect them, and was himself about to be roughly handled by the mob, the angels protected him, and struck with blindness the men who were acting so outrageously. Among the many thrilling things that John saw upon the island of Patmos, he beheld "a strong angel that took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all." This is no doubt a figure of speech, but it is based on the fact that angels are possessed of great strength, so that one might pick up a great millstone, as a child picks up a pebble, and hurl it into the sea.

Angels are said to exist in vast numbers. Daniel describes one of his visions as follows: "I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days [God] did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Dan. 7:9, 10). These thousands of thousands that



stood before the "ancient of days" were undoubtedly His angels, and the expression indicates that their number was infinite. In speaking of the blessings that we enjoy under the new covenant, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24). This passage declares that the hosts of angels are innumerable, and shows that God is abundantly supplied with agents to do His will at all times and under all circumstances. The angels are also swift in their movements. Daniel says: "Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation" (Dan. 9:21). From Luke 1:26 we learn that "the man Gabriel" was an angel.

The sad feature of this subject is that angels are peccable, and that some of them did actually sin and lose their inheritance in heaven. Peter says: "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," etc. (2 Pet. 2:4). When sin arose in heaven it led to an attempt at revolution, and there was a battle royal for supremacy. In Revelation we find the following brief account of that startling event: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war

with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (Rev. 12:7-9). It seems from this that he who became and was called "the Devil and Satan" was originally an angel of light who occupied an exalted position among the hosts of heaven, but in an evil hour rebelled against the King eternal, immortal and invisible. This throws a side-light upon Paul's statement that a bishop should not be "a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil." "The condemnation of the devil" means the condemnation into which the devil fell. It appears that this great spirit allowed himself to be overcome by an overweening ambition to usurp the place of God, and become the supreme ruler of the universe. He saw the Almighty sitting upon His throne of glory, arrayed in light and holding in His hand the scepter of universal authority, and heard the ascriptions of praise that the shining ranks of angels accorded to Jehovah, and envy crept into his heart, and his pride prompted him to lead a revolt against the King of heaven, which ignominiously failed, and involved him in eternal ruin. How many souls have envy, jealousy and unholy ambition led to destruction!

It is a source of comfort and confidence to the child of God to know that the holy angels are charged to look after and care for him as he engages in the battles of life, to help him to victory and the crown of immortality. In this assurance one of the Lord's

servants rejoiced when he exultantly sang the ninety-first Psalm, which it will be interesting and profitable to read in this connection:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High  
 Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.  
 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress;  
 My God, in whom I trust.  
 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,  
 And from the noisome pestilence.  
 He shall cover thee with his pinions,  
 And under his wings shalt thou take refuge:  
 His truth is a shield and a buckler.  
 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,  
 Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;  
 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,  
 Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.  
 A thousand shall fall at thy side,  
 And ten thousand at thy right hand;  
 But it shall not come nigh thee.  
 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold,  
 And see the reward of the wicked.  
 For thou, O Lord, art my refuge!  
 Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;  
 There shall no evil befall thee,  
 Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent.  
 For he shall give his angels charge over thee,  
 To keep thee in all thy ways.  
 They shall bear thee up in their hands,  
 Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.  
 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder;  
 The young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under foot.  
 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver  
 him:  
 I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.  
 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;  
 I will be with him in trouble:  
 I will deliver him, and honor him.  
 With long life will I satisfy him,  
 And show him my salvation.”

This Scripture contains teaching that is wholesome and very full of comfort to those who are serving Him who has at His command these innumerable hosts of angels whom He charges to watch over His people for their good. And it is plainly indicated in the word of God that these angels are interested in the welfare of the children of God, and it is expressly declared that they "desire to look into" the things that pertain to the redemption of the children of men. And it is also categorically declared in Holy Writ that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," and we find a conspicuous historical instance of this in what occurred when the king of Syria sent a great company of soldiers to capture Elisha, the prophet of God. The soldiers went to Dothan, where the prophet was, and at night surrounded the city so that Elisha could not escape. When the servant of the prophet arose early next morning, and saw that the city was surrounded by Syrian soldiers, he was very much alarmed, and exclaimed: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" But Elisha, in the exercise of that strong faith that supports men in the midst of trials and difficulties, and overcomes fear, quietly answered: "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." What a grand and admirable figure the prophet presents as he stands erect and speaks his confidence in God in the most unequivocal terms! He was disturbed by neither doubt nor fear, but was sustained by that trust in God which is a "shield and buckler" to those who commit their ways unto the Lord of hosts.

Elisha prayed God to open the eyes of his servant that he might see what the prophet himself saw, and

thus be relieved of his fears; and when his eyes were opened in answer to the prayer of the man of faith, he saw that "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." These horses and chariots of fire were God's angels sent to encamp round about Elisha to deliver him from the power of the Syrians. Does God think less of His people now than He did then? Is He less careful for their welfare at the present time than He was in the centuries long ago? I trow not. We learn from His word that He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and that with Him there is neither variableness, nor shadow that is cast by turning, and it is not unlikely that the dullness of our eyes often keeps us from seeing God's angels hovering over us to protect us from dangers seen and unseen, or encamping round about us to deliver us from trials and perplexities from which we could not extricate ourselves. If I may be permitted a personal allusion, as I look back over my past life I think I can see more than one instance of the intervention of Divine Providence to succor me in time of danger, and it is a source of great pleasure to me to cherish this belief. It is the faith that overcomes the world, and brings us off conquerors, and even more than conquerors, over the difficulties and trials that beset us along the checkered pathway of life. To feel assured that angels that are strong, swift, and interested in the outcome of my warfare, are commissioned to attend me along the way, is a most comforting and encouraging consideration. May it not be that this is what the Saviour alluded to when He said, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my



Father who is in heaven"? This declaration certainly holds out the idea that there is a very close relationship between the "little ones" that believe in Christ, and the beings that are called "their angels," and that relationship is one of guardianship and protection.

We find another striking instance of angelic intervention, in behalf of the people of God, in what occurred when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Palestine in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, took a number of fenced cities, and threatened the destruction of Jerusalem. The haughty Assyrian monarch sent a vaunting message to Hezekiah, in which he demanded his surrender, even bidding defiance to Jehovah. But Hezekiah took it to the Lord in prayer, and the Lord heard him, and sent Isaiah to him to give him assurance that he would be delivered from the snare of Sennacherib, and that the latter should meet with an overwhelming defeat, when, from every human point of view, this seemed impossible. But God, who rules in heaven and presides over the armies of men, had made bare His mighty arm to bring to naught the machinations of the proud Assyrian, and He would bring it to pass. So one night "the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt in Nineveh." Thus through the instrumentality of an angel the haughty and boasting king was utterly routed, and sent home in defeat and disgrace, to meditate upon the folly of men in attempting to measure arms with God.

It will be profitable and interesting to consider the intervention of angels in behalf of individuals, and the case of Daniel looms up as a striking example. The prophet had exposed himself to the penalty of being cast into the lions' den by refusing to comply with an edict that his enemies had induced King Darius to put forth to the effect that "whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." This was the result of a despicable conspiracy on the part of the envious colleagues of Daniel in office, that they might bring about his downfall. They knew that the prophet would not observe that edict, but would continue to pray to the God of the heavens and the earth, and so it turned out, for three times a day did Daniel, at a window of his chamber that opened towards Jerusalem, and in full view of his enemies who were watching him, pray and give thanks to Jehovah. This gave the jealous rivals of the prophet the opportunity they sought, and forthwith they brought the matter to the attention of the king and demanded that the law be enforced by feeding Daniel to hungry lions. The prophet stood high in the esteem and affections of the king, and it almost broke his heart when he saw the plight that his prime minister was in, and he "set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him," but the case was hopeless, for no law of the Medes and Persians could be changed or set aside, and the king had to obey his own edict, and order that Daniel be cast into the den of lions. But when he saw the noble man of God marching unabashed to his doom, he said to him, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will

deliver thee," and then went to his palace, and "passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him." At the dawn of morning the king visited the den, and as he approached it he exclaimed: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" To this earnest inquiry he received the following response: "O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." God used one of His angels to protect Daniel and confound his enemies, who were consigned to the fate that they had planned for the prophet. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, to deliver them."

Another instance is found in the case of Hagar, who was unjustly driven from home by Sarah, her mistress, who had given her to Abram as a concubine that she might become a mother through her. Yonder she sits by a fountain of water in the wilderness, homeless and shelterless, lonely and crushed in heart. But presently she discovers that she is not alone, for an angel appears to her and tells her to return to her mistress and be submissive to her, and assures her that she would become the mother of a numerous posterity, which in those days was regarded as about the greatest boon that could come to a woman. She returned to her mistress, and by and by she gave birth to Ishmael, who, when he became a lad, displeased Sarah by some childish antics the day Isaac was weaned, and again Hagar was driven from home. With a loaf of bread, a bottle of water, and a child

as her heritage, she wanders in the wilderness of Beer-sheba till her supplies are exhausted, and then in despair she places her child in the shade of a bush to die, and goes far enough away from the scene not to see or hear the boy in his dying struggles, and sits down and weeps in agony and solitude. But "man's extremity is God's opportunity," and so "the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad a drink." God does not forsake His own, but charges His angels to care for them in time of dire need. What a source of joy and consolation this is!

When righteous Lot was "sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked Sodomites, and vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds," God sent a couple of His angels to deliver him from his troubles, and overwhelm the wicked city in a fearful destruction. When the children of Israel were oppressed by the Midianites, the angel of the Lord visited Gideon and used him, with three hundred carefully chosen men, to defeat the army of the oppressors and effect deliverance for the Israelites. When Elijah fled from the wrath of Jezebel, whose prophets he had slain, and took refuge under a juniper-tree over yonder in the wilderness, and "requested for himself that he might die," saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers," an angel relieved him. And what shall I say more? for the time

would fail me if I should attempt to tell of the many other cases of the ministry of angels in behalf of God's people, that are recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. Those that have been cited are sufficient to inspire the servants of God with confidence that they are the objects of Jehovah's care and solicitude, and that He will use His angels to take care of them, and deliver them out of all their troubles. This confidence they should encourage and cultivate more and more as the days come and go, for thereby they become the better enabled to cast all their care upon Him who cares for them, and is able to succor them in time of need.

Angels have been conspicuous for their agency in connection with the introduction and propagation of the gospel of the grace of God. After the silence of the voice of prophecy for centuries, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias as "he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course," and said to him: "Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." This message contained the twilight of the dawning day of redemption for the children of men, and presaged the near



approach of the time of salvation for those who sat in the region and shadow of death.

A little later "the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that are highly favored, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power. And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." These are words that live and breathe, and pulsate with divine energy, and he who says, in view of these marvelous asseverations and others like them in the sacred record, that Jesus was the son of Joseph,

simply crucifies the Lord afresh and puts him to an open shame!

When Jesus was born, and Wise-men came from the east to find and worship Him, and thus stirred up the jealousy of Herod, who determined to kill Him, "an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." The night that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, an angel of the Lord stood by shepherds who were minding their flocks on the adjacent plains, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, "and they were sore afraid." But the angel said unto them: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

At the conclusion of the fearful ordeal through which the Master passed in the temptation in the wilderness, "angels came and ministered unto him." That is, they brought Him food, the thing of which

He was in sore need. God fed Elijah through the agency of ravens, but He employed angels to feed His Son who had resisted and defeated Satan in three successive and fearful attacks upon Him in efforts to induce Him to act upon the enemy's advice. Thus the Lord teaches His people not to lend a listening ear to the seductive and charming suggestions of the adversary, who, like a roaring lion, is always on the lookout for souls to destroy, frequently making his approaches, as in the case of the Saviour, in the guise of a friend, and even benefactor. Nor does he hesitate to use Scripture to accomplish his nefarious ends, but always by perversion. When he had the Lord on the roof of the temple, and suggested that He cast Himself down, he attempted to bolster his proposition up and make it reasonable by an appeal to the word of God, and quoted a certain passage as follows: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and on their hands shall they bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone." If you will read the ninety-first Psalm, you will find that the devil left out a very important modifying clause in that passage. It reads thus: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, *to keep thee in all thy ways.*" The clause in italics the devil left out, for the purpose, no doubt, of impressing his intended victim with the idea that God had unconditionally promised to take care of His people. But the passage says: "To keep thee in all thy ways." The ways of a child of God are his by adoption. God marks out the way, and says, "This is the way; walk ye in it," and as long as one walks in the way that God has designated, he has the promise of angelic protection.

When the dear Lord was agonizing in the garden, and "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground," "there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." How He needed strength from on high in that dark hour of fearful anguish, and He was not forgotten. At some time in his life almost every child of God has to pass through his Gethsemane, and drink from the cup of bitterest anguish, and it is in such experiences that he especially needs that strength which comes from above; and, blessed be God, he has the promise of angelic help, and but for such help he would sink beneath the submerging waves. "Take it to the Lord in prayer." When Peter mistakenly supposed that he could serve his Master with his sword, and "smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear," the Lord said to him: "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" How abundant in resources is our heavenly Father for the protection of those who love and serve Him! And with what implicit confidence can they entrust themselves to His care and keeping! The Saviour was crucified and buried, and when the time came for His resurrection, "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment as white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men." No angel ever came to earth upon a more delightful mission than that, and no doubt the heavenly hosts made the welkin of heaven ring with

shouts of joy when that stone was rolled away, and the Lord came out as a glorious conqueror.

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the sepulchre soon after the resurrection, it was an angel that said to them: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." How that message touched and thrilled the hearts of those pious and devoted women! How blessed is the ministry of angels! When the Lord of glory was taken up into heaven from the disciples, and they stood "looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." And when He entered into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of the throne of God, Jehovah said: "Let all the angels of God worship him." Angels announced His birth, watched over Him during His earthly pilgrimage, comforted and strengthened Him when His soul was crushed under a tremendous weight of sorrow, received Him up into the courts of glory with shouts of joy, and cast their glittering crowns at His feet, exclaiming: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." In the early days of the kingdom of Christ angels were active in the guidance and protection of evangelists, and in so directing pious inquirers as to have brought to them the gospel of Jesus Christ which is "the power of God unto salvation." When the apostles



were arrested and cast into prison in Jerusalem, it was an angel of the Lord that opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said: "Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." When Herod threw Peter into prison after killing James, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and brought him out that he might go to a place of safety. When Paul was on his voyage to Rome upon his appeal to Cæsar, and the ship in which he was sailing was caught in a fearful storm and all on board were in imminent danger, an angel of the Lord stood by the apostle, and said: "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." When Cornelius was praying in his house in Cæsarea, praying, no doubt, for a fuller knowledge of the will of God, an angel appeared to him and directed him to send for Peter, who would speak to him words whereby he and all his house might be saved.

Thus we see how active angels have been in the affairs of men, and in promoting the gospel of God's grace among the children of earth, and this recital of facts is well calculated to assure the people of God that they are in the hands of guardians who can and will care for them when they are living in the fear and service of the heavenly Father. I close this discourse with a repetition of the text: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"

# CONVERSION

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“For this people’s heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed;  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart,  
And should turn again,  
And I should heal them.” —Matt. 13: 15.

**T**HIS is the rendering of this passage as given in the Revised Version of the Scriptures, and it is eminently worthy of note that “turn again” here takes the place of “be converted” in the Common Version, the verb being in the active voice in the Revision, while it is passive in the King’s Translation. And not only is this the case here, but it is also the case in every other instance of the occurrence of the verb in the New Testament. No passive form of the verb, such as “be converted,” occurs in the Revised Version, and it is interesting to inquire why the king’s translators used the passive form, while the revisers employed the active voice altogether. The reason why the passive form was used by the former lies in the theological dogmata of total hereditary depravity and immediate or miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion. It was held by Augustine in the fourth century of our era that every human being is born in a state of spiritual death that incapacitates him to do anything towards his conver-

sion till the Holy Spirit makes him alive by a direct and immediate operation upon him, and that in the transaction man is wholly passive. This Augustinian doctrine spread far and wide, and prevailed throughout Christendom at the time of the making of the Common Version.

The king's translators were dominated by this doctrine, and when they came to translate the Greek verb in question (*epistrepheet*), they found themselves in a conflict between their theology and their scholarship. They knew full well that the verb was in the active voice, but their theology said that a sinner is passive in conversion—that he *is* converted by an operation performed upon or within him by the Spirit of God—and to translate the verb in the active voice would spoil their theology on the subject of conversion. In this conflict their theology triumphed over their scholarship, and they translated an active verb in the passive form to agree with their doctrine concerning conversion. These men—great scholars for their day—are not to be censured too severely for this eccentricity, for theology held the minds of men with a very firm grip in those days, and it was a matter of moral impossibility for them not to be influenced by it in dealing with the Scriptures. But by the time the revisers came to their task scholarship had gained a firmer hold upon the minds of men, and while they held the doctrine of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion in a somewhat modified form, their scholarship prevailed, and they translated the active verb in the active form, showing that a sinner is active in his conversion, and left theology to take care of itself. This will finally deliver the religious world from the theological night-

mare that has dominated it for fifteen hundred years or more, paralyzing men's spiritual energies with the notion that they were powerless to do anything in the direction of their salvation till they became the recipients of this alleged immediate operation of God's Spirit. The mischief that this dogma has done in the world is incalculable. It has kept men waiting and trembling in the face of eternity, and postponing their acceptance of Jesus Christ to the salvation of their souls, in expectation of this miraculous operation that never came. But, thank God, this superstition is losing its hold upon the minds of men, and it is not too much to hope that in the near future its spell will be completely broken.

The difference between active and passive verbs as to their force and application is well understood by pupils in the grammar school. They know that in an active verb the subject performs the act or acts indicated by the verb, while in a passive verb the subject is acted upon or receives the action or actions indicated by the verb. "James struck" indicates that James performed the act of striking something or somebody else, while "James was struck" means that James was the object struck by something or somebody else. James can tell you the difference between the two forms of the verb, if nobody else can. In the first instance James was active, performing the operation indicated by the verb, while in the second instance James received the operation indicated by the verb. According to this principle in the construction and use of language, as the verb which indicates the act or acts of conversion is in the active form, the subject of it is contemplated as performing the act or acts involved in conversion. We have in the

text a cluster of four verbs, all in the active form, thus indicating that in the things referred to thereby the subject is active, and not passive. "Lest they should see with their eyes" shows that man must see for himself, and that another can not see for him. God has given him eyes with which to see, and has placed before him the beauties of nature to see, and there God's agency in the matter ceases, and man must do the rest. If he chooses to do so, he can close his eyes and thus darken the windows of his soul and shut out the beauties of his environment and live in darkness. He must drink in these beauties by using the sense of sight that God has given; he must do the seeing himself and for himself.

"And hear with his ears" shows that in the matter of hearing man is active and hears for himself. As God has given him eyes with which to see and placed before him objects to behold, so He has given him ears with which to hear, and made nature vocal with sounds for him to hear. But as he may close his eyes and shut beauty out of his soul, so he may fill his ears with wax and exclude from his being the harmony and melody of music, and even fail to hear the roar of thunder. He must use the faculty of hearing and hear for himself, and another can not hear for him. If he closes the avenue by which sound is perceived, he fails to hear, and must forego the pleasure that comes through hearing. No one else can hear for him. "And understand with their heart." God has given man a heart with which to understand and has said something for him to understand, and there the matter rests with man. He may fail to use his faculty of understanding, and derive no advantage from the messages that God has sent



into the world. Thus we discover that man so far is active all along the line, and does the seeing, hearing and understanding himself, as indicated by the active form of the verbs, which is sanctioned by reason and confirmed by experience and observation.

“And turn again.” Here we reach the crucial point in our investigation, and are brought face to face with the subject of conversion, and it behooves us to look at it carefully and without prejudice, for it is a matter in which we can not afford to make a mistake. As in the three other instances, so here, too, the verb that indicates the act or acts of conversion is in the active form, thus showing that man himself must perform that act or those acts. “Turn again” is active, and conveys the idea that man does the turning, and that he is not turned by another. In other words, he turns or converts himself, and the responsibility of the transaction is upon his own shoulders; and if he does not turn or convert himself that he may be saved, the blame lies at his own door, and he can find fault with no one else. He must not wait for another to do for him what he must do himself, and when we consider that his eternal destiny is involved in the matter its importance looms large in the estimation of common intelligence. It is the most vital and far-reaching question that can possibly claim the attention of rational men and women, and it should not be sidetracked for anything else. Questions of political economy, education, social conditions, international relations, etc., are weighty and interesting, and are entitled to a share of the attention of the children of men; but they all pale into insignificance in comparison with the matter of eternal salvation which is involved in the question of conver-

sion, and this is the subject to which men should give first and chief attention.

As employed in the New Testament, the term "conversion" in its broad sense is a synonym for the whole gospel plan of salvation, as is manifest from the following statement: "They [Paul, Barnabas and others] therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:3). Other passages might be quoted to the same effect, but one clear declaration in the word of God is sufficient to establish any proposition. Conversion and becoming a Christian are one and the same thing, and this emphasizes the importance of the question that we are discussing, and suggests that we should consider it with the utmost care and candor. Conversion is something that stands between sinful men and salvation, as is quite evident from the following declaration from the Master: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn [convert yourselves], and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Weightier language than this is not to be found in the whole realm of literature, and it should be inscribed upon the tablet of the human mind as with the point of a diamond, so that it might never be forgotten. When God calls the attention of men to a given subject, that call should be heeded with alacrity, and it should not be neglected on any account.

Here it is opportune to analyze the question in hand, and look at it in its several parts and phases, and bring out the various specific things that man must do in his conversion; and the very first thing that claims our attention is the duty to believe in

the Lord Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God. This is a divine command, and every such command carries with it the idea of an act or acts of obedience on the part of the one commanded. The act or acts may be either mental or physical, or both, but whether the one or the other, or both, they are the personal acts of the one commanded; and hence the duty to believe is man's duty, and he must perform it. But that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is a proposition that man can not believe except upon sufficient and adequate testimony. The proposition is a divine and superhuman one, and hence testimony of the same nature is the only kind of proof that can establish it in a rational mind. We are told in the sacred volume that "belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," and this shows us the vital relation between the Scriptures and intelligent faith or belief in Jesus as the Messiah of God. God has borne testimony to the divine Sonship of the Nazarene, and if we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, and we can receive it with the utmost confidence, and build upon it the most unswerving faith.

God has borne His testimony to this wonderful proposition "both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." This shows the important relation of the miracles of the New Testament to the gospel of God's grace. They constitute the foundation upon which faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God rests, and without which there could be no such faith. On this point the Scriptures bear the following testimony: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not

written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30, 31). It is self-evident that this item of conversion must be accomplished by man himself. Neither God nor man can believe for another, but every one must believe for himself, and this makes it necessary for every man to read or hear the word of God that he may believe and thus accomplish this part of his conversion. In harmony with this principle we read that when the Samaritans "believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Philip preached the gospel to those people, and they heard and believed in accordance with the fact that belief comes of hearing the word of Christ. And we also learn that when Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas "so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed." Other passages might be cited to the same effect, but those already quoted make it perfectly clear that in conversion men believe in Jesus Christ upon the testimony which God has given of His Son in the Holy Scriptures.

Next comes repentance, which also involves human action, as the etymology of the Greek word for repentance indicates. That word is *metanoia*, from *meta* (with) and *nous* (the mind), thus showing that repentance is action that a man performs with his mind; and the first definition that Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" gives of the word is "a change of mind." This is likewise implied

in the fact that repentance is a command of God, and every such command indicates action on the part of him who is commanded. The following Scripture is pertinent here: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30). Every divine command implies ability on the part of those commanded to comply with the command, whatever it may be. It would neither be gracious nor just for God to give man a command that he is unable to obey, for John says: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." A command which man has no ability to obey would certainly be very grievous. Thus it appears that repentance is something that a sinner does himself; he changes his own mind with respect to his conduct towards God, and determines to "cease to do evil, and learn to do good." Repentance is a fruit of godly sorrow, or sorrow that results from one's conviction that he has sinned against God, as Paul declares in the following terms: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret" (2 Cor. 7:10). This sorrow is in marked contrast with that selfish sorrow which a wrong-doer experiences when a due penalty is visited upon him for the wrong that he has done. A thief is caught in the act of stealing, or with stolen goods upon him, and is consigned to the penitentiary for a term of years on account of his crime. While in prison he experiences sorrow, not because he has sinned against the State and wronged his fellow-man, but because he is suffering punishment for his sin, and at the end of his term of imprisonment he will probably resume his



nefarious business. His sorrow is simply selfish, and does not bring forth genuine repentance. But if he is sorry because he has done wrong—that he has sinned against law and society—he will resolve to amend his life and bring forth the fruits of repentance in reformation, and might safely be pardoned and set at liberty, and received back into the confidence of the community.

If there is anything that should overwhelm the soul of man with deep and lasting sorrow, it is certainly the conviction that one has sinned against the kind, loving, gracious and merciful Father in whom “we live, and move, and have our being.” And unless the conscience is seared as with a hot iron, serious meditation upon the fact that one has sinned against God will produce that “godly sorrow” which will prompt one to determine to quit sinning, and live soberly, righteously and godly the rest of his life. And why should not the knowledge of the fact that one has transgressed the law of God and offended Him who is “too wise to err, and too good to be unkind,” fill the heart of a sinner with the profoundest and purest sorrow? And why should not such sorrow turn the soul in disgust away from sin, thus producing repentance that brings no regret, and reconciling the soul to God? Such a heart will cry out in deepest repentance, “I have sinned against high heaven, and in the sight of the God of holiness, and with His help I will turn over a new leaf and live a new life.” Nothing in human life is more hateful than sin when looked at from the standpoint of godly sorrow, and when so seen it fills the soul with loathing disgust, and it says, “I will no longer live therein,” and repentance naturally follows.

Then comes the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and this confession is made openly in the presence of men. The teaching of Scripture is very plain and explicit on this point. Consider the following words from the Master Himself: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). This is one of the most precious promises among all "the exceeding great and precious promises" of the gospel of God's grace. The thought of being owned and confessed by Jesus Christ before the judgment-bar of God makes the soul of man quiver with the most delightful anticipation, and presents a most powerful lure to stimulate one to the greatest possible effort to secure the "abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Lord further says: "Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." It will be a day of ineffable glory when the redeemed shall stand in the presence of God and His angels, to hear the Master say: "Father, these are they who confessed me before men, and I now confess them in this august presence, and own them as my disciples." A more pleasing prospect than that could not greet the eye of faith nor cheer the heart of hope. But there is another side to this question, which we should not fail to consider. Listen! "But he that denieth me in the presence of men, shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God." And failure to confess is taken for denial, for the Lord says: "Whosoever is not for me is against me." This question receives great emphasis from Paul's language in Rom. 10:9, 10, as follows: "Because if thou shalt

confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

The culminating item of conversion is baptism, and the word of God is very full and complete in its teaching on this question. “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;” “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned;” “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit;” “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name;” “Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” “When the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”—are some of the pointed declarations of the sacred writings on this subject, and they clearly show that in the ordinance of baptism a penitent believer who confesses Jesus Christ to be the Son of God turns to the Lord to the salvation of his soul. They also show that baptism is a personal duty which every one must perform for himself as an

act of his own volition. No one can be baptized for another or have another baptized without his consent. Baptism is an interrogation or an inquiry of a good conscience toward or after God, and this is an interrogation or inquiry that every one must make himself personally and directly, and it can not be made by substitution. Thus we see that all along the line of conversion man is active, doing the things that conversion involves.

What, then, has God to do in the matter? Much every way. Take the item of belief or faith. It belongs to God to furnish the foundation for faith in testimony that is adequate to the production of intelligent faith in the human mind, and He has abundantly done this both verbally and in the miracles that are recorded in the New Testament. When Jesus was baptized, God spoke from the vaulted sky and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and this declaration was repeated on the mount of transfiguration. Thus we have the direct testimony of the greatest witness in the universe upon which to rest our faith in the Messiahship and deity of Christ Jesus. There can be no firmer basis for faith than the word of Him who can not lie, for, while "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass, . . . the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." We can repose with the utmost confidence upon the word of Him "who spake, and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast," concerning which word Jehovah through Isaiah says: "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and

giveth 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." This is one of the imperishable stones in the foundation that God has laid for our faith, and upon it we can stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of the Lord.

But in addition to this verbal testimony that Jehovah has given concerning His Son, we have the never-failing evidence found in the miraculous works that were performed by Jesus Christ and His apostles in attestation of His claim to be the only begotten Son of God. To the Jews the Master said: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." Here Jesus even puts His works above His word in their evidential value as to His relation to God, and that presents the strongest possible foundation for our faith in Him. When the Lord informed His disciples that Lazarus was dead, He said: "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe" (John 11:15). In this saying He had reference to the wonderful miracle that He would by and by work in raising Lazarus from the dead, and thus strengthen the faith of His followers in Himself as the Messiah of God; and this was the great and ultimate purpose of all His miracles, as is declared by John in a passage quoted in another place in this discourse. But the keystone in the arch of this miraculous evidence is found in the resurrection of the Lord Himself from the dead, as is set forth by Paul in the following



passage: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised before through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:14). "Dead" here (*nekroon*) is plural, and it is no doubt intended to include all those whom Christ raised from the dead, but with supreme emphasis upon the resurrection of the Lord of glory, who thereby brought life and immortality to light. Had He failed to rise from the dead, all His claims would have fallen to the ground in a heap of ruins, and we would have been left without God and without hope in a world of darkness and despair. But as He triumphed over death and the grave, and arose a triumphant conqueror, we can plant our feet upon that supreme fact, and believe in Him with an undying faith. And God not only presents the evidence to enable us to believe, but He also offers an adequate motive to induce us to believe, and that motive is the promise of immortality and eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life," says the Master, and surely a higher motive to action could not be presented to the mind of man.

The wonderful exhibition of the goodness of God, as displayed in His providence and through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is the cord that draws men to God in repentance, as Paul declares in the following language: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). By the sun whose light

in swathes the earth in garments of glory; by the stars that twinkle in the heavens; by the pattering rain and the sparkling dew; by the succession of day and night and seedtime and harvest; by the rippling brook and the majestically flowing river; by the song of the bird and the beauty of the flower; by our daily food and raiment, and by a thousand other tokens of His providential goodness, does God appeal to men to quit sinning against Him, and live according to His will. But the supreme manifestation of God's goodness to the children of men is seen in the tragedy of the cross and the scenes of Calvary. Just before the Lord expired, He uttered this sky-smiting cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This heart-rending question received no reply in words, but the answer may be read between the lines in the gospel of God's grace, and it runs something like this: "My beloved Son, I must forsake you for a little while now, that I may not have to forsake the suffering children of men forever. Men are exposed to eternal death, and the only way for me to save them and be just, is to leave you to yourself in this hour of your supreme need." "O for such love let rocks and hills their lasting silence break!" It is no wonder that the earth clothed itself in the robes of mourning, nor that rocks leaped from hillsides to emphasize the awfulness of the tragedy! How can men help being led to repentance by this wonderful display of God's goodness? "Lord, help me to turn away from that hateful thing which has made it necessary for Thee to make such a tremendous sacrifice for my redemption" would seem to be the natural outcry of the soul of man in view of the heavenly Father's lovingkindness.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of a higher motive to influence men to act, than the one that God has placed before us to induce us to confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. The hope of eternal salvation appeals to a rational mind with tremendous power, and is a mighty dynamo to prompt men to make the "good confession." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," is the way whereby God seeks to persuade men to confess His Son, and certainly the appeal carries with it wonderful power.

Practically the same motive is placed before men to induce them to be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," says the Prince of life and salvation. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins," says the Holy Spirit through an inspired apostle. "The antitype to which, even baptism, doth also save you," declares the unerring word of God. In these and other passages God brings to bear upon men and women a very high and holy motive to influence them to do His will.

Thus we see that in every item of conversion there is co-operation between God and man. God presents the evidence to prove that Jesus Christ is His Son, but man does the believing. God offers the motive to induce man to repent, but man does the repenting. God persuades man to confess His Son, but man does the confessing. God appeals to man to be baptized, but man chooses to be baptized. From one point of view God converts men, and from another point of view men convert themselves, and from still another

point of view men convert one another. "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19, 20). "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:16-18). A marginal rendering is "to turn them," and this is manifestly the correct rendering, and it is so rendered in the Common Version, and by Dean Alford in his "New Testament for English Readers." Paul was to turn or convert those to whom he was sent, from darkness to light, just as he was to open their eyes. God converts people, people convert themselves, and people convert one another. God presents evidence and motives, men preach these to their fellows, and, influenced thereby, hearers convert themselves, or turn to the Lord, who saves them.

The following declarations of Scripture are in line with the foregoing argumentation: "And many of the children of Israel shall he [John the Baptist] turn unto the Lord their God" (Luke 1:16). "And all they that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord" (Acts 9:35). "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:28). "We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from

these vain things unto a living God" (Acts 14:15). "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God" (Acts 15:19). In all these passages the word "turn" translates the Greek term *epistrepho*, which indicates the act or acts of conversion. With their eyes men see what God has placed before them, with their ears they hear what God has said, with their hearts they understand what God has revealed, and then convert themselves or turn to the Lord, who does for them what they can not do for themselves—He heals or pardons them. No man can save himself from his sins, but every one must turn to the Lord in His appointed way, and look to Him alone for the boon of salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ, and He alone, has authority to forgive sin and save sinners from its condemnation. Humbly and penitently the believer must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and obey Him in the ordinance of baptism, and thus come to Him who can "save to the uttermost all that come to God by him." Sinner, listen to the gospel call, accept the overture of mercy extended through Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, and so accept and enjoy the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.



# THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF THE DEAD

## *A SERMON*

TEXT.—“We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.”—2 Cor. 5: 8.

**B**Y the intermediate state of the dead I mean the state or condition of the dead between death and the final judgment, and the subject brings us face to face with the immediate future—that future which lies just in front of us, and into which people enter when they die. I expect that most people, when they think of the future, place it away beyond the judgment, and whatever intervenes between now and then seems hazy, nebulous and uncertain. In this sermon we will make an effort to look into that future toward which we are rapidly hastening, and into which we must soon enter. No more interesting or thrilling subject for thought and reflection than this ever engaged the attention of the human mind, and whatever time we devote to its investigation will be well and profitably spent. A distinguished preacher was once spending some time visiting a friend and brother in central Kentucky. One evening the two were engaged in general conversation, when the host began to talk about the State of Iowa, which was then regarded as situated in the wilds of the distant Northwest. The man talked with remarkable

intelligence about that region of country. He had read up on its soil, its products, its climate, and everything pertaining to its material resources. The guest wondered why it was that his host was so interested in and enthusiastic about Iowa, and he aimed to so direct the conversation that he would discover the secret. Presently it came out that the man's children had all married and gone to Iowa and made it their home. No longer was it a puzzle to the preacher as to why his friend was so deeply interested in Iowa, for it was the home of his children. And pretty soon it developed that the man himself had sold his bluegrass farm, and made investments in Iowa, and expected soon to make it his home. All was then as clear as light as to why the man had taken such pains to inform himself about Iowa—it was the home of his children, and would soon be his own home.

This is a fine illustration of our case with respect to the future. Already it is the home of many loved ones, and the time is not far distant when it will be your home and mine, and investigation with respect to it should be intensely interesting to every one of us. In pursuing the line of thought our subject suggests, we will necessarily skirt along the borderland between two worlds, and if now and then we can reach over and pluck a flower from the garden of the Lord to cheer us along the way, I am sure that we will feel amply repaid for our mental labor. I may say here that my investigation of this topic, which has been long, patient, and somewhat thorough, has not led me to the conclusion commonly entertained by Biblical expositors, and my apology for dissenting from the popular view is that I have not

so learned the Scriptures. The view generally held upon this subject is that somewhere between earth and heaven there is an intermediate place known by the general name of Hades, which simply means what is unseen. It is held that Hades is divided into two compartments, one of which is called Paradise, and the other, Tartarus. According to this view, Paradise is a place of reception for the spirits of the righteous, into which they enter when they leave the body, and where they remain till the end of time, when they are judged and consigned to the place of their eternal abode. In Paradise these spirits are conscious and happy, but are not in heaven proper—are not in the presence of God. Tartarus is a place of reception for the wicked dead, into which they enter at the death of the body, and where they remain till the judgment in a state of consciousness and misery.

Both as a matter of choice and necessity this sermon directs attention exclusively to the intermediate state or condition of the righteous dead; and this turns to the mind's eye the beautiful side of the picture. It is not pleasant to either think or talk of the future condition of the wicked, and perhaps that is one reason why the modern pulpit does not deal largely with that phase of the subject. It is a matter, however, upon which God has spoken, and the minister of God should, upon proper occasions, faithfully declare God's word on future punishment as well as future salvation and happiness. But a preacher can not very well handle both sides of the question in one discourse, and in a special sermon one may choose between the two sides of the general subject without disloyalty to Jehovah, and I have chosen to treat of the immediate future of the right-

eous dead in this discourse. I have said that I do not accept the popular interpretation of this theme. On the contrary, I hold that those who die in the service of God, under the gospel, go directly to God and enter at once upon the enjoyment of His presence and fellowship, and for them there is no intermediate place. As I understand the Scriptures, the intermediate-place arrangement did exist under the old covenant, and that as a matter of moral necessity in the administration of the divine government. And here this question emerges: What is it that separated man from God? As we trace the course of human history back toward its fountainhead, we find that the channel becomes narrower and narrower, till it is made manifest that the human race took its rise in a single pair—a man and a woman fresh from the hand of the divine Creator, and as pure and clean as the driven snow. The Garden of Eden, with its newly created occupants, furnishes a theme worthy of the genius and skill of the most gifted poet. Trees, fruit and flowers flourish in richest profusion, while the songs of birds fill the air with entrancing music, and, to crown it all, God comes down and graces the environment with His glorious presence. He speaks in words and tones of love to the being that bears His own image, and man looks into His fatherly face and bids Him welcome to the Edenic home. Here are scenes and circumstances of bliss and glory that are indescribable and unsurpassable.

But we turn away from these enchanting visions for a little while, and then look back, and what a change! The garden, the trees, the fruit, the birds, are still there, but man is gone, and no longer are the footfalls of Jehovah heard amid the bowers of

that delightful place. Man is a wanderer, and God has withdrawn His personal presence from the land. What has brought about this wonderful and fearful change? What is it that has separated man from God and driven both from this beautiful abode? That hateful something that we call *sin* has done it—that dreadful thing that “brought death into the world, and all our woes”; that detestable enemy of both God and man, that men roll under their tongues as a sweet morsel, and swallow the essence of a deadly poison, and hug to their bosoms as a boon companion, only to later on feel the sting of the hissing viper. Sin, through the disobedience of man, came into the world and built up a wall of separation between God and man, over which man could not pass to meet God, and over which God would not pass to meet man. How hateful a thing is sin, and how disastrous in its effects! But, while man has been driven from the home that the Father had given him, and while God has withdrawn His personal presence from him, still he is the object of divine love, and at a distance God follows him with an outstretched hand laden with innumerable blessings, and sends him messages that inspire the hope that all is not finally lost. And in this it is probable that angels saw something that seemed to be a discrimination in the administration of the affairs of the divine government. At some time in the dim and distant past some of the angels sinned, and were immediately expelled from heaven, and consigned to outer darkness to await the condemnation of the day of final accounts, unfollowed by a single ray of hope, and uncheered by a solitary promise of deliverance. Yet man, who likewise sinned and fell from his first estate, is the recipient of the divine favor in blessings



without number, and promises that are most precious because of the blessed hope that they inspire.

This presented a problem that angels could not then solve, but they could see that God, by withdrawing His personal presence from man, by which He put the seal of His disapproval and condemnation upon sin, was not compromising with sin, nor doing violence to the principles of eternal truth and righteousness. They could reasonably infer that something was concealed from them then, but would be revealed at the proper time, that would make everything plain, and fully vindicate God in His treatment of sinful man. God was looking down through the vista of time and saw Calvary and the cross, and beheld the stream of sin—atoning blood that was by and by to flow from the side of His Son, that would enable Him to be just and at the same time deal mercifully with His erring children of earth. This angels could not do, but they could wait and watch for coming events that would clear up the mystery. I have said that God's withdrawal of His personal presence from man manifested His disapproval of sin, and I wish now to state that that manifestation, to serve its purpose, must be kept up as long as sin, the cause of the separation, remains uncanceled. And this leads me to make the following statement: Not till the blood of Christ was shed upon the cross was any sin of man ever actually or absolutely forgiven. The Scriptures declare (Heb. 10:4) that "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins," and yet that is the only kind of blood that was ever shed by divine authority with respect to sin, till the blood of the Lamb of God was poured out upon Calvary. It is true enough that the forgiveness of sins is

spoken of as having taken place under the old covenant when animal sacrifices were offered as an atonement for sin, but only in a relative or provisional sense. The shedding of the blood of animals for the remission of sin was a temporary arrangement, in view of which, because it typified the shedding of the blood of Christ, He could stay the penalty due sin, and grant the sinner respite from time to time, till the great day of atonement when the blood of His Son should take away the sins of His people.

The word of God tells us (Heb. 10:3) that "in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year." When on the day of atonement the worshiper made his sin-offering, his sins were not canceled, but were rolled forward a year, to be recalled the next year on the day of atonement. Under this arrangement the punishment due sin was not inflicted, nor was sin obliterated. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" When God absolutely forgives sin it is obliterated, and the sinner stands to God as if he had never sinned. This never took place under the old covenant, and when a servant of the Lord died his sins remained untaken away, and he could not go into the immediate presence of God. This gave rise to the necessity for that intermediate and temporary place called Paradise, into which the departing spirit of the just went at the death of the body, where it continued to exist in a condition of consciousness and happiness, but, as it were, held at arm's-length from God because its sins still stood between it and God. One of the characteristics of the new covenant, that differentiate it from the old, is that under it provision is made for the actual or absolute forgiveness of sin. In giving

a prophetic description of the new covenant, and contrasting it with the old, Jeremiah (chap. 31) says: "And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." This passage Paul quotes in the eighth chapter of Hebrews, and applies it to the covenant mediated by Jesus Christ, under which God blots sin out and remembers it no more forever. When Christ shed His blood on Calvary, a fountain was opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness, into which the Lord dipped the hand of His mercy, and drew it across the page containing a record of the sins of His people, thus blotting them out or covering them from His sight, and purging them from His memory.

Let us now examine some of the passages that seem to clearly support the foregoing contention: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26). Divine dispensations preceding the new covenant were simply dispensations of forbearance, and not dispensations of actual forgiveness—dispensations under which God passed over the sins of His people without either forgiving them or punishing the sinner; and in due time He set forth His Son crucified, to show that He was righteous in the

exercise of this forbearance, and was making no compromise with sin. This revealed to angels what had previously been a mystery to them, and enabled them to see the ground of God's dealings with His people in former times; and no doubt that it called forth a full chorus of praise from the "choir invisible," in which God was glorified in the midst of the heavens, and acknowledged to have been just and righteous in all His dealings with men in ages past, as well as at that present season. Before passing from this passage to another, it might be well to call attention to the following rendering: "*Because of the passing over of the sins done aforesaid, in the forbearance of God.*" The rendering given in the Common Version is this: "*For the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*" "For the remission of sins" is an expression that occurs in Matt. 26:28 and Acts 2:38, as rendered by the king's translators, and readers of that translation are liable to conclude that the phrase means the same thing in all three of the passages, for a stable principle of interpretation is that identical expressions must have identical meanings.

But the expressions are by no means identical in the original. In Matt. 26:28 the preposition rendered "for" is *eis*, which means "unto" or "in order to," and the same is true of Acts 2:38, while in Rom. 3:24 the preposition is *dia*, which means "because of." In Matt. 26:28 and Acts 2:38 the noun rendered "remission" is *aphesin*, which means "remission," while in Rom. 3:24 the noun is *piresin*, which means "passing over" or "passing by." Christ's blood was shed unto (*eis*) the remission (*aphesin*) of sins. That is, Christ's blood was shed *in order to* the remission of sins, and on the day of Pentecost people



were told to repent and be baptized unto (*eis*) the remission (*aphesin*) of their sins. That is, they were to repent and be baptized *in order to* the remission of their sins. "Unto [*eis*] remission" in Acts 2:38 must have the same meaning that "unto [*eis*] remission" has in Matt. 26:28. If we may make identical expressions mean opposite things, to suit somebody's theology, then language is fickle and whimsical, and human speech is not a safe medium of communication between human minds. But in Rom. 3:24 it is said that God sent forth His Son as a propitiation, to show His righteousness "because of [*dia*] the passing over [*piresin*] of sins done aforetime," and the Revised Version makes the distinction very clear.

Let us now consider the following passage: "And for this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15). The death here referred to is manifestly the death of the Saviour, and it is said that that death took place "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant," or "the sins that were done aforetime in the forbearance of God." Now, it is axiomatic that, if Christ died for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, those transgressions were not redeemed till that death occurred, or the "sins done aforetime" were not actually remitted till the tragedy of the cross was enacted. That proposition seems to have the force of a demonstration. It is thrillingly interesting to note the bearing of this upon the servants of God who lived and sinned under the first covenant. It



was done that "they might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." From this it is as clear as a sunbeam that those who lived and died under the first covenant did not receive "the promise of the eternal inheritance." And here it becomes necessary to distinguish between a promise in the abstract and a promise in the concrete. A father says to his boy: "Son, be good, obedient and industrious, and when Christmas comes I will give you a watch." That is a promise in the abstract; that is, something is conditionally promised, which is to be bestowed in the future. Time passes on, Christmas arrives, the conditions have been complied with, and the father turns over the watch, and the son receives the promise in the concrete; that is, the thing promised. So with regard to the ancients: they received a promise in the abstract—that is, a promise was made them to be fulfilled in the future—but they did not receive the promise in the concrete, or the thing promised—that is, "the eternal inheritance"—and could not receive that till their sins were taken out of the way.

The following passage is in point here: "And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39, 40). "These all" alludes to those spoken of or referred to in general terms in the preceding part of the chapter; they died in faith, but they did not receive the concrete promise—namely, "the eternal inheritance"—because they were not "made perfect." Let us now institute and examine this inquiry: In what respect or respects were those who lived and died under the old covenant not made perfect? From the

foregoing Scriptures it is quite evident that they were imperfect in two important particulars: In the first place, they were not perfect in their redemption from sin, as has already been pointed out, and, in the second place, they were not perfect in their inheritance, and hence they did not enjoy the "better thing" that God has provided for us under the gospel of His grace. Passing down into the twelfth chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, we find the writer drawing a contrast between the two dispensations, that of Moses and that of Christ, and pointing out the superiority of the latter to the former, and in regard to the Christian dispensation, he says: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the *spirits of just men made perfect*, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel" (verses 22-24). It is interesting and instructive to note that the apostle does not say, "Ye are come to just men made perfect," but "to the *spirits* of just men made perfect." The reference is undoubtedly to the disembodied spirits of just men who had lived and died in the service of God; and if we will remember that the Scriptures were not originally written in divisions of chapters and verses, we will see that this language is very closely connected with the closing words of the eleventh chapter. That the spirits spoken of in the twelfth chapter are the spirits of the just men mentioned or alluded to in the eleventh chapter, is a fair and logical, if not a necessary, inference.

Those spirits were not made perfect while they remained in the flesh, but they are now spoken of as made perfect. What has occurred to bring about this perfection? Turn to the tenth chapter, and read the fourteenth verse: "For by one offering he hath *perfected* for ever them that are sanctified." That this "one offering" by which perfection was brought in, was the offering of Christ Himself upon the cross, there can be no doubt. When His blood was shed on Calvary, as indicated in another part of this discourse, God was enabled to actually forgive and blot out the sins of His people in all past ages, and thus perfect their redemption from sin. Closely following the statement that the sanctified were perfected by one offering, the writer quotes the following declaration from Jeremiah's description of the new covenant: "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Sins that had been remembered from year to year are now stricken from the record, and cast into the pit of eternal oblivion. But while the spirits of the just are now perfect in their redemption from sin, they are not yet perfect in their inheritance, and in order that they may be perfected in this respect, and come into possession of the eternal inheritance that has been promised them, they must be brought out of Paradise, and taken into the glorious presence of God. The only being who is adequate to this task is the one who perfected these spirits in their redemption from sin, and, in order that He might do it, it was necessary for Him to go into Paradise where they were, bring them out, and take them to heaven with Him. Just before He expired on the cross, He said to a penitent man who was crucified by His side: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This

shows that when Jesus died His spirit went into the intermediate place where the spirits of the just men of all the past ages had been awaiting the event that would make them perfect, and take away the wall of partition that sin had erected between them and God.

When Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, they "spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." They seem to have felt a personal interest in that decease, and no doubt expected to receive some immediate benefit therefrom. And when Jesus entered Paradise I doubt not that Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the spirits of the just, gathered about Him and hailed Him as their chief and deliverer. He remained there for three days and nights, and on the morning of the third day He came against the gates of that part of Hades known as Paradise with His omnific power, and they gave way before Him, and He came out over their ruins a triumphant conqueror. Nor did He come alone. He brought with Him the multitude of spirits whose redemption from sin He had perfected through His death, that they might go home with Him to glory, and enter upon the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance in the presence of God. Sin, the thing that separated man from God, has been taken away, and there is no reason why the separation should be continued. As long as the cause remained, the effect remained likewise, but when the cause disappeared the effect might go with it. It is said of Christ that "when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8). No doubt this passage has perplexed many students of the Word, as it did me for a long time. "What can



'leading captivity captive' mean?" was the question that caused me perplexity. But by and by I chanced to get hold of a Bible with marginal renderings, and I found that the marginal rendering of this passage was, "He led captive a multitude of captives," and through this rendering light began to break in upon the passage. But upon examining the original I found that the noun (*aichmalosian*) is singular, and that it literally means "captivity." This gave me a backset for a time, and the difficulty seemed to return to the passage. But in my anxiety to sift the matter to the bottom, and find the meaning of this interesting declaration in the word of God, I had recourse to Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon," which has helped me out of a number of difficulties, and discovered that that great work, the universally acknowledged standard lexicon for New Testament Greek, in defining this word, refers to this very passage, and says, "Abstract for concrete; *i. e.*, *aichmalotoi*." *Aichmalotoi* is the plural of *aichmalotos*, which means "a captive."

This seemed to fully illuminate the passage and make its meaning perfectly clear. The place of captivity is put for the occupants of the place, and the idea is that Christ, when He ascended up on high, led captives captive. Perhaps I can make the meaning a little clearer through an illustration: Let it be supposed that a band of marauding Mexicans invade the southern border of the United States, capture a number of women and children, and carry them off as captives into their own country. A competent military leader assembles an adequate army, goes in pursuit, overtakes the depredators, rescues the captives, and returns with them to "the land of the free and the home of the brave." As he returns it may



be said of him, putting the abstract for the concrete, "he leads captivity captive." He went into the land of their captivity, broke the power that held them captive, and returns with them as his captives. Paradise was a place that captured God's people, and held them as captives till He should come, who would destroy the place of captivity and take its occupants—the captives—as His captives, home to the "eternal inheritance." After coming out of Paradise with His captives, the Master spent forty days with His disciples, instructing them more fully in the things pertaining to His kingdom, and then ascended up on high in the presence of the apostles, who gazed after Him till a "cloud received him out of their sight." I do not think that that was an atmospheric cloud, but a cloud of like nature with the "cloud of witnesses" that surround us as we run the race that is set before us. It was made up of the captives that the Lord had released from Paradise, who had been hovering in midair awaiting to be rejoined by their deliverer for the final upward flight. As He approached the company, it, in true military style, divided, and the ascending Lord passed into the opening and beyond the sight of the astonished apostles, who stood gazing up into heaven as if transfixed in their tracks, till two angels in white apparel attracted their attention and gave them assurance that "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."

The ascension now begins in earnest, with Jesus at the head of the column of the ascending hosts. And here is something that baffles the skill of poets and orators. What majestic circles the rising millions

describe in their upward flight! Suns and moons and stars are passed, and left glistening and glimmering in the dim and distant rear. The Milky Way is encountered and traversed. Onward and upward they go. Deeper and deeper they plunge into the ethereal blue, till by and by the head of the column halts in front of the gate of the eternal city, and that scene is enacted which is described in the twenty-fourth Psalm. An attendant from without issues this startling order: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory will come in." This wonderful demand is met with the following challenge: "Who is the King of glory?" and the following response is made: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." He has fought with death and the grave, and has overcome both, and here is His risen body as a glorious trophy of that victory; and He has fought with Paradise itself, and triumphed over that, and here are the spirits which He perfected and liberated, as the trophies of that victory. Upon this basis the command is repeated from without, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory will come in;" and, as if to make certainty doubly sure, the challenge is repeated from within, "Who is this King of glory?" which receives the confident and final answer, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." This is enough, and the gates of the eternal city of God lift high their heads, and the doors swing back upon their golden hinges, while the King of glory, "leading captive a multitude of captives," and in triumphal march, passes through, and leads the rejoicing procession along the golden streets of the heavenly

Jerusalem to the martial music of the celestial band, into the very presence of Jehovah, and says with exuberant delight: "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me." It was a great occasion, and no doubt the angels of light struck the strings of their harps with unusual energy, and made the environment ring with the praises of Him who had delivered all them "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Those gates have never lowered their heads and those doors have never been closed since the victorious Lord led His captives in triumph through them, and from then till now they have afforded "a new and living way" of access into the presence of God. And as the children of God die under the gospel dispensation, they go directly to heaven, and enter upon the enjoyment of personal and direct fellowship with the heavenly Father. There is no intermediate Paradise now for the Lord's people, God having "provided some better thing for us" through Christ. Hence Stephen, just before he died, with his face shining like the face of an angel, said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened"—not Paradise; that was the best the ancients could do "apart from us," but "God has provided some better thing concerning us," and Stephen, dying in the service of God under the gospel dispensation, was permitted to look directly into heaven itself, with the assurance that he would take up his home there upon quitting his body. And the glorious proto-martyr exultantly continues, "And I see the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"—not Abraham's bosom now; that was the best that could be done for the servants of the Lord under the old covenant, but "God has provided some better

thing concerning us." Just as Stephen was about to leave the earth, Jesus arose from His seat at the right hand of God to receive him unto Himself, and introduce him to the heavenly host as another one of His ransomed children, and no doubt the "choir invisible" sang praise to Jehovah in honor of the occasion. And Stephen, with his last expiring breath, and with visions of the heavenly home luring him on, exclaimed in triumph: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What a glorious death!

And now, in conclusion, let us briefly consider the text: "We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." This passage, together with the one concerning Stephen, thoroughly refutes the cold, materialistic doctrine of "soul-sleeping." Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—not the grave. And Paul longed to "be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." The great apostle joyfully looked forward to being at home with the Lord while absent from the body; that is, between death and the resurrection. A person who contends that the soul sleeps in the grave with the body, in view of the language of Stephen and Paul on the subject, is beyond the reach of reason. "At home with the Lord!" Paul was then a pilgrim and a stranger in this world, but was on his journey home, and visions of the glory of that home that he was nearing cheered him on and filled him with courage to persevere unto the end of this life. "Farewell, vain world, I am going home," is language that every child of God may use as he trudges along the path of life, that is sometimes "dark and dreary." Before him the prospect of heaven will become "brighter and brighter

unto the perfect day," while "Jesus, all the day long, is his joy and his song." No Paradise now, "God having provided some better thing for us." "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." Amen and amen.



# CHRISTIANITY ITS OWN PROOF

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what you are about to do. For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.”—Acts 5: 35-39.

THE success of the apostles in winning disciples to Christ excited the anger of the Jewish rulers and leaders to a very high pitch, and they resorted to very harsh means in their effort to prevent the spread of the new teaching. They arrested the apostles and put them in prison, “but an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” Upon receiving this instruction “they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught.” Early that morning the high priest called the council together and sent to have the prisoners brought before them for trial. Not finding the apostles in the prison, the

messengers returned and said: "The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within." This report greatly perplexed the high priest and his associates, and, while they were wondering in regard to the circumstance, "there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are in the temple, standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned."

When the apostles appeared before the council, the high priest addressed them, saying: "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Little did this howling mob expect when they said to Pilate, "His blood be on us, and on our children," that they would so soon experience the reality of their own imprecation. But their sins are now finding them out, and their consciences are feeling the prick of the goad of guilt. To the high priest's speech Peter made the following noble reply: "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." This shaft went home to the hearts of the persecutors of the apostles, and threw them into such a rage that they "were minded to slay them." It was at this critical juncture that Gamaliel, an honorable Pharisee, "stood up in the council," and

addressed it in the language of our text. That his counsel was wise and judicious is perfectly manifest. The best way to dispose of some things is to refer them to the arbitrament of events, and sometimes the quickest method of killing an error is to let it severely alone, for frequently error fattens and thrives on agitation.

Gamaliel fortified his position by referring to recent events with which the members of the council were evidently acquainted, and sought thereby to allay the fury of the high priest and his associates, and get them to leave the matter involved to be decided by the natural course of events. His argument was based upon the soundest principles of reason, for if the doctrine which the apostles were preaching had been of men, it would soon have fallen to pieces like a rope of sand, and would not have outlived that generation. The fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ did not sink of its own weight is proof that it is of divine origin, and that men can not overthrow it. When we analyze the cause of Christ and look at it in the light of its history, we discover a conspicuous absence from it of all those factors and combinations of factors upon which men are accustomed to rely for the success of human enterprises. Of course it is trite to say that Jesus of Nazareth is the great hero of the gospel story, and that the whole system of Christianity revolves about Him, and is by Him held together. He is its foundation, and its stability depends upon the validity of His claims. He claimed to be the Son of God in a unique sense, in that He claimed to be "the only begotten Son of God"—the Son of God in a sense in which no other being in the universe can be said to be the Son of

God. Let us scrutinize this wonderful person to see if His equally wonderful success can be explained on the hypothesis that He was merely a man.

Sometimes it happens that the place from which a man comes gives him *eclat* and gains for him the attention and respect of the people. If a professional man from New York or London appears in a community to practice his profession, the city from which he comes throws around him a sort of halo that gives him prestige to start with. But Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was handicapped seriously by that fact. Galilee was the meanest division of Palestine, and Nazareth was the meanest spot in Galilee. So disreputable was it that there was an adage, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and Jesus was called a "Nazarene" by way of contempt. There was nothing about the place of His origin to commend Him to the favorable consideration of the people among whom He lived and taught and worked, but much to excite prejudice against Him, and hamper and embarrass Him in the promotion of His claims.

It occurs not infrequently that a man possessed of fine scholarship can, on account of that fact, readily gain the attention of the people, and get a hearing at their hands for the enterprise that he advocates. It is cause for felicitation that education is constantly advancing in the estimation of men, and, other things being equal, a good education is about the best capital with which a young man can begin life. Usually an educated young man will outdistance the one who is uneducated, in the race of life, and achieve success in business, while the other plods along at a tremendous disadvantage, possibly having a hard time to

make a comfortable living. But how was it with Jesus? Was He known among His countrymen as a finished scholar who might be regarded as a competent leader in a great enterprise? Far from it. In their astonishment at His wisdom the people said: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" This would seem to indicate that He had no school advantages whatever. While He could read, and appeared to have an intuitive knowledge of the Scriptures and of nature, yet He was not educated in the popular sense of the term, and hence He was destitute of this element of power to draw the attention of His fellow-citizens to Himself, and conciliate them to the cause that He launched and promoted.

Then, again, wealth is a mighty power in the affairs of men, and if one is possessed of large riches, that fact opens a way for one into the good graces of the people. It sometimes comes to pass that a man, almost solely on account of much money, can make his way into legislative chambers and Governors' seats; and it is said that legislative bodies have been swayed, in their legislation, by money. What is it that a man can not buy with money? Men can be bought, and it has been said that "every man has his price," and while this indictment is probably too broad, yet there is too much truth in it. Men can buy wives, and women, husbands, with gold. Sometimes a European snob, a sprig of royalty possibly, hears of an American girl who is an heiress to a large fortune, and at once he plans a trip to the New World to gobble up that fortune, and incidentally, of course, get a woman whom he will, *per gratiam*, call wife; and the little fool girl sells herself for a worthless title and throws her money in!



Did Jesus have anything of this kind to draw men to Him, and cause them to give favorable consideration to His claims? Far from it. While the foxes had holes, the Son of man had not where to lay His head. When His natural mother and legal father reached Bethlehem, the place of His birth, although they were no doubt footsore and travel-weary, there was "no room for them in the inn." And the probable reason that there "was no room for them in the inn" is that they did not have money to buy room with. If Joseph had been a millionaire, no doubt there would have been "room for them in the inn." This story was related to me in the community where the principal in the narrative lived: This man moved into the county of his adoption in an early day and took up a large body of land, and in process of time became quite wealthy. He handled cattle on a large scale, and he made frequent trips to Chicago with large shipments of beef cattle. On one of these occasions, after selling his cattle, he went to a hotel for lodgment. He had been about the stockyards, and his brogans were muddy and his farmer's clothing was somewhat soiled. When he went to the desk to register, the clerk eyed him suspiciously, and hesitated about taking him in, alleging scarcity of room. The old farmer looked around for a moment, and then said somewhat quizzically, "What's your old hotel worth? If you don't price it too high, I'll buy it, and I reckon I can stay then," and he simultaneously exhibited a great roll of money; and then there was plenty of room. Money talks and money pulls. But Jesus had no power of this kind. He was so poor that He had to perform a miracle to get a little piece of money to pay His head tax.

Sometimes a man has a strong pull through wealthy and influential friends, and in this way he is able to advance his cause. But how was it with Jesus in this regard? He had a body of close and loyal friends, but where did He get them? and what was their standing in the general community? Did He go to the imperial city of Rome and select from among her scholars and statesmen men to accompany Him in His work and take it up and carry it on after His death? Nay, verily. Did He go to Athens and make choice of some of her philosophers and orators to advocate His claims? Truly not. Did He go to Jerusalem and call some of her priests and scribes to be His apostles and chief supporters? Far from it. On the contrary, He went along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and by custom-houses, and called fishermen and tax-gatherers to the most important posts of His kingdom—men who were without social prestige and political influence. They were uncouth and uneducated men, who occupied the humblest walks of life—such men as no mere man would have thought of selecting to promote a great enterprise. That Peter, a leader among the apostles, was an unpolished and rough specimen of the genus homo, is evident from his conduct when he was accused by a Jewish maid and others of being a follower of Jesus. Under the third accusation he “began to curse and to swear,” and in the most profane manner he denied his Lord. Profanity was no new thing in the vocabulary of Peter, but was simply a revival of his old fisherman’s habit. And he could not have chosen a more successful method of convincing his accusers that he was not a disciple of Christ, for profanity was wholly foreign to the life and teaching of the

Master. If a man wishes to demonstrate that he is not a Christian, all he has to do is to begin to use profane language, for by that the people will know that he does not belong to the school of Christ.

Thus we see that the success of the cause of Christ can not be accounted for from the standpoint of worldly agencies, for not only were these elements of power and influence not enlisted in His behalf, but they were all arrayed against Him. Education, wealth, philosophy, tradition, established religions, oratory, social influence, the arm of law, priestcraft, etc., all conspired in efforts to put the gospel down and destroy it from the face of the earth. And, in addition to the handicaps enumerated above, the Saviour was finally condemned as a malefactor and crucified between two thieves, and this would have been enough to consign His cause to infamy and eternal forgetfulness if He had been a mere man. No human cause could have survived the circumstances of adversity under which Christianity fought its first battles and won its first victories. On the contrary, it would have found its level among forgotten delusions long before the passing of the generation of men and women then living. It is not at all wonderful that the Master's closest friends forsook Him in the hour of His direst need. When they saw that Jesus was going to be put to death, their courage failed them, and their hope forsook them, and they naturally fell into the deepest depths of despair. From their viewpoint they saw no possible chance for the cause that they had espoused to survive, and hence they gave up the enterprise as lost, and betook themselves to their former occupations. In that hour of darkness and distress the whole scheme revealed

itself to them as visionary, and impressed them with the idea that they had been mistaken in regard to the whole matter. Their hope died when the Lord died, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Not only were the disciples heart-broken and thoroughly disappointed, but the enemies of their Master were hilarious and exultant over their apparent success in suppressing the cause of the Nazarene. It looked as if their success was complete, and it would have been if God had not been in the gospel of His Son. Its enemies were yet to learn that they were fighting against God, and that their apparent success was but the beginning of their utter defeat. A few days after the death of the Lord His disciples, who had forsaken Him and abandoned Him to His fate, were boldly standing before the people in His name, and filling Jerusalem with the doctrine which they preached concerning Him. What has brought about this marvelous change in their conduct? A little while ago they were arrant cowards denying their Lord, but now they are as bold as lions and are preaching Him as Lord and Christ. They "have been begotten again unto a living hope" by the resurrection of the Master, and are now willing to suffer and die for Him. It is not my purpose to discuss the resurrection of Christ extensively here, as that is done in another sermon. I simply allude to it in this connection to indicate the ground of this wonderful change in the deportment of the apostles. These men are now boldly preaching Jesus and the resurrection, and charging home upon their hearers the guilt of murder. It is one of the most wonderful spectacles in human history, and it challenges the

admiration of every appreciative soul. Hats off in the presence of such heroes as are now before us, ready to lay down their lives in the service of Him whom they have so recently denied and forsaken! Their names are entitled to be written high upon the scroll of fame, and their brows to be encircled in chaplets of immortal glory.

Be it remembered, too, that this was not done in a corner. It would have been suspicious if these men had gone off up into Galilee to make their proclamation in some obscure corner of that unsavory district. It would have been to invite and assure defeat in their great enterprise. Not in Galilee, but "first in Jerusalem, then in Judæa, then in Samaria, and then unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Right there in the city where Jesus had been crucified and buried, in the presence of wily scribes, alert Pharisees and conscienceless priests, and where enemies had every opportunity to confute them, they proclaimed Jesus as having arisen from the dead, ascended up on high, and been coronated in the midst of the heavens as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is no surprise that such a message, delivered under most unusual circumstances, brought three thousand souls to the foot of the cross to take upon themselves the yoke of Him who had said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The proclamation of the apostles fell upon the hearts of many of their hearers like oil upon troubled waters, and brought them from darkness to light, and translated them into the kingdom of God's dear Son. There was joy in heaven and in



Jerusalem that Pentecostal day when the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ were opened up to the people who were assembled in the "city of the great King" from "every nation under heaven." Christianity was proving itself to be divine by what it was accomplishing, and starting upon a career that was destined under God to carry the name of Jesus to earth's remotest bounds.

But this cause, which started so auspiciously, was not to have smooth sailing throughout the voyage which it began that day. In a little while the enemies of the cross inaugurated a crusade of opposition that apparently threatened its extermination. The priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and elders, moved by prejudice and jealousy, instituted a campaign of persecution that brought about the martyrdom of Stephen, and scattered the disciples from Jerusalem like autumn leaves before the wind. No doubt these enemies congratulated themselves upon what they regarded as their success in putting a stop to this new doctrine; but they did not realize that they were dealing, not only with men, but also with God. If they had been dealing simply with men, their success would have been complete and permanent, and but little, if anything, more would have been heard of Jesus and the resurrection. But they failed to reckon with the Psalmist's idea that God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and hence they reckoned without their host. When Jesus commanded His apostles to "make disciples of all the nations," He assured them of His presence with them in their work, and this was a pledge that their labors should not be in vain.

The wrath of man drove the disciples from Jerusalem, but the result was far different from what the

persecutors expected, for they "that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word," or sowing the seed of the kingdom of God, and as a result churches sprang up all over the country. Yonder stands a stalk of thistle in the field, crowned with a head of thistle-seed, and while you are looking at it a whirlwind comes along, gets hold of that head of thistle, and literally tears it to pieces, and it looks as if the thistle were destroyed. But you observe that the atmosphere is laden with little objects that are flying in every direction. The wind is sowing thistle-seeds, and after awhile, instead of one thistle stalk, there are scores of them as a result of the apparent destruction of the parent stalk. So it was with the persecution in Jerusalem, that scattered the disciples abroad. The persecutors thought that they were destroying the cause of the Nazarene, but they were simply propagating it, and no doubt they were greatly chagrined when they heard that those whom they had driven out from Jerusalem were going through the land preaching the gospel, making disciples, and establishing churches. God was making the wrath of man to praise Him, and bringing to naught the machinations of His enemies. He was proving that Christianity is divine, and teaching its adversaries that they could not overthrow it.

Persecution followed persecution in rapid succession, so that some writers distinguish between ten general persecutions, but perhaps it would be more accurate, as suggested by Prof. Philip Schaff, to regard it as one persecution with occasional breaks. Sometimes the persecution was conducted by infuriated mobs, and sometimes under the sanction or at the instigation of kings and emperors, and always with

cruelty and in violation of all the principles of justice and equity. The records of the persecutions of those days constitute one of the darkest and bloodiest pages of human history, and the reading of it makes one sick at heart. Human ingenuity exhausted itself in devising ways and means of torture, and no extreme of cruelty was considered too severe to be administered to the disciples of Jesus Christ. It seems almost incredible that men could become so steeped in iniquity as to inflict such misery upon their fellows as Christian martyrs suffered during those dark and bloody days, and for no reason other than they accepted the Son of God as their Lord and Saviour. The dungeon, the gibbet, the fagot, and every other device for torture that could spring from the skill of man, were brought into requisition to inflict the most excruciating agony upon blameless men and women because they accepted Christianity and acknowledged Jesus to be their Lord and Master. For this head and front of their offending some men's tongues were cut out, so that they could not speak the name of their blessed Lord, while others were thrown to lions or pitched into cauldrons of boiling oil to perish in this awful manner.

The first Roman persecution was instigated by Nero, that moral monstrosity and prodigy of depravity, and on the flimsiest pretext. Two-thirds of Rome had been destroyed by a tremendous conflagration which was thought to be incendiary, and the people, wild with excitement, were breathing out threatening and slaughter against the miscreant who had perpetrated the diabolical deed. Guilt was about to be saddled upon the emperor, who was probably the criminal in the case, and to save himself, and know-

ing that there was great prejudice against the Christians, he resorted to the cruel ruse of accusing them of the crime, and proceeded to treat them as guilty without judge or jury. The cruelties that this caricature upon humanity inflicted upon innocent Christians beggar description, and even at this distance of both time and space from the scenes of his perfidy, one turns away from the picture with feelings of disgust and resentment. The clothing of some was saturated with oil and they were burned at night to illuminate the streets, while others were fed to hungry lions. The "Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopædia" makes this harrowing statement in regard to the Neronian persecution: "In the gardens of Nero, the present St. Peter's Square, the Christians were crucified; sewn into hides of wild beasts, and thrown before the dogs; enveloped with some inflammable stuff, raised on poles, and used as torches, etc."

Things went on thus under the reign of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian and Nerva, and during those periods very many Christians suffered martyrdom, while many others suffered in various other ways, sometimes being subjected to cruelty that was worse than death. Through all these hardships and adversities Christianity lived and flourished, and disciples of Christ were multiplied exceedingly. If this cause had been of men, it would have weltered and died in its own blood long before it was espoused by Constantine and given the protection of his throne. The fact that it did not die a premature death under the circumstances shows that it was of God, and that He was its guardian and protector. Without heavenly protection it could not have survived the evils that beset it in the days of its youth, but would have withered



and died like a tender plant when uprooted from its native soil. Herein lies a proof of its divinity, upon which we may stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and look forward to the attainment of immortality and eternal life. No, we are not following cunningly devised fables in accepting Jesus Christ as our Master and Saviour, but are following the lead of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, our divine Lord. With Paul we can triumphantly exclaim, "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and can with the utmost assurance receive the pledge of our blessed Lord that He is preparing places for us in the regions of eternal glory.

It is a very significant fact that the gospel has achieved its most conspicuous triumphs in the most enlightened and civilized parts of the footstool of God. It was thus in the beginning, and has been thus from then till now. Our holy religion has always courted the strongest light that could possibly be thrown upon it. It went to the imperial city of Rome, and there, in the dazzling light of the civilization of the metropolis of the ancient world, it unfurled its glorious banner and invited lawyers, scholars, statesmen, and citizens generally, to attach themselves to the meek and lowly Nazarene, and follow His leadership, and succeeded in subduing some of the household of Cæsar to the scepter of the King of Israel. It went to Greece and boldly challenged the attention of philosophers, orators and poets, and made disciples of Christ in the leading cities of that great and enlightened country. Christianity in some form has dominated all Europe for ages and established itself



in the most advanced regions of those wonderful countries. It has not worked with a hidden hand, nor skulked in the dark corners of the earth, but has fearlessly walked out into the open, and invited the severest scrutiny as to its wonderful claims. Under the circumstances it is easier to believe in the divinity of the gospel of Christ than to believe it to be a delusion, and "if weak be thy faith, why choose the harder side?"

"The tree is known by its fruit," and if Christianity be judged by this standard it has nothing to fear or be ashamed of, but everything of which to be proud. It has brought to pass the prophecy of Isaiah, who, looking forward to the renovating effect of the story of the cross, said: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." It has caused deserts to become fertile and blossom as the rose, and made music and joy take the place of sorrow and mourning. The vision of the evangelic prophet has been realized in the effects of the gospel in the world, so that "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Ezekiel saw a striking vision in connection with Jerusalem, of which he gives the following graphic description: "Then brought he me out by the way of the gate northward, and led me round by the way without unto the outer gate, by the way of the gate that looketh toward the east; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. When the man went forth eastward with the line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the ankles. Again

he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass through: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the bank of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, upon the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue forth toward the eastern region, and shall go down into the Arabah: and they shall go toward the sea; into the sea shall the waters go which were made to issue forth; and the waters shall be healed." This is a beautiful symbolic representation of the beginning, spread and effects of the gospel in the world. It began as a small stream, but widened and deepened as it went on its way, till it became a great river which poured its contents into the Dead Sea of humanity and healed and sweetened its bitter waters.

These gospel waters have healed and sweetened human life in all of its ramifications and relations. It has healed and sweetened domestic life as seen in a typical Christian family. A Christian home is the most delightful place on the face of the earth to those who belong to it. Sweeter and more beautiful flowers grow and flourish there than anywhere else in the wide, wide world, and the most cheering music beneath the skies floats out upon the atmosphere that surrounds such a home. Christian parents and children constitute a fellowship which angels might covet.

Contrast a typical Christian family with a typical pagan family, and you will at once see the difference, and when you remember that the difference is due to the uplifting and sanctifying influences of the religion of Jesus Christ, you will be able to more fully appreciate that religion. These waters have healed and sweetened national life by introducing into it principles that prompt and urge and enable people to do justice, love mercy, and fear God in all their dealings, and thus make society like the Paradise of Jehovah. Here is room for another contrast to the advantage of Christianity. Contrast a Christian community with a heathen community, and you will be struck with the wonderful difference in favor of the former. Who would want to exchange a home among followers of Christ for one among people that "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"? As a conspicuous example of the elevating and purifying influence of the gospel, take the Fiji Islands. Less than a century ago the inhabitants of those islands were cannibals, eating each other's flesh and drinking each other's blood. But finally the gospel found its way into those benighted regions, and caused the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" to shine unto those besotted people, and as a consequence a thorough moral and spiritual revolution has taken place. Now those islands are dotted over with Christian temples in which the people assemble to worship God, and family worship is quite general among them. A woman who spent a number of years in that territory says that about the last thing that one upon the streets at night hears is the songs and prayers of family devotion, and that this is repeated

in the early morning. Is the thing that could effect such a change in so short a time human or divine?

I repeat with emphasis that the success of the gospel under the circumstances proves to the exclusion of all reasonable doubt its divine paternity and its divine mission among men. If it be suggested that the success of Mohammedanism and Mormonism weakens the force of this argument, a sufficient answer is at hand: The cases are by no means parallel, for these isms operate upon lines that cross those upon which Christianity operates, at right angles. The gospel preaches self-denial, while the isms preach self-gratification and self-indulgence. Jesus says: "If any man would come after me, let him *deny* himself, and *take up his cross*, and follow me." He had no worldly honor or emoluments to offer men to induce them to attach themselves to Him and His cause, and when a man proposed to follow Him, probably actuated by sordid motives, He replied: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The gospel appeals to the very best that is in men, while the isms mentioned appeal to the baser passions of human nature. Christianity seeks to curb and check ambition, pride, lust, etc., while these are the propensities to which the isms cater. Mormonism was founded upon polygamy, and Mohammedanism looked to the sword for success, and both of these abominations the Lord Jesus Christ unsparingly condemns. Christianity teaches that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world," while the isms cultivate the things here condemned and are slack in the things that are commended. These isms are as



different from Christianity as night is from day, and their success was achieved through influences that Jesus Christ pointedly condemns. No, the success of these isms does not militate against the argument for the divinity of Christianity, based upon its success.

Now, if the Christian religion is from heaven, with the approval of God stamped upon it, as it certainly is, what should be the attitude of rational men and women toward it? There is but one reasonable answer to this question, and that is that people should be in haste to accept this religion and make it the guide of their lives. To reject the gospel, its Christ, and its salvation, is most irrational and unaccountable, and men do not act thus with respect to the ordinary affairs of life. Men are not slow to take advantage of a good business opportunity, and are upon the alert to discover such an opportunity. People in ill health will spend money and compass sea and land that they may be restored to bodily soundness, while at the same time they reject Him who offers them salvation from sin, and eternal life. What would be thought of a man who, if an epidemic were raging and destroying people by thousands, and a physician should appear with a specific that was never known to fail to effect a cure, and offer it to the afflicted without money and without price, would spurn the remedy and treat the physician with indifference, if not with contempt? Would such a man be regarded as in his right mind? Surely not; his friends would certainly look after his mental condition and take steps to have him cared for. And yet that is the way multiplied thousands of people act with respect to Christ and the gospel. The epidemic of sin is raging among men and destroying myriads



of souls, and when Jesus, the great Physician, appears with a spiritual specific that has never been known to fail to effect a cure, and offers it to the sin-sick without money and without price, thousands reject the remedy and treat the Physician with indifference! To such may be applied the prophetic saying that the Saviour applied to the people of His day who rejected Him:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed;  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart,  
And should turn again,  
And I should heal them.”

This is the necessary result of the love and practice of sin, and people who hear the gospel and feel no yearning for its salvation are in a very bad way, and should look well to their spiritual condition. Jesus says, “Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved,” and this is a blessed invitation that ought to be heeded by every sin-sick and sin-condemned soul. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” What a gracious invitation! What a priceless privilege! Dying man, act before it is too late.

# THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—  
2 Pet. 3:12.

THE promise of a new earth implies the destruction of the old one, and that is positively asserted in immediate connection with our text, in the following dramatic language: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” This description of the winding up of the affairs of this earth with its heavenly environment is certainly graphic and somewhat appalling, but it will be nothing new in the history of the earth, except as to the means of destruction. The earth has been destroyed again and again, but its destruction has always been brought about by means of water, but its next and final destruction is to be accomplished by means of fire.

This is explicitly stated in the same chapter from which our text has been taken, in the following vivid terms: "For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." The Greek phrase which is here rendered "stored up for fire" might as well be translated "stored with fire," and the Revised Version, both the Oxford and the American editions, puts this in the margin as an alternate rendering, and it exactly expresses the meaning of the original. The earth has always carried in its bosom the elements of its own destruction, so that when the time for a destruction arrived, the means necessary to that end were at hand. In harmony with this fact the earth is stored with fire which will be in readiness for the final conflagration, and here is another instance in which divine revelation pioneered the way for natural science. Geologists tell us that the center of the earth is a mass of fiery, molten matter, and this is indicated by volcanic eruptions and other natural phenomena. This fact Peter knew by inspiration when he said that the earth is "stored with fire," and he gives us to understand that this fire will be used in "the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."

It is an interesting and noteworthy fact that the earth has risen out of the ruins of its every great destruction with conditions that adapted it to higher and better forms of life than those it carried before

its destruction. The destruction of the earth does not mean its absolute extinction. Scientists tell us that matter is not subject to absolute destruction—that not a particle of matter has ever been put out of existence. Its form can be changed, but it still remains in existence, notwithstanding the many transformations through which it may be made to pass. This being true of any single particle of the matter of the earth, it is true of every particle of the earth's matter, and therefore it is true of the whole earth. Hence it follows that the idea of a new earth does not carry with it the notion that the matter that composes it is absolutely new. The Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," but that does not mean that the man he was before has lost his identity. He has simply been made over, and in his re-creation he has been so thoroughly changed in his relations and aspirations that it is entirely appropriate to speak of him as a "new creature." So it is in regard to the earth. It will rise out of the ruins of its destruction by fire so thoroughly renovated and changed that it may appropriately be contemplated as a new earth, old conditions having passed away; and as the earth came up out of the ruins of its last great destruction by water in the form of ice, with conditions adapting it to the life of a being partly physical and partly spiritual, such as man is, so it will come up out of its destruction by fire with conditions adapting it to the life of a being wholly spiritual, such as man will be after his resurrection and glorification. More of this later on.

Peter tells us that we look for new heavens and a new earth "according to his [God's] promise," and that promise reads thus: "For, behold, I create new

heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isa. 65:17-19). This brief prophetic description of the new earth is suggestive of everything that could be necessary to make it "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," and cause it to appeal with tremendous power to the very best that is in men, and stimulate them to even "agonize" to attain to citizenship therein. It is to be so transcendently glorious that it will blot from the minds of the redeemed all remembrance of the old earth and the old order of things, and lift them to the loftiest pinnacle of joy and gladness. "The voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying." What a delightful prospect is thus presented to the enraptured eye of faith, and what a contrast between the new and the old!

The discordant voices of weeping and crying are prominent features of the old earth in which we now live, and countless thousands of human breasts are the sanctuaries of torn and bleeding hearts, and unnumbered myriads of eyes swim in tears and are inflamed with mournful weeping. Many a life down here in these low grounds of sorrow is simply one mighty sigh emanating from the cradle and ending in the grave. Men and women go through this world stooping and groaning under intolerable loads of bitter grief and pungent suffering, nursing aching heads and breaking hearts, and wishing that death would come to their relief. But the new world which beckons



us onward and upward is to be free from all these disturbing factors, and will be possessed of everything that will be necessary to minister to the comfort, joy and pleasure of all those who through Christ shall receive the abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of the King of kings and Lord of lords. But for this glorious prospect, human existence would be a stupendous failure, and human life a mocking farce, and the foundation for faith in the existence and overruling providence of God would be very insecure, and the vortex of atheism would draw the souls of men into its insatiate maw. But, blessed be God, our faith anticipates a better day, and our hope anchors us to the eternal throne of God, so that we can bid defiance to the howling storm, and set at naught the raging tempest.

In the Book of Revelation John enlarges upon Isaiah's portrayal of the new heavens and the new earth in the following striking and fascinating manner: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them; and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. . . . And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out

of heaven from God, having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chryso-prase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the

moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

I make this long quotation because it exactly fits my subject, because it is so beautiful, sublime and interesting, and because the character of the Book of Revelation keeps many people from attempting to read it. Those who read this sermon will read this Scripture, and probably become so charmed with it that they will take up the book and read its pages with deep and increasing interest. Did uninspired poetic fancy ever conceive of such a word picture as is here presented? Did painter's brush ever put upon

canvas so sublime a representation of the productions of uninspired imagination as we behold in this marvelous delineation of things to come? I am not going to discuss the question as to whether this wonderful language is to be interpreted as literal or figurative, for whether they are the one or the other, or a combination of both, which is probable, the lessons contained therein are the same. Let us notice some portions of this enchanting Scripture, that are certainly to be taken as literal: "And he [God] shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more." These things are said in contrast with facts that enter into our experiences in this world. In view of the tears that grief wrings from our eyes while we are in the flesh, how sweet and refreshing the assurance that there will be no tears in the new world, visions of which the word of God presents to the eye of faith. Death scourges the children of men through this world with scorpion cords, and hangs crepe upon our door-knobs to remind us of its merciless work. But this monster will not be known in the new earth which God's children will inhabit throughout eternity.

"O blessed day! O glorious hope!  
My soul rejoices at the thought  
That in that holy, happy land  
We'll take no more the parting hand."

This old earth is full of mourning, crying and pain, for it is largely dominated by conditions that sadden our lives, lacerate our hearts, and fill our souls with trouble. But thanks be to God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the children of the heavenly

home will be subject to none of these harassing circumstances. The eternal inheritance will be incorruptible, undefiled, and free from any intrusion of sorrow. In this description of the new earth we have everything that appeals to the very best that is in men, and it presents a lure that should incite the children of this earth to lay hold of the hope that is set before them in the gospel of the grace of God, and cause them to so live that when the time comes for them to lay aside the mortal coil, they can go hence singing: "Farewell, vain world, I am going home." If we could only realize that this life is but a pilgrimage, and that we have no permanent abiding-place here below, we would certainly appreciate the importance and gracious opportunity of accepting the offer of eternal life that the gospel presents to those who obey heaven's glorious King, and strive to walk in "all his ordinances and commandments blameless." "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," and it is our privilege to choose between the two, and there should be no hesitation as to which to select.

The old Canaan had its Jerusalem in which God's people took great pride, and which they loved with an intense love. Their poets sang its praises, and their statesmen gloried in the metropolis of their beloved country. With what joy did men, women and children go stately to their beloved city to keep their feasts, and have happy fellowship with each other in the temple and upon the streets of their adored capital. They looked forward to these occasions with the fondest anticipations, and back to them with happy memories. When Jerusalem prospered they were happy, and when Jerusalem was desolate they



were burdened with the deepest grief. The esteem in which Jerusalem was held by the Jews is set forth by a Psalmist in the following expressive language: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." When Nehemiah heard in the land of captivity of the sad estate of Jerusalem, he sat down and wept certain days, and fasted, and prayed to God in behalf of the wasted city of his fathers; and when he bore wine to Artaxerxes, the king noticed that his cupbearer was of a sad countenance, and demanded to know the cause of his sadness, and he received this reply: "Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" The man's heart was crushed when he heard the sad story of Jerusalem's desolation, and he immediately began to take steps to repair the city and at least partially restore it to its former glory; and even Jesus, in view of the coming fate of the city, wept over it, thus lamenting the final catastrophe that was to overwhelm it. The Jews loved their city, and gloried in its excellence.

But what was the old Jerusalem, even in the height of its splendor, in comparison with the new Jerusalem as described by John? I can think of no words that would add to the glory of the revelator's description of the metropolis of the new earth, the eternal home of the righteous. Look at its dimensions for a moment: Twelve thousand furlongs long, twelve thousand furlongs wide, and twelve thousand furlongs high. Reducing these measurements to miles, we have

a city fifteen hundred miles long, fifteen hundred miles wide, and fifteen hundred miles high. Reducing the city to one mile in height and extending it in length in proportion, we have a city fifteen hundred miles wide, and about long enough to belt the earth! And then the materials of which the city is composed! It embraces the most precious metals and jewels that we know anything about—gates of pearl, foundation of jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth and amethyst, and walls of jasper, and streets of gold. What flight of imagination can go beyond this in picturing magnificence and splendor! Is this literal? Why may it not be? Is anything too hard for God to accomplish? Couldn't He who built this great universe build such a city as is here described? The city is said to have come down out of heaven from God, and this may either mean that it was built in heaven and handed down to earth in its completed form, or that it was conceived and planned in heaven by the great Architect, and built on earth according to His plans and specifications. If the language is to be taken as figurative, then it represents something superlatively grand and glorious—something perfect in every respect.

I have intimated that the new earth will come up out of the ruins of the old one, which is to be destroyed by fire, and that it will come with conditions adapting it to a higher form of life than it had ever known before. Out of the ruins of its last destruction by water it came with an environment suiting it to the life of a being partly animal and partly spiritual; that is, man. Out of the ruins of its destruction by fire it is to come with conditions

adapting it to the life of a being wholly spiritual; that is, redeemed man with a body fashioned like the glorious body of the Son of God. To the development, elucidation and proof of this proposition I shall devote the remainder of this discourse. The Scripture that I verily believe teaches these things is the following: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:18-25). This is another beautiful, significant and important passage of Scripture, and it is well worthy of patient and careful study.

The pivotal word in this passage is the term "creation," and it is therefore necessary first of all to ascertain its meaning as here employed, for upon its import the significance of the whole passage depends. Let us first look at it from a negative point of view. It "was subjected to vanity, not of its own will." This shows that it does not include man, for

while he was subjected to vanity, it was of his own will; that is, he willingly did that on account of which he was subjected to vanity. For the same reason it does not include fallen angels, for they also willingly did that for which they were subjected to vanity, and hence it was of their own will. It does not include unfallen angels, for they were never subjected to vanity. For the same reason it does not include the heavenly bodies, because there is no evidence that they have ever been subjected to vanity. So far we feel that we have firm footing, and we can proceed with considerable confidence. After eliminating the things just mentioned, there is nothing left but the earth to correspond to "the creation," and I verily believe that we are shut up to this conclusion, and my exegesis is founded upon this basis. This makes it necessary to regard the earth as personified in this passage, and presented as a sentient being with feelings and aspirations, and this figure of speech is by no means unknown to the sacred volume. The trees are represented as going forth to anoint a king over them, and offering the crown to the olive-tree, the fig-tree, the vine and the bramble, in the order here mentioned, and they are all represented as peremptorily refusing to be king over the trees, except the bramble. Now, if the trees are thus personified in the Bible, and represented as endowed with human characteristics, no violence is done the passage at present under consideration in regarding the earth personified and likewise thus endowed.

When man sinned, and in so doing plunged into ruin, he carried his home, the earth, with him, and involved it in the same misfortune that befell him. And how often do we see similar results following in

the wake of transgression. A man commits a crime, and thereby not only subjects himself personally to suffering and sorrow, but destroys his home as well. This fact finds illustration in drunkenness, murder, and many other evils that afflict the human race, and through which the innocent suffer with the guilty. A young man leads a loving, trusting, pure girl to the marriage altar, and there, in the presence of God and men, he pledges her his troth, assuming a most sacred obligation to love, cherish and protect her so long as they both do live. He installs her in a neat and comfortable cottage with ample furnishings, and with vines climbing and flowers blooming here and there about the premises. He has a beautiful and attractive home that is to him the dearest and sweetest spot on the footstool of the heavenly Father. Presently the patter of little feet and the prattle of childish voices are heard in and about that home, and it is a fit type of heavenly bliss. A fond mother and loving wife glides like a sylph about that home, keeping it as neat as a new pin, and the noise of children is music akin to that of the "choir invisible." When the husband and father returns from his daily toil, and enters that home, it is like a ship coming in from a stormy, billowy sea and entering a quiet, peaceful haven of rest. That home is "a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever."

But by and by the husband and father takes to drink, and in due course of time his face is red, his eyes bleared, his temper soured, his cash savings gone, and his reputation ruined. The cottage is going to wreck, the vines and flowers are neglected, the wife and mother wears a sad countenance and inferior clothes, the children are half clad and half starved, and there



is evidence of ruin, desolation and sorrow on every hand. The man has brought ruin upon himself and his home, and turned what was once a blessed place of joy and happiness, peace and plenty, into a veritable hell! But now comes the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and takes that man in hand, breaks the shackles with which the demon of intemperance had bound him hand and foot, restores him to sobriety, industry and thrift, and soon the home begins to assume its aforesaid appearance of happiness and plenty. The cottage smells of new paint, the vines and flowers trail and bloom again, the step of the wife and mother has its old-time spring, and her countenance has recovered its wreath of fascinating smiles, and the children have plenty to eat and wear, while the husband and father returns from his work with his wonted embraces and kisses. What a regeneration! The Temperance Union has redeemed the man and his home, and filled his life again with sunshine and bliss. Just so God in Christ proposes to redeem both man and his ruined home, and restore both to the condition they were in before the desolation came through sin.

In harmony with this gracious program "the creation [the earth] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." When man sinned he brought upon himself and his home this penalty: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and

unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19). Thus we see that everything that is objectionable and hurtful in this world came as the result of man's transgression of the law of God, and well might a poet mournfully sing with regard to the eating of the forbidden fruit: "Whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woes." Let us scrutinize this burden of corruption somewhat closely. Here are thorns, briars, thistles, and all kinds of noxious weeds that disturb man's relation to the earth, and entail upon him much inconvenience and hardship, and wring from his brow sweat in showers. The earth (the creation) was subjected to vanity; that is, turned out of its normal course and perverted from its intended use, on account of the sin of man, but it was done in the hope that it would finally be recovered from this sad and preternatural condition.

On account of the sin of man, the earth, which was given him as a delightful home, was turned into a vast graveyard, for to man it was said: "For out of it [the ground] wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What a burden of corruption this has bound upon the stooped shoulders of the earth (the creation), and it is no wonder that it is represented as groaning and travelling in pain under this tremendous load. It has been estimated that if all the people who have lived and died from the death of Abel till the present time were to require burial at one time, the landed surface of the earth would have to be dug over three times, or they would have to be buried three deep! What a vast charnel-house our earth is, and under this appalling burden of corruption its groaning is simply fearful! But it is patiently waiting in earnest expect-

tation of "the revealing of the sons of God." To reveal is to uncover, and the revealing of the sons of God seems to me to refer to their resurrection by which the earth (the creation) will be relieved of this tremendous burden of corruption, to which it is anxiously looking forward. "And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This passage differentiates the "we ourselves" from the "whole creation," showing that the redeemed are not included in that expression. The "whole creation" and the "we ourselves" are joint participants in the groaning and travailing, and also in anticipating the great and glorious resurrection of the dead whereby man's redemption will be completed, and the earth relieved of its "burden of corruption." Could anything more grand, glorious and sublime challenge our hope? To stand upon this sunlit mountain of faith and look forward to an event of such glory and splendor certainly fills the appreciative soul with unspeakable joy and gladness.

But the redemption of the earth is not complete yet, for it has gotten rid of only a part of its "burden of corruption." It must pass through its regeneration by fire, and thus be relieved of the thorns and thistles and all other evil things that the sin of man brought upon it. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Simultaneously with the resurrection of those who sleep in Jesus, with bodies fashioned like the glorified body of the Son of God, the saints who will be found alive on the earth when the Lord comes, will be suddenly so changed as to have bodies of the same nature, and then all will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. What an opportune time this will be for the conflagration of the earth to take place, and what a sight it will be for the redeemed who are poised in midair, to look down upon the fiery process! And when it is all over, and the earth emerges from its ruins purified and adorned as the eternal abiding-place of the ransomed children of God, they will descend to take possession of their glorious inheritance! The new Jerusalem now comes down out of heaven from God, and the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and be their God, and pain and tears and sorrow and mourning are gone forever.

This is the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The idea in this statement is that righteousness *alone* shall dwell in the new earth. Righteousness dwells in this old earth, but alongside of it dwells iniquity of every hue and type. Unrighteousness lives in the same country, in the same city, in the same street, and even in the same heart, with righteousness, and casts its dark shadow across our pathway daily. A veritable carnival of wickedness is running riot throughout the country at the present time, and you don't pick up a newspaper whose pages are not red with the blood of murder. The hand of the

robber is in evidence on every hand, and bandits overrun the land. Bank robberies have become so common that they do not receive very much notice, and ordinary burglaries are innumerable. Unfaithfulness in the marriage relation is a matter of common knowledge, and divorce courts are overcrowded with business. In addition to bank robberies, burglaries, and ordinary street hold-ups, we have that more general brand of thievery known as profiteering, which makes consumers pay two or three prices for what they are obliged to have. The present "high cost of living" simply means that the hands of highway robbers are being thrust into the pockets of the people to filch therefrom money that they do not earn. This is a dark picture, but it is true to the facts, and it presents an object-lesson to those optimists who vociferously tell us that the world is getting better morally. If there has been a more godless age since Noah's flood, it has escaped the pen of the historian.

But how different it will be in the new earth! No murders, no robberies, no cheating, no penitentiaries, no jails, no houses of correction, no electric chairs, no weeping eyes, no breaking hearts, no divorce courts, no unfaithfulness in any of the relations of life. Every man is every other man's brother, and God is the Father of all. Peace, harmony and good will prevail everywhere, and beautiful and sweet flowers bloom and emit their fragrance throughout the Paradise of God, and golden streets glitter in the midst of the city of our God. The days of tribulation are gone forever, and the eternal ages of joy and gladness have set in. Listen how they shout: "Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and



let us give glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." Hear them as they continue their ascriptions of praise: "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Richer and still richer, sweeter and still sweeter, become the strains of the heavenly music. Give ear while they sing the "song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest."

May God help us all to "wash our robes, that we may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." Amen.

# CHRISTIAN UNITY

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.”—John 17: 21, 22.

THAT the present divided condition of Christendom is out of harmony with Scripture teaching goes without the saying. The heresy of the Scriptures is division, and it is condemned in the word of God in no uncertain terms. Only once is heresy predicated of doctrine in the New Testament, and that is in 2 Peter, where the apostle says: “But there arose false prophets among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.” This is a pretty severe characterization of false doctrine, and should make it odious to every lover of the truth. In other instances of the use of the word it means division, but division is intimately connected with heretical teaching, and usually grows out of it, and they are both condemned together. Paul pleads with the brethren in Corinth as follows: “Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the

same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). This pathetic appeal is as applicable to the church universal to-day as it was to the Corinthian church in the apostolic age. Let it be noted that speaking different and contrary things produced the divisions among the Corinthians that Paul laments and censures, and this should admonish religious teachers to be sure that they always speak according to the Oracles of God.

Paul gives divisions a very dark setting in the following language: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, *divisions*, *parties*, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). This indictment should give all the professed followers of the Lamb of God pause, and cause them to reflect seriously as to the location of the responsibility for the divisions that exist in the so-called Christian world at the present time. Somebody is responsible for these divisions, and whoever is responsible for them is guilty of grievous sin in the presence of God, and Paul says that such "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is perfectly obvious that whoever belongs to a sect, party or division in the church (I use this term in its common acceptation) encourages and promotes division, and therefore classifies himself with those upon whom the apostolic censure falls. Does some one say that this is a very broad and sweeping allegation? Be it so. We should be candid with ourselves and the truth, and look Scripture teaching fully in the face, and immediately proceed to square our

conduct accordingly. This is a question that involves not only our eternal destiny, but also the conversion of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ. The text clearly implies that a divided church will never bring the unsaved world to the Redeemer, and considerations personal and general should admonish Christian people to be in haste to tear down the middle walls of partition that have been built up among them, so that they may come together in one flock under one Shepherd.

More than a century ago pious and godly men began to discern that prevailing conditions in the religious world were unscriptural, antiscritptural, and were a tremendous obstacle to the progress of the kingdom of God; and, seeing the sinfulness of the divisions that crippled the church, various individuals in different parts of the world began to consider the question of the unity of the people of God, and to cast about in their minds for some feasible and Scriptural plan by which such a desirable and essential result might be brought to pass. Very naturally and logically they betook themselves in this quest to the word of God, and accepted that as the polar star to guide them to the desired haven. That was to start right, and in such an undertaking it was very important to get a right start. In their thinking the following principle was evolved: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." This splendid and sane motto was to guide them in all matters pertaining to faith and ordinances, but had no application to ways and means of carrying on the affairs of the kingdom of God. These were regarded as matters of expediency to be controlled by sanctified common sense, and were not

to be classified among the fundamentals that require a "Thus saith the Lord" either in express terms or by divinely approved precedent. This distinction is a very vital one, and is to be observed with care and fidelity.

Among the things that demanded first and careful consideration was the matter of a catholic creed that all disciples of Christ could accept, and that all desiring the fellowship of God's people could conscientiously subscribe to. Every religious organization based upon matters of faith must necessarily be based upon a creed that will secure the co-operation and hearty fellowship of all its members. Every one who believes anything has a creed, and what he believes is his creed. In a matter in which a great many people are interested, the narrower a creed is, the better, for the narrower it is, the more people can stand on it. I am now using the term "creed" in its technical sense, to indicate those things that one *must believe* in order to have fellowship with the people that are organized upon it and are bound together by it, and beside which no one can be required to believe anything else. Here it became necessary to distinguish between faith and opinion, and the men who launched the Restoration movement clearly and sharply drew the distinction, and enunciated that in the sphere of opinion there must be absolute and unlimited liberty, with the proviso that opinions must be held by individuals as private property, and not inculcated or foisted upon others. The observance of this principle is absolutely essential to unity and harmony among the people of God, and whenever it is set aside and individuals begin to exploit their opinions, friction and contention are sure to arise.



In looking for such a creed as all could accept, all man-made creeds and confessions of faith were weighed in the balance of sound reason, found wanting, and laid aside on the ground that no one of them could harmonize all the interests that were involved. The searchers were providentially, as I verily believe, directed to the following passage of Scripture: "Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:13-18). *Eureka!* They had found the object of their search; namely, the foundation or creed of the church of Jesus Christ—that upon which the Lord said He would build His church. The great truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, with its corollaries, which are that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and was raised from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures, is the creed of the church of Christ, that every one who desires membership in that church must accept; and beyond that, so far as matters of faith are concerned, no one can properly be required to go; and whoever makes this confession of faith is prepared to enter the church of Christ

and have fellowship therein. I do not know what brethren mean when they sometimes say, "Christ is our creed," for Christ is not a creed at all; He is a person, and a creed is something that one believes. The creed of the church is something that we believe about Christ, and that something is that He is the Son of the living God. The rest of the New Testament is our book of discipline, and both of these every Christian under the heavens can and does accept. Thus the question of creed was settled.

The Scriptural creed of the church having been discovered, it became necessary to settle upon a name for the institution. This question led to the evolution of the idea that Scriptural things should be called by Scriptural names, and this made it necessary to discard all human names for this divine institution, and hence all such names were thrown overboard with human creeds. They were making progress, but progress at great cost, for such creeds and names were held in high esteem, and even veneration, by many most excellent people. But the die was cast, and those earnest men who were seeking a reasonable and Scriptural basis of unity had nothing to do but follow the principles that they had adopted to their logical conclusions. The church of Christ is a divine thing, and it must have a divine name, and no name is a divine name unless it is divinely approved in the sacred Scriptures. From an examination of the word of God it was discovered that this divine institution is therein called the church of God, the church of the Firstborn, while the local congregations are called churches of Christ. Speaking of the church at large, the Saviour says, "On this rock I will build my church," which makes it the church of Christ, or its

equivalent, the Christian church. On these names all Christian people can unite, so as to form one church under one Head and one creed, and thus get rid of that divisive thing called denominationalism, and heal the breaches that have been made in the kingdom of God. This is a reasonable and Scriptural solution of the question of names for the New Testament church.

Next comes the problem of names for individual followers of Christ, and here as elsewhere recourse must be had to the Scriptures for information and guidance. An examination of the Oracles of God shows that God's children are therein designated as disciples, saints, brethren, Christians, etc., and hence any or all of these names are Scriptural and may properly be used to designate the followers of the Lamb. All human names for church and individual Christians are divisive and should be abandoned. As there is some disagreement as to the origin of the name "Christian" as applied to individual disciples of Christ, I deem it expedient to examine that question with considerable care, and it is proper and logical to begin with the following Scripture: "And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they [Paul and Barnabas] were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Many scholars and expositors hold that the name "Christians" was bestowed upon the disciples in Antioch by the enemies of Christianity by way of reproach; but that this is erroneous I am perfectly satisfied. These sermons are intended for the general reader, and hence I do not like to resort to Greek criticism, and I have refrained from doing so almost

entirely; but in this instance it is absolutely necessary, in order to bring out the meaning of the passage whose import is quite obvious, as it seems to me, in the original. In the Greek the passage runs thus: *Egeneto de autois kai eniauton holon sunachtheenai en tee ekklesia kai didaxai ochlon hikanon, chreematisai te prootoos en Antiocheia tous matheetas Christianous*. I quote the passage as pointed by Westcott and Hort, whose text is the standard at the present time. This text puts a comma after *hikanon*, where the Revised Version puts a semicolon. No punctuation whatever is demanded. The following is a literal translation of the Greek: "And it happened to them to be gathered together even for a whole year in the church and to teach much people and to call the disciples Christians first in Antioch." We have here three verbs—all in the infinitive and all telling what Paul and Barnabas did. The word for "call" is in the active voice, and should be so rendered in English, and would be so rendered but for a compelling theory. All three of these verbs are connected back with the pronoun *autois* (them), and depend upon it for their construction, and there is no demand for the abrupt severance that the common translation makes. Just why the writer should suddenly break off from telling what Paul and Barnabas did, and in the same sentence bring in what some pagans were doing in derision, is not apparent, and that he did it is an unjustifiable assumption.

Moreover: Both *matheetas* (disciples) and *Christianous* (Christians) come after the verb *chreematisai* in the record, thus showing that they are both objects of the verb, whereas if one of them had been intended to be taken as the subject it would have been placed



before the verb. Furthermore: The particle that connects *chreematisai*, etc., with the preceding part of the statement is *te*, and the function of this particle is given by Thayer in his "Greek-English Lexicon" as follows: "*Kai* introduces something new under the same aspect yet as an external addition, whereas *te* marks it as having an inner connection with what precedes." There is absolutely no "inner connection" between what Paul and Barnabas were doing, and what it is alleged that pagans were doing. Indeed, there is no connection of any sort between being assembled in the church and teaching much people on the part of Paul and Barnabas, and the calling the disciples Christians on the part of pagans. The statement that the "disciples were called Christians *first* in Antioch" implies that they were afterwards called Christians in other places, and that they were called Christians in other places by the same parties that called them Christians in Antioch. Did pagans make it their business to follow Paul and Barnabas around and call the disciples that they made, Christians? No, these preachers called the disciples Christians *first* in Antioch, and afterwards did the same thing elsewhere.

In addition to all this, *chreematisoo*, as used in the New Testament, has a natural affinity for divine things, and indicates that whatever it signifies was done by divine authority. This statement is supported by the following definition as given by Thayer: "*To be the mouthpiece of divine revelations, to promulge the commands of God.*" With this agrees the definition of Liddell and Scott, as follows: "In N. T. of *divine warnings or revelations.*" These definitions are sustained by the following passages of Scripture: "And being warned



of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." "Being warned of God" is the translation of one word, the participle *chreematisthentes*. "And when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth." Here, as in the former passage, "being warned of God" translates the participle *chreematistheis*. "And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house." In this passage "was warned of God" translates the verb *chreematisthee*. These quotations are sufficient to show that the word under consideration, as employed in the New Testament, carries with it the idea of divine instruction or authority, and hence the conclusion that the disciples were called Christians in Antioch by divine authority, and this ought to settle the question as to what name the disciples of Christ should wear, and it adds force and emphasis to this Scripture: "But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Pet. 4:16, R. V.). Disciples of Christ can not glorify God in any human name that they may wear, and hence they should discard all such names, and wear the name that honors Christ and glorifies God.

The question of baptism comes next. The men who were searching for a proper basis for Christian unity knew very well that a united church could not be founded upon a divided baptism, and that a baptism

must be found and accepted that all Christians would recognize as valid and Scriptural. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul speaks of baptism as a unit, in the following striking passage: "Giving all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." The unity of baptism is as strongly emphasized here as the unity of God, or the unity of the Lord, or the unity of the Spirit, or the unity of the body (the church), or the unity of faith, or the unity of hope. There can not be more than one baptism, any more than there can be more than one God, or one Lord, or one Spirit, or one body, or one faith, or one hope. The problem is to find one baptism that all can accept and unite upon, and that problem was solved when immersion was hit upon, for all agree that when a proper subject is immersed he is baptized. Immersion, then, is common ground, and nothing else is, and hence immersion as the one baptism must be a part of the foundation for the one body or church to rest upon. Sprinkling, pouring and immersion are three different things, and if one of them is baptism, the other two are not. This appears to be axiomatic, and it should settle the whole question.

But, in addition to this, it is the almost unanimous verdict of scholarship that when the New Testament was written the Greek word *baptizo*, which the Saviour used to indicate the act of baptism, meant to immerse, and did not mean either to sprinkle or pour. In this there is nearly perfect agreement among Greek lexicons and Greek scholars generally. Liddell and Scott's

first definition of *baptizo* is, "*To dip in or under water.*" Cremer's "Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek" gives this definition: "*Baptizo, to immerse, to submerge.*" Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" defines thus: "*To dip repeatedly, to immerge, to submerge.*" E. A. Sophocles, in his "Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods," defines as follows: "*To dip, to immerse, to sink.*" This author appends the following note to his definition: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks." Sophocles was a native of Greece, and occupied the professorship of the Greek language in Harvard University for many years, and was perfectly at home in the Greek tongue. These four lexicons occupy leading positions in the front rank of Greek lexicography, and their testimony is decisive. But do not some Greek lexicons give "sprinkle" and "pour" as meanings of *baptizo*? I will permit men of wide reputation and acknowledged scholarship to answer this question: In response to a note of inquiry on the subject, Prof. M. W. Humphreys, then of Vanderbilt University, said: "There is no standard Greek-English lexicon that gives 'sprinkle' or 'pour' as meanings of *baptizo*." Replying to the same note, Prof. W. S. Tyler, of Amherst College, said: "I do not know of any good lexicon which gives 'sprinkle' as a rendering for *baptizo*." Professor Tyler alludes to the fact that Liddell and Scott, in their first edition, give "to pour upon" as a meaning of the word, the whole truth concerning which is stated by Prof. J. B. Foster, of Colby University, as follows: "Liddell and Scott, in their first edition, gave as one

of the meanings of the word *baptizo*, to pour upon, but corrected it in the second edition, and the correction stands in the latest (sixth) edition." Replying to a similar question, Professor D'Ooge, of Colby University, and Professor Flagg, of Cornell University, gave the following answers: "There is no standard Greek-English lexicon that gives either 'sprinkle' or 'pour' as one of the meanings of the Greek verb *baptizo*." "I know of no lexicon which gives the meanings you speak of for *baptizo*, not even the lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods of Prof. E. A. Sophocles."

In view of the fact that immersion is common ground upon which all can conscientiously stand, and of the further fact that immersion has the unanimous support of the lexicons, and of the additional fact that the circumstances attending the administration of the ordinance as given in the New Testament favor immersion, it does seem that this question should not stand as a "middle wall of partition" between those who love the Lord and desire the fulfillment of His prayer that His people might be one. Let us glance for a moment at the circumstances just alluded to. The ordinance was administered where there was "much water," and in the "river Jordan"; the people "went down into the water" to be baptized, and "came up out of the water" after baptism, and in baptism they were buried with Christ, and raised up again; men and women left their homes and went to the water to be baptized. These circumstances are without meaning except in the light of the idea that the ordinance appointed by our blessed Lord requires immersion, but in such light they are full of meaning, and ought to have great weight with those who want to know what the will of the Master is, that they may comply

with it. These considerations, in connection with others, enabled those who inaugurated the union movement of the nineteenth century to discern the safe and Scriptural ground as to the action of baptism, and they were heroic enough to take their stand upon that ground and offer it to the religious world as presenting a happy solution of the baptismal problem as to what is commonly, though improperly, called its "mode."

In the next place, the question of the proper subjects of baptism presents itself for consideration, and here, too, it is easy to find common ground. That the baptism of a penitent believer is Scriptural is denied by no one, for it is clearly taught in the New Testament, both by precept and example. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins;" "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women;" "Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized;" "Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." These are some of the passages that show that faith, repentance and baptism are inseparably linked together in the New Testament, and the inevitable inference is that in the absence of faith and repentance there can be no baptism. And in addition to this, the word of God declares that baptism is "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:21, R. V.), and this is impossible with an infant. Of course there can be no unity upon a basis which includes anything so



entirely unscriptural and antiscritural as infant baptism, and however venerable the practice may be, and however dear it may be to the hearts of many excellent people, it will have to be given up before the people of God can get together in a Scriptural and permanent union.

In an article in the *Christian Union Quarterly* for October, 1920, its author, Prof. W. H. Griffith Thomas, of Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada, an Episcopal institution, emphasizes the importance of respecting the silence of the Scriptures with regard to religious institutions, in a very striking manner. He is opposing special orders of priesthood in the church, and in so doing he uses the following significant language: "*This silence is a simple fact.* There are twenty-seven books, and not a single reference can be found to a special human priesthood. But this conveys only a little of the strength of the evidence. The New Testament is not so much a volume as a library, and its evidence consists of several independent parts, and has a cumulative force. Let us take seven of these representative and distinctive parts and notice the result: (a) There are the instructions of our Lord to His disciples and apostles in the four Gospels, but not a word about a special priesthood. (b) There is the first book of general church history, the Acts of the Apostles, but not a hint of such a priesthood. (c) There is the first detailed picture of one particular apostolic church in the Epistles to the Corinthians, but not a sign of any such priesthood. (d) There are the two great doctrinal Epistles for Gentile Christians, Romans and Ephesians, but no instruction whatever as to such a priesthood. (e) There is the great doctrinal Epistle for Jewish Christians, Hebrews, but nothing in it

except our Lord's priesthood. (f) There are the three Epistles of pastoral and ecclesiastical instruction, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, but not a word of any special priesthood. (g) There are the mature writings of the two great apostles of the circumcision, St. Peter and St. John, but no trace whatever of this priesthood. This evidence taken separately in its parts is striking, but taken as a whole it is cumulative and absolutely overwhelming." The necessary changes being made, this reasoning will apply to infant baptism with as much force as to the priesthood. Here it is: "*This silence is a simple fact.* There are twenty-seven books, and not a single reference can be found to infant baptism. But this conveys only a little of the strength of the evidence. The New Testament is not so much a volume as a library, and its evidence consists of several independent parts, and has a cumulative force. Let us take seven of these representative and distinctive parts and notice the result. (a) There are the instructions of our Lord to His disciples in the four Gospels, but not a word about infant baptism. (b) There is the first book of general church history, the Acts of the Apostles, but not a hint of infant baptism. (c) There is the first detailed picture of one particular apostolic church in the Epistles to the Corinthians, but not a sign of any such baptism. (d) There are the two great doctrinal Epistles for Gentile Christians, Romans and Ephesians, but no instruction whatever as to such baptism. (e) There is the great doctrinal Epistle for Jewish Christians, Hebrews, but nothing in it about infant baptism. (f) There are the three Epistles of pastoral and ecclesiastical instructions, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, but not a word of infant baptism. (g) There are the mature writings

of the two great apostles of the circumcision, St. Peter and St. John, but no trace whatever of this baptism. This evidence taken separately in its parts is striking, but taken as a whole it is cumulative and absolutely overwhelming." Infant baptism can no more stand before this argument than a special priesthood. They are both unscriptural, and must be abandoned before Christian union can come about.

People in whose hearts a real desire for unity among the followers of Christ burns must and will consent to lay aside every unscriptural doctrine and practice that tends to divide the church into opposing factions, and teach and practice such things, and only such things, as are plainly exhibited in the New Testament, so far as church ordinances are concerned, and maintain silence concerning things about which the Scriptures are silent. Why should not Christian people who love the Lord, and desire the fulfillment of His prayer for union, do this? The doctrines and traditions of men have always been in the way of the progress of the gospel and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and they should be laid aside that the truth as it is in Christ Jesus may have free course to run and be glorified. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, angels celebrated the glorious event by singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Would not those same angels delight to renew their song of praise to celebrate the coming together in one body of the divided army of the Lord, and the consequent conversion of the world to Christ? No doubt they are as anxious to do this as they were to announce to shepherds the birth of Him who was to "destroy him that has the power of death, and

deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Why should untaught questions be permitted to stand in the way of, and delay, such a glorious consummation of the gracious purpose of God with respect to the salvation of the world? Are the ordinances and commandments of men more precious than lost souls? Can it be possible that Christians are willing to continue to look upon the torn and bleeding body of the Son of God, rather than give up things that have no sanction in the inspired Word of truth?

There is one other feature of baptism that deserves some notice in this discussion, and while it does not bear the same relation to the question of unity that the questions already considered do, yet oneness of view with respect to it will be promotive of that general unity which bulks large in the thought of Christendom at the present time. The design or purpose of baptism in the economy of grace is of considerable moment in the matter of seeking a basis of unity upon which all Christians can have fellowship together. On this question the Scriptures, as it seems to me, speak very plainly and positively, leaving little room for diversity of opinion. It will not be necessary to examine more than one passage of Scripture with respect to the design of baptism. The first time the gospel was ever fully preached it pierced the hearts of many people, convicting them of sin, and they cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" To this vital question the apostle Peter made answer as follows: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That those inquirers were told to repent,



and be baptized in order that they might receive the remission of their sins, is perfectly obvious. The message may be analyzed as follows: "Repent ye, and be baptized." How many of us? "Every one of you." In what name? "In the name of Jesus Christ." For what purpose? "Unto the remission of your sins." This presents the teaching of the passage in a clear and strong light, so that there should be no misunderstanding about it. And if God has appointed baptism as a condition of pardon, along with other things, why should any mortal object to it? Sinners should rejoice in any provision for the pardon of sin that the wisdom and goodness of God might dictate, and gratefully comply therewith, and count it a holy and heavenly privilege. The Jews were willing to be saved, but they were not willing to be saved in God's way of saving men. They wanted to dictate the terms of their own salvation, and thereby made an egregious blunder, as is always the case when men seek to substitute their own wisdom for the wisdom of God. The Scriptures clearly teach that to penitent believers baptism is in order to the remission of their alien sins. For a fuller discussion of this point I refer you to the sermon on "What must I do to be saved?"

But I have said that unity of faith on this subject is not essential to the unity of the people of God. If a penitent believer submits to baptism because God has ordained it, and because he loves Jesus and wants to honor Him, God will take care of the design of the ordinance, and a mistake on the part of the subject will neither vitiate the institution nor nullify its design. If God establishes an ordinance with a specific design in view, and a man obeys that ordinance because he wants to honor and obey God, although



he may not understand its design, he will receive the blessing that God connected with obedience to His will. The profoundest problem involved in the gospel of Jesus Christ is the atonement for sin made through His death, and no man fully understands it, but the humblest member of the human family may avail himself of its gracious benefits. God may as well have made no atonement for sin as to require that men shall understand all about the profound mysteries that are involved in it, before they can accept and enjoy its benefits. The Lord has appointed baptism as a condition of pardon to a proper subject, and when such a subject submits to it God will see to it that he gets the blessing. But at the same time men should strive to learn as much as possible about it from the Scriptures of divine truth, and the more they thus learn about it, the more they will appreciate and enjoy it. However, a misunderstanding in regard to it need not stand in the way of the unity of God's people.

#### SUMMARY.

According to the teaching of the word of God, division among disciples of Christ is sinful. This necessarily gives rise to the inference that any one who promotes or encourages division is guilty of sin before God. All human creeds and confessions of faith, being essentially divisive, must be discarded, and the unifying and inspired creed of the New Testament adopted as an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and an ample bond of union and fellowship among Christian people. All human names to designate churches and disciples of Christ, being middle walls of partition between God's children, must

be abandoned, and such names as are approved in the Scriptures accepted. Immersion, being universally recognized as valid baptism, must be universally adopted as the practice of the church, and all forms of affusion, being human inventions, must give place to the one baptism of the New Testament. Infant baptism, being unauthorized by the word of God, must be abandoned, that the baptism of penitent believers may have undisputed sway. All types of ecclesiasticism must be relinquished in favor of the autonomy of the local churches, which is so conspicuous in the New Testament order of things. If ever Christian unity comes about, it will have to be upon a basis substantially identical with that thus outlined.

# THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

## A SERMON

TEXT.—‘‘Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’’—Matt. 16: 28.

ONE of the interesting and significant features of the New Testament is the way in which it is put together. It is manifestly constructed with reference to its own elucidation, and the best commentary on that book is the book itself. I sometimes say that I wish I had known fifty years ago the difference between studying the Bible, and studying books about the Bible, as I think I know it now. I am quite sure that such knowledge would have led me to a better understanding of that blessed book than I now have. Books about the Bible are not to be despised, but the student should always remember that his main reliance for a correct understanding of the Bible is the Book itself. That should be the text-book, and all other books should be used as mere helps. And here lies a danger, with respect to helps, that should be guarded against. The danger is that of making the helps the main thing, and retiring the Bible to the background. In studying a Biblical subject the Bible should be consulted and carefully studied first, and let the helps come in afterwards to supplement the knowledge gained by an independent examination of the Sacred Oracles.

The New Testament is constructed upon the same principle that underlies the composition of an arithmetic. In making this mathematical book the author's first aim is to acquaint the student with the numerical symbols, 1, 2, 3, etc., that he may understand their value both singly and in combination, and no progress can be made in this science till this lesson is mastered. The next thing that the author does is to lay down a rule under which these numerals are to be applied in the solution of mathematical problems. Then come some examples wrought out by the author himself, so that if the student should fail to understand the rule in the abstract, he has it concreted and illustrated in the examples that are before him. The wisdom and absolute necessity of this course are perfectly manifest, and in no other way can a student become proficient in arithmetic. Christianity, as well as arithmetic and every other branch of human knowledge, has its elementary or underlying principles, and they come first in the study of the science of human redemption, and this fact is recognized in the construction of the New Testament. The fundamental fact upon which the Christian religion rests is the imperishable truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and upon opening the New Testament the student first encounters four brief historical sketches of the life and work of our divine Lord when He was on earth. The purpose of these writings is to lay a foundation deep, broad and strong for intelligent faith in Him as the "only begotten Son of God."

This marvelous proposition finds perfect proof in the miracles the Saviour performed, the crowning one being His own resurrection from the grave. Toward the close of his testimony John says: "Many other

signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30); and Paul affirms that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). The proposition, being superhuman and divine, can only be established by divine and superhuman evidence, and such evidence we have in the miracles that are recorded in the New Testament. The evidential value of the miracles wrought by our Saviour, and put upon record in the sacred Scriptures, can not be overestimated. They were recorded for the same purpose for which they were performed, and, if they had not been put upon record, and thus preserved for all time, faith in Jesus as the Son of God would have faded from the minds of men.

As in the case of the arithmetic, the establishment of this fundamental fact of the gospel is followed by a rule that is to apply in the solution of the problem of salvation from sin—the most stupendous problem with which men have to deal. That rule was given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and is sanctioned and supported by all authority in heaven and on earth. Shortly before our Master was received up into glory He said to His apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). This is the rule by which men and women are to be saved under the gracious gospel of the Son of God, and sinners should rejoice in the privilege thus extended to them. If



there are any exceptions, God will take care of them. We have to do with rules and not exceptions. Following this rule, as in the case of the arithmetic, we find a list of examples of conversion and salvation in the Book of Acts—examples wrought out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that, in addition to the abstract statement of the principle in the rule, we have it in the concrete in these examples, and we can thus see just how it is done. Then come some epistolary writings to teach the saved how to live the Christian life. What wonderful wisdom is displayed in this arrangement!

And not only are the individual books of the New Testament put together with reference to their own elucidation, but each book is constructed upon the same principle. A fine example of this is found in the third chapter of John, which records a conversation that took place one night in Jerusalem between Christ and Nicodemus. The preceding chapter closes with the following language: "But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he knew what was in man." This wonderful statement is immediately followed by the conversation between the Lord and this ruler of the Jews, and no doubt it was recorded in this particular connection to illustrate and emphasize the great fact that Jesus knows what is in man without being told. Nicodemus approached the Master in a very patronizing way by saying: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." The Teacher made the following reply: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born

anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” There is absolutely no logical connection between the speech of Nicodemus and the reply of Jesus. There is nothing in the former to suggest the latter. But Jesus knew what was in the mind of this Jewish ruler, and He replied to that, and not to the words of his lips. Nicodemus had the idea that was common to the Jews concerning the Messianic kingdom—that the Messiah would set up a kingdom in this world and occupy its throne Himself just as David had done. He had the further mistaken notion that in this kingdom the Jews would at least be God’s favorite people, and that he as a Jew would have the right to entrance into that kingdom on account of his Jewish birth. The Saviour meant to put the ax to the tap-root of that worldly tree that had grown up in the Jewish mind and was dominating the thought of Nicodemus. In effect He said: “Nicodemus, don’t you come knocking at the door of my kingdom with the idea that your Jewish birth will secure admission for you. So far from it, you have to be born anew.” A better proof and illustration of the fact that Jesus “knew what was in man” could not be found than this.

And this brings me to the main topic of this discourse—the transfiguration of Christ—and I cite Matthew’s account of that remarkable transaction: “And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make

here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only" (Matt. 17:1-8). In substantial agreement with this are the accounts of this sublime incident as given by Mark and Luke, and it is a noteworthy and significant fact that all three of these writers bring in this account right after the saying of the Saviour that "there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Does this circumstance mean anything? Of course Jesus did and said many things during the time intervening between the saying just quoted and the transfiguration, for He was never idle; but every one of these writers skips over all these things, and brings his account of this great event and records it in immediate and close connection with the declaration that closes the preceding chapter. This shows conclusively, in my judgment, that there is a vital connection between these things, and I verily believe that they stand to each other in the relation of prophecy and fulfillment. The transfiguration fulfilled the Lord's prophecy that some of those who heard Him would not die till they should see Him "coming in his kingdom"; or, as Mark has it, "till they see the kingdom of God come with power;" or Luke, "till they see the kingdom of God." A question of prime

importance here is, What kingdom does the Lord refer to? It has been commonly taken for granted that the reference is to the kingdom that was set up in this world on the day of Pentecost, and it is proper to look at the question from that point of view. Let it be carefully noted that the Master says, "There are *some* of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see" this marvelous event. "Some of them" indicates that only a few would witness the coming of the kingdom that Jesus was talking about, and this fact is very instructive in the interpretation of these Scriptures. It is not known whether Judas was in that company or not, but, if he was, he is the only one, so far as we are informed, who did not live to see Pentecost. These events occurred not very long before Pentecost, and, with the exception just mentioned, the strong probability is that all the people who stood there and heard what Jesus said, lived to see the happenings that occurred that day. This is not at all in harmony with the Lord's language, and we must look in another direction for the kingdom to which the Master alludes.

Peter speaks of a kingdom which he calls the "eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and this kingdom pertains to the great future toward which we are all hastening. Can it be that this is the kingdom to which the Lord refers in the language that we are considering? I verily believe that it is, and for reasons that I shall now attempt to develop. Peter, James and John were "*some*" of those who stood by and heard what the Teacher said, and they witnessed the transfiguration, and saw "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," or saw "the kingdom of God come with power." This



makes it necessary that we analyze the citizenship of the "eternal kingdom," which will give us the proper standpoint from which to study the transfiguration. The citizenship of the "eternal kingdom" will be made up of three classes of citizens. First, the Saviour is in a class by Himself, enthroned in transcendent glory and splendor. Second, the redeemed who shall have passed through the valley and shadow of death and been raised from the dead. Third, those of the saved whom the Lord will find alive on the earth when He comes, and who will enter into the eternal kingdom without dying, according to the following Scripture: "We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [the living] shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

Now, with this analysis before us, let us examine the transfiguration scene with care. The first personality to attract our attention is that of the Master. We behold Him arrayed in the glory that will adorn Him in the eternal kingdom. His face is shining as the sun, and His garments are glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. Next, we see Moses, and we must study him with great care. He had been dead about fifteen hundred years, and yet here he is, as I verily believe, in a resurrection body, and here the following Scripture is appropriate: "But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). This is one of the most interesting and significant passages in the



Bible, and it behooves us to examine it with great care in so far as it bears upon the subject now under consideration. Let it be particularly noted that this contention and disputation between Michael and the devil was "about the *body* of Moses." It is a rule of interpretation universally recognized by exegetes that a word is always to be taken in its usual and most known signification, unless in a given case it is accompanied by circumstances that make it absolutely necessary to give it an unusual meaning.

The passage says that the dispute was about the "body" of Moses, and there is no attending circumstance to indicate that the word is to be understood in any unusual sense, and to so take it is to be arbitrary and unscientific. The "body" of Moses means the *body* of Moses, and that is as plain and simple as it can be made. That the "body of Moses" means a body of writing is simply out of the question, and to so understand it is to try to force the passage into agreement with a preconceived theory. That profound scholar and prince among men, the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for many years, used to say to his students as reported to me by one of them, "Young brethren, always let the Scriptures mean what they want to mean," and the best, and about the only, way to "let them mean what they want to mean," is to let them mean what they say; and the passage now under consideration says that the contention between Michael and the devil was about the *body* of Moses, and it should be permitted to mean what it says. Moses died apart from his people, and the Lord buried him on the side of Mount Nebo, and no man knew where his grave was. God wanted Moses to appear in the transfiguration in his

body for a special purpose, and He sent the archangel to get it. He was going to give a very real representation of the eternal kingdom that Peter, James and John, who were present when Jesus said, "There be some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," might see it, and He needed that body for this purpose.

When the angel went to get the body the devil met him at the grave and disputed his right to invade his kingdom and rescue a body that he had captured. The devil has always fought shy of the resurrection, for it gives the future for man a very realistic and substantial existence that makes it very attractive, and causes it to appeal with tremendous power to man to strive to attain to immortality and eternal life. The enemy wants to obscure this great doctrine, and involve the minds of men in confusion in regard to it, and he knew that if the body of Moses should be raised from the dead and presented to competent witnesses, it would forever settle the question of the resurrection of the dead with all reasonable people. It is true that others, including the Saviour Himself, have been raised from the dead, but it is also true that they had been dead but a few days, and it might be said that they were not really dead, but only in a state of suspended animation. Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Anderson Eddy, in her "Science and Health," that acme of absurdities, says that Jesus was not actually dead, but had simply swooned from fatigue and loss of blood! And yet there are people who take this driveling nonsense for the veritable gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here is a man who, after lying in his grave fifteen hundred years, is alive,

and if God can raise from the dead a man who has been dead that long, He can raise one from the dead who has been dead fifteen millions, or any number, of years. The devil did not want the matter to have such a demonstration as this, and hence the contention.

The third personality in the transfiguration is that of Elijah, who was translated and taken to glory without passing through the grave, and he appears as a representative of those who shall be so changed as to be fitted for the eternal kingdom without dying. If I may be permitted to indulge in some personal reflections, I desire to say that I would like to be in that company of Christians whom the Lord will find living on the earth when He makes His second advent, for I frankly confess that I don't want to die, and wouldn't die if I could help it. If there is anything in all human experience and observation that I hate with an intense hatred, it is death. Why shouldn't I? Has it not slain many of those whose lives were as dear to me as my own? and is it not hot upon my track to lay me low in the grave? Yes, I hate it, and have no sort of fellowship for it, and would evade it if possible. I have absolutely no sympathy with that cold, icy theology which charges death up to the providence of God. It was through sin that death came into the world, and sin came through the devil, and hence his Satanic Majesty is the author of death. Here is a picture that is realized again and again in the affairs of this world: A good Christian is the mother of three young children who need a mother's care more than they need anything else in life, and along comes death and lays its freezing hand upon that mother and sends her to her grave. Are you going to tell me that God did that? Well, you may

tell me that and repeat it over and over, but you will never make me believe it again. I was brought up to believe that God-dishonoring theory, but I thank the Lord that I saw my mistake and gave it up many years ago. "The mysterious providence of God," in sooth! Better say the cruel providence of the devil, who has the power of death. I rejoice in all the great and precious promises of God, but there is one of these that gives me exquisite pleasure, and that is "that the last enemy that shall be abolished is death"! Oh, how glad I am that the reign of this monster is not to be perpetual, but that his throne is to be overturned, his scepter broken, and he himself abolished. Hosanna in the highest heavens, the destroyer is himself to be destroyed. Blessed be God, this great Napoleon of the kingdom of darkness is finally to come to his Waterloo, meet his Wellington, and be banished to the island of extermination! "Praise the Lord. Let all the people praise him."

We have, then, in the transfiguration of Christ all the essential elements of the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and Peter, James and John saw it, and they bare witness to us of that sublime fact. Thus we have the utmost assurance of the final results of the gospel of the Son of God as seen in the redemption of men and women re-created in the image and after the likeness of God; and how comforting is this assurance in the midst of the toils, trials, temptations and heartaches of this life. Even from these low grounds of sorrow and distress we can look away to the land of sunshine, music and flowers, and see the eternal kingdom of our Saviour with its glorified King and all its exalted citizenship; and with these prospects before us we can stand upon the



precious promises of the gospel and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. How like oil on troubled water is this heavenly prospect to the hearts of the children of men as they trudge along through this world, sometimes carrying burdens that seem almost unbearable. The weary pilgrim may thank God and take courage, for he is traveling up the valley toward the rising sun, and not down the valley toward the setting sun. Witnesses who saw this miniature representation of the eternal kingdom—the everlasting home of the redeemed—tell us about its glory, and incite us to press forward toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. In that assembly of the eternally glorified saints the eye of faith can see the dear ones who fell asleep in Jesus, sitting by His side in the eternal kingdom, and wearing the habiliments of immortality and crowned with a crown of eternal life; and the desire to join that glorious company becomes an inspiring and controlling passion. If the miniature representation is so glorious, what must the eternal kingdom in its full-orbed glory be!

The foregoing interpretation of the transfiguration seems to be confirmed by the following Scripture: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:16-18). That the "holy mount" was the mount of transfiguration there



can be no question, and that the reference is to what occurred in the transfiguration scene is perfectly obvious. Here the inspired writer declares that he had made known "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and of course he could not have made that known if it had not come to pass. Speaking of himself and James and John, Peter says, "We were eye-witnesses of his majesty," and he simply made known to others what he had himself beheld. "The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" was a matter of history when Peter wrote, and was not a "cunningly devised fable." Those who constituted the "inner circle" of the disciples of Christ were eye-witnesses of the majesty of His power and coming, and saw the "kingdom of God come with power," or saw "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," according to the Saviour's promise. This, I am sure, is the main lesson that the transfiguration was meant to teach—and what a magnificent lesson it is!

But I am not saying nor meaning to imply that this is the only lesson that that majestic and glorious event contains. It may, and probably does, teach that the dispensation of Moses and the ancient prophets was drawing to a close, and that both the legal and prophetic functions were to unite in Christ, and that henceforth he was to be looked to for both legal and prophetic instruction. Perhaps Peter's suggestion that three tabernacles be constructed on the spot, one for Christ, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, indicates that he thought that the gospel of Christ would simply be new wine in old wineskins, while the disappearance of Moses and Elijah, leaving Jesus alone, coupled with the divine admonition, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear

ye him," was meant to impress upon the minds of the witnesses that the work of the ancient lawgiver, and that of the former prophets, had been completed, and Jesus alone was to be lawgiver and prophet to His people in the future. This is also an important lesson, and it would be well if all professed Christian people could learn it and regulate their practice accordingly.

There are still those who want to unite the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, by engrafting upon the latter the law of the Sabbath, which is evidently done away in Christ Jesus. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Sabbath was established to be observed by man in commemoration of the completion of the work of creation, as attention to the following Scripture will show: "And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made" (Gen. 2:1-3). God blessed and hallowed the seventh of the days that are mentioned in connection with His work of creation, and He blessed and sanctified it to be observed by Himself, and not by man. Those seven days were not solar days or days of twenty-four hours each, but indefinite periods of time, and the seventh one, or God's Sabbath, is still running, as is shown by the Saviour's reply to His enemies who accused Him of violating the Jewish Sabbath in healing a sick man on that day. He said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." The Master had just done a benevolent work in heal-

ing the cripple, and he vindicated Himself by appealing to precedents set Him by His Father. God had been doing benevolent work on His great Sabbath from the completion of creation to that very hour ("until now"), and the Master's argument in effect runs as follows: "I have simply done on your little sabbath a work such as God has been doing on His great Sabbath all the while." The argument was conclusive, and it shows that God's Sabbath is age-long, and hence was not appointed for the observance of man.

The sabbath that was established to be observed by man was not ordained till after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, and was established for a purpose very different from that for which God's Sabbath was established. The following Scripture is pertinent in this connection: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath," etc. (Neh. 9:13, 14). This shows conclusively that no sabbath had been ordained to be observed by man prior to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and the purpose of the Sinaitic sabbath is clearly stated in the following passage: "Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest

as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:12-15). This language can not be made plainer by any attempt at explanation. "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: *therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.*" Here is a positive statement that God commanded the Israelites to keep the sabbath day to commemorate the facts that they were slaves in the land of Egypt, and that God had mightily and graciously delivered them; and this makes it perfectly obvious that this sabbath had no reference whatever to the work of creation.

The law concerning this sabbath prohibited the building of a fire on that day, in the following enactment, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (Ex. 35:3), and for gathering sticks (presumably to build a fire) on the sabbath day a man was put to death, as related in the following Scripture: "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without



the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died: as the Lord commanded Moses" (Num. 15:32-36). It was no great hardship to pass a day without fire either in the wilderness where the law was enacted or in Canaan where the Israelites settled to live in the observance of the law; but how would it work in the frigid zone? The sabbath law was never meant to be observed by any people other than the Jews, and it is without significance to the Gentiles because they were never in bondage in Egypt, and of course were never delivered thence, and have nothing to commemorate by observing the sabbath. But if they are going to pretend to keep it, let them keep it just as the law requires.

The sabbath was ordained to be observed for a certain purpose, as has just been pointed out, and was to be observed for that purpose till a certain event should occur, when the law would expire by limitation to give place to something better, as Paul sets forth most explicitly in his letter to the Galatians, as follows: "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. . . . But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:19-25). This passage teaches explicitly that when Christ, the promised "seed," came, that event put an end to the law, including the sabbath, and retired it, and that since faith, or the gospel, has come, people are no longer



under "a tutor," or the law. Paul particularly emphasizes this truth in the following passage: "But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory" (2 Cor. 3:7-11).

Now, the only "ministration" that was ever "written, and engraven on stones," is the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments, and the apostle expressly declares it has passed away, or has been done away in Christ. That was the "ministration of death," and it served its purpose and passed away to give place to the gospel of Christ, which is the "ministration of life." It is only from this point of view that the following language has force and pertinency: "And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; and having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new

moon or a sabbath day'' (Col. 2:13-16). If the Scriptures make anything plain, it is that the sabbath law has passed away, and that it is no longer of binding force and effect. It is quite likely that all this was indicated in the events of the transfiguration of Christ, in addition to its main purpose of presenting in miniature form the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in its glory and power.

## EXTREMES MEET

### A SERMON

TEXT.—“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.”—Luke 16: 31.

I DEEM it altogether unnecessary and profitless to discuss the question as to whether the story of Lazarus and Dives (the rich man) is parable or history, for the lesson that it contains is the same whether it is the one or the other; and that lesson is that there is a future life for man, and that the character of that life depends upon the kind of life one lives here. This consideration ought to prompt sensible people to order their conversation and conduct here below in harmony with the teaching of the word of God, so that when they are called upon to pass out of this world into the great beyond, they may have the assurance that they will enter upon the enjoyment of immortality and eternal life in the presence of God. Unless this be the case, this life is a miserable failure and farce, and one had better never have been born. Men and women should be admonished to heed the Saviour's exhortation when He says: “But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” This suggests a life of faith in God and His overruling providence, and places man upon the highest plane accessible to him in this life.

In this pathetic story extremes meet in two instances, and each may be studied with interest and profit by thoughtful and prudent people. "Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." Here is the extreme of plenty and luxury, a fine residence handsomely furnished, and a table laden with the richest delicacies that the market affords, while the most gorgeous apparel adorns the members of the family. "And a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores." Here is the extreme of poverty and distress, and it appears by the side of the extreme of the greatest abundance. What a pitiable object that is that lies there at the gateway leading into the magnificent premises of the man of wealth, upon a pallet of straw, covered with sores from head to feet, and his only attending physicians the dogs of the street that lick his suppurating sores! But it is not to be always thus in either case. In process of time the beggar dies, and we are not informed as to what disposition was made of his putrid body. If it was buried at all, it was no doubt in potter's field, without flowers and without mourners. But, blessed be God, the story does not end here. "He was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom." As that child of misfortune lay there, not upon a downy bed, but upon the open street, with no friendly, loving hand to brush the dew of death from his brow, but surrounded by mangy dogs, with his physical ear becoming dull as the hand of the death-angel was laid upon him, no doubt his spiritual ear could catch the rustle of the wings of

angels that hovered over him, ready to receive his spirit as its frail tenement of clay should fall to pieces, and bear it away to a place in the home of the blessed.

The teaching of the word of God in regard to the ministry of angels presents a subject of thrilling interest to an appreciative mind. How often these messengers appeared to direct the affairs of the ancient people of God, and deliver the saints of the Most High from danger and trouble! "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," is a declaration of Holy Writ that is wholesome and full of comfort to a man or woman of faith in God and His promises. We are called upon to travel over roads that are rough and rocky, and along which grow thorns and briers, and it is a source of inexpressible joy to know that the good Lord has charged His angels concerning us to keep us and protect us along the way, lest at any time we dash our feet against stones, or become entangled in thorns and briers, and get ourselves torn and mangled thereby. Not many of the precious assurances of the word of God are sweeter than the declaration concerning angels, that they are ministering spirits, "sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." If we could take hold of this assurance with a masculine faith, and feel that the heavenly Father is watching over us, and making His angels our servants, what a world of trouble, anxiety and vexation it would save us from! If we could only do the best we can for ourselves, and leave the rest with God, feeling fully assured that He will bring things out all right, life would be sweeter and brighter.



“And the rich man also died, *and was buried.*” Certainly. The rich must die as well as the poor. Colonel Astor, with all his millions, could not buy a seat in a life-boat, and had to go down with the hundreds of others who perished in the “Titanic” disaster. Death had no more regard for Dives in his splendid mansion, clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day, than it had for poor Lazarus who lay at his gate full of sores. Prepare to meet thy God, whoever you are, and whatever may be your condition in life, for by and by you must stand before His throne to give an account of the deeds done in your body. It is particularly noted that the rich man was buried, and what a funeral that must have been! No doubt messengers were dispatched in every direction to notify kindred and friends of the death and funeral of the wealthy and popular man, and from every direction people came to pay tributes of respect to the memory of the departed, bringing with them floral offerings of richest hue and most artistic design. And if a funeral oration was delivered over the remains by some one of like mind with some modern preachers, probably the deceased was given a passport to glory. It is likely that some preachers do more harm preaching funerals, than they do good preaching Christ. The people usually know the character of the dead much better than does the preacher who preaches funerals, and when they hear a preacher trying to comfort the living by assuring them that the beloved dead has gone to heaven, when they know that he lived an ungodly life, they are liable either to become disgusted with religion, or conclude that they can live ungodly lives and be saved too. There is great danger here.

I heard Moses E. Lard, the greatest preacher to whom I ever listened, tell the following pathetic story: He had a very dear friend who was a successful lawyer, and withal an excellent man every way in the estimation of the world, but he was not a Christian. He took sick, and it soon became evident both to him and his friends that he would die in a little while. He sent for his close friend, Bro. Lard, who was glad to respond and render the dying man any assistance he might be able to confer upon him. He made the visit, and, after the usual salutations were exchanged, the sick man said: "Mr. Lard, I would not have you think that I have sent for you with any idea that you can do me any good in my dying hour, for such is not the case. I know that when I die I will go to perdition, and there is no help for me." "Why," said Bro. Lard, "don't you think there is any hope?" "Hope, Mr. Lard; talk not to me about hope. For twenty-five years I have understood the gospel and my duty under it as well as you do, Mr. Lard, and during all that time I have refused to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. I have lived a life of disobedience and am dying in my sins, and where Christ is I can not go. I am lost—eternally lost. I sent for you to tell you that I want you to preach my funeral, and I don't want any sentimentalism about it. I want you to tell my friends and neighbors that while you are preaching my funeral I am in hell, and inform them that I requested you to tell them this. I want you to use my case to warn others against the life of disobedience that I have lived, lest they die without hope, as I am dying, and go to hell, as I am about to do." That is a blood-curdling story, but it introduces us to an honest man face to face with

fearful realities, and every one of us ought to be warned against the fatal mistake that he made.

“The rich man died, and was buried,” and perhaps a towering shaft was erected over his tomb; but the story does not end here. “And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Here we have the second meeting of extremes, and it involves the same parties that were concerned in the former meeting, but with tables turned and circumstances reversed. Dives, who, in the other meeting, was in the extreme of plenty and satisfaction, is now in the extreme of want and misery, while Lazarus, who, in the former meeting, was in the extreme of poverty and suffering, is now enjoying the extreme of happiness and bliss. But listen: “Father Abraham.” It is Dives talking, and talking in prayer—a thing that he had probably neglected all his lifetime. Listen to his first petition: “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.” Little did he ever dream, while on earth, that circumstances could ever possibly arise under which the poor beggar that lay at his gate could render him the least favor. But the unexpected has happened, and he finds himself in desperate straits, and in anguish he makes application for a little relief at the hands of the former beggar. “Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.” What an insignificant benefaction is thus pitifully sought, and with what touching and pathetic earnestness the petition is urged: “I am tormented in this flame.” Will not this plea melt the heart of Abra-

ham, and move him to send Lazarus in haste with the desired relief? If he is a person under the domination of sentimentalism and blind to the demands of justice, he will yield to the pathetic pleading of Dives, who cries mightily from the depths of the pit of ruin. But listen: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish." "Remember!" How that must have penetrated the soul of the formerly rich man like a dirk! While memory may be an angel of pleasure and happiness, it may also be a demon of torture armed with scorpion cords to lash the conscience most unmercifully. There are things in the past of the lives of all of us that we would gladly forget, but memory clings to them and refuses to let them go, and they are to us ministers of chastisement. This suggests the importance of sowing in the soil of memory only such seeds as will bring forth flowers of beauty and fragrance to delight us along the way, and not thorns and briers to torment us. Good deeds will produce the flowers, while evil deeds will bring forth the thorns and briers. With what pleasure one remembers words of love spoken to mother in early life, while the memory of deeds of kindness shown that dear one is a joy forever. But inconsiderate words and unkind deeds directed toward that sacred person produce memories by and by that tear the soul like the teeth of a hackle. Let us all take good heed as to what we lay up in the storehouse of memory.

"Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things." Yes, what a vivid picture that presented



to the eye of the rich man's memory. He saw a beautiful street in the city of Jerusalem, upon which was located a splendid mansion in which dwelt a man who lived in the lap of luxury every day, and down at the gate lay a poor wretch covered with sores. How natural it all seemed, and how striking the contrast that follows: "But now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish." The balance-sheet has been struck, and things have been evened up. Justice has been vindicated, and human folly exposed. "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." This is a weighty and powerful statement, and it has a lesson for us all, but especially for those effeminate preachers and teachers whose sensitive souls revolt at the idea of eternal punishment. There is an intervening and impassable gulf *fixed*—**F-I-X-E-D!** Let no one be deceived by the fallacious notion that he can spend his life in sin, and, after being punished awhile hereafter, escape, and attain to the land of bliss. This idea is a snare and a delusion prepared by the devil to ensnare the unwary and accomplish their eternal ruin. If the New Testament teaches anything plainly, it is that the finally impenitent will be "punished with eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (1 Thess. 1:9), and He who spoke as never man spoke, speaking of the final judgment and the destiny of the wicked, says that they "shall go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If one sow to the wind, one shall reap the whirlwind.



Seeing that his own case was utterly hopeless, Dives thinks of his brothers, and enters a plea in their behalf: "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Better for him and them had he thought of that before. Perhaps he was the oldest of the six brothers, and was looked up to by the rest as an example, and if he had lived the right kind of a life, he would have landed in a different place, and his brothers would have had no need of the ministry of a special messenger from heaven to warn them against the awful fate that befell him. Tremendous responsibilities rest upon every individual with respect to others, for no man lives simply unto himself. Every life touches and influences some other life for weal or woe; and hence a man should exercise the utmost caution as to the influence he is exercising upon those round about him, for he may be shaping their destiny for eternity. A father may land his own children in heaven or hell, according to the example that he places before them in his daily walk. Tortured by the thought that his brothers were following in his footsteps, and would consequently land where he was, he undertook to avert such a calamity, when it was too late, by pleading with Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them. It has been said that misery loves company, but here is a man in the deepest depths of misery, and yet he does not desire the company of his brothers in his pit of destruction.

Note well the reply that Abraham made to this urgent appeal: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." In putting this language into

the mouth of Abraham the Master recognizes the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, for it was only in his writings that these brothers had Moses, and the Pentateuch contains the only writings that were ever attributed to Moses with any degree of confidence. Speculating critics would do well to heed the Lord's decision in this matter, and not call in question the accuracy of his judgment in the case. Moses wrote the Pentateuch, if Jesus told the truth. In his deep anxiety for his brothers the rich man undertakes to argue the case with Abraham, and says, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent." Men have no right to expect that God will do more for them, unless they make diligent and proper use of the blessings that He has already bestowed upon them. In addition to Moses and the prophets, we have Christ and the apostles, and if the possession of Moses and the prophets left the Jews without excuse for their disobedience, surely we can make no plea in extenuation of our neglect of the salvation offered us in the glorious gospel of the Son of God; but, having neglected and rejected this heavenly boon, we will have to stand in profound silence before the throne of judgment to receive the sentence of eternal condemnation. Surely all men should take warning, and govern themselves accordingly.

The reply to this pathetic and thrilling appeal in behalf of the living is startling and amazing: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." Strange and surprising as this statement is, it found verification in the conduct of the Jews with respect to the risen Saviour. They knew that He rose from

the dead, and yet they refused to be persuaded to accept the truth and become obedient to the Lord of glory. It is remarkable that the human mind can reach such a degree of perversity and obduracy. Instead of accepting the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and surrendering to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, they hired men to lie about it, and give it out that His disciples came and stole Him away while they were asleep!! By sin men may reach that state of moral hardness as to be beyond the power of truth to change them, and be given over to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind, to believe a lie and be led captive at the will of Satan. Men of our day think that the Jews who acted thus in regard to the Messiah were very wicked, and so they were; but how much worse were they than those of our time who say that they believe in the resurrection of Christ and the truth of the gospel, and yet refuse to bow to the authority of Him who died for their sins, and rose again for their justification? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" is the Master's challenge to disobedient people who say they believe that He is the Son of God. How will they meet that challenge in the day of judgment?

It remains to inquire into the basis of the condemnation of the rich man, and the salvation of Lazarus. Why was the latter saved? Not because he was poor, for there is no virtue in poverty in itself considered. Indeed, it may be very blameworthy. If poverty comes as a result of sin, it is a crime that has but little palliation. Poverty saves nobody. This poor man was saved because he believed in God, and served Him as best he could, and it is a blessed

thing to know that poverty has no power to separate one from God and keep one out of heaven. The hardships of poverty that we experience here may enter into the background of the glory that awaits the faithful in the great and glorious beyond. "God chooses them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him," and certainly this assurance is abundant compensation for all the pinching poverty that may torment one here below. While Lazarus was overwhelmed with poverty, yet he loved God and was rich in faith, and when he died God's angels took him home to glory.

Why was the rich man lost? Not because he was rich, for, while there is danger to the soul in riches, as the Saviour clearly teaches, yet riches are not sinful in themselves. They may be obtained by sinful methods, and expended in ways that are wrong, but this does not make them sinful *per se*. Abraham was rich, and yet he was the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, and Paul instructs Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." The apostle does not intimate that the rich can not be saved, but, on the contrary, he expressly teaches that the rich may so employ their wealth as to enable them to lay hold of eternal life, which is "life indeed." Dives was not lost because



he was rich. Was he a stingy skinflint who felt no interest in the poor and needy, and went to perdition on that account? It is sometimes so alleged, but it seems to me that this view of the matter is unfair to the facts and unjust to the man. How came Lazarus to be lying at the gate of this rich man? It was because that was the best place he could find to get relief. In those days the poverty-stricken placed themselves, or were placed by their friends, where the benevolently inclined could conveniently bestow upon them benefactions. Such an object was "laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple," because that was a convenient place for him to be to receive the help that he so much needed. And it was for the same reason that poor Lazarus was laid at the gate of Dives, and it is more than probable that the rich man saw to it that many and large crumbs fell within the reach of the needy man who lay "in the street below," and there is nothing to indicate that crumbs were all that Lazarus received. The fact that the rich man called for some service at the hands of Lazarus seems to suggest that he felt that the beggar was under some obligation to him. There is no evidence that Dives was a close, hard-fisted man to whom the milk of human kindness was unknown.

Why, then, was he lost? Simply because he ignored God, as multiplied thousands of men and women have done, and are doing to-day. He had a plenty of the goods of this world, and was therewith content. He did not take God into the account at all in the plans and purposes of his life. He was running his own boat, and felt no dependence upon or



obligation to God whatever. He felt sufficient of himself to take care of himself, and draw from his own resources everything that he needed. He had no thought of any other world than this, and looked to it for the highest good that he craved. He was not the least concerned about the great future, and made no sort of provision for it. He corresponds to the man of whom it is said in Holy Scripture, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Some understand this saying thus: "The fool hath said in heart, No God;" that is, no God for me. And thus construed, the passage does not regard the fool as denying the existence of God, but simply as declaring his independence of Him; as much as to say, "I don't need God, and can get along without Him." A man who admits that God is, and at the same time proclaims his independence of Him, is a bigger fool than he who says there is no God. A person who tries to get along without God has a hard road to travel, and will dash his feet against many stones along the way. But even if he can manage to get through this world fairly well on the independent line, the time will come when he will realize the folly of his course. A young lady of an aristocratic family became convinced that she ought to obey her Saviour and enter into the kingdom of God; but her father, a man wholly devoted to the world, dissuaded her, and even gave her a bribe not to ally herself with Christian people. By and by she took sick, and it soon became evident that death was inevitable. Upon being so informed, she called her father into her sick-chamber, and the following conversation took place: "Father," said the daughter, "they tell me that I must soon die." "Yes, daughter," replied the father,

“in spite of all that could be done to avoid it, you must die.” “Father,” said the dying maid, “this is a lonely and dreary journey upon which I am entering; can’t you go with me?” “No,” said the father, convulsed with emotion, “I can not accompany you; if I could, I would gladly do so.” “I know that,” responded the daughter; “you can not go with me, and Jesus, whom you persuaded me not to accept, will not. I must go alone.” Then two hearts broke, and in a little while the soul of the dying girl started through the valley of the shadow of death with neither Saviour nor father to cheer her amidst the gathering gloom. Men may imagine that they do not need God in life, but when death comes, and eternity opens to receive them, they will awaken, when it is too late, to the great need of the divine presence and support. Dives undertook to get along without God, and he is now and forever in a place of torment.

Hear his pitiful wail: “I am in anguish in this flame.” It has been said that hell is a condition, and not a place, but a condition without a place is impossible, and those who entertain this inconsistent philosophy would do well to pay attention to the testimony of one who speaks from experience. Dives prayed Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers to testify to them, “lest they also come into this *place* of torment.” This wretched man realized that he was in a *place*—an isolated place from which there was no escape. Hell involves both place and condition, and both are frightful in the extreme, and strenuous efforts should be made to avoid them. It would be as reasonable to say that heaven is a condition, and not a place, as to say this of hell; but Jesus says, “I go to prepare a *place* for you, and if I go and pre-

pare a *place* for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." The idea that God is everywhere in general, and nowhere in particular, is against both reason and Scripture, and smacks strongly of pantheism. If God is a person, which reason and revelation clearly teach, He must have some certain dwelling-place, and that place is called heaven. In like manner there is a place called hell, which was prepared for the devil and his angels, and into that place the wicked will be turned in the day of judgment.

This place is characterized in the New Testament as a lake of fire and brimstone, in the following passages: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Dives said: "I am in anguish in this flame." We are now in front of a question of interpretation, and must proceed cautiously. Are we to understand from these passages that hell, as a place, consists of a lake of literal fire and brimstone? From the standpoint of reason, this question must be answered in the negative. Where would the brim-

stone come from to keep a lake of immense size burning day and night for ever and ever? Couldn't God make it? Well, I suppose he could, but the idea that God is running a brimstone factory to make brimstone to burn people throughout eternity, does not seem to harmonize with the disposition that the Scriptures ascribe to the loving God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us look at some other passages bearing upon the same subject, that are manifestly to be taken as tropes, or figures of speech: "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss," etc. (Rev. 20:1-3). The Common Version renders the word here translated "abyss" by the phrase "bottomless pit," and this appears to me to be a better rendering than the other. Indeed, "abyss" is scarcely a translation at all, but rather a transference of the Greek word *abussos*, pretty much as *baptizo* is transferred as "baptize." "Bottomless pit" expresses the idea quite happily, and it is a figure of speech in which future punishment is represented as falling, falling, for ever falling into a pit that has no bottom. "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12). "And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness" (Matt. 25:30). This figure represents the wicked as living and wandering in darkness forever. "And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out:



it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47, 48). Here we have two figures, in the first of which a worm is represented as gnawing upon the vitals of the wicked forever, and the other regards the lost as spending eternity in fire.

These manifest tropes point to "the lake of fire and brimstone" as a bold and striking figure of speech to indicate the awfulness of future punishment. It seems that God has exhausted his resources in His earnest effort to get before the minds of men the fearfulness of the fate that awaits those who die in their sins. Let no one imagine that the reality of future punishment is dissipated in these figures of speech. On the contrary, it is stressed and emphasized by this method of illustration. Correct figures of speech are always based on facts, and the facts are much more real and substantial than the figures that are founded upon them. If the passages that have been cited are figures, what must the fact be upon which they are built! If these Scriptures are simply shadows, what must the substance that casts them be! What is the nature of the punishment thus represented? Remorse of conscience? Let it be that, at least in part, and it is something that beggars description. It has been a long time since I read Pollock's "Course of Time," and I have not the book at hand at present, and the passage that I am about to recite is reproduced from memory; and while it may not be exactly accurate in its verbiage, yet it is substantially correct, and should be read with all seriousness:



“As felt the material part, when in the furnace cast,  
So felt the soul, the victim of remorse:  
Who passed there met remorse;  
The heavens above, the earth beneath,  
Seemed glowing brass, heated seven times:  
A violent fever seized his soul,  
And as he writhed and quivered, scorched within,  
The fury round his torrid temples flapped her fiery wings,  
And breathed upon his lips and parched tongue  
The withered blasts of hell.”

Is not this scorching within more dreadful even than the suffering resulting from the application of fire to the flesh? This wonderful picture drawn by one of the greatest poets that ever toyed with the Muses is enough to prompt all intelligent beings to strive to so live that they may not be “victims of remorse” in the great hereafter toward which we are all hastening as fast as the wheels of time can revolve. Or take that marvelous production known as “The Raven.” Literary critics have been somewhat at a loss to discover the real meaning and intent of this remarkable poem, and some have concluded that there is no plot or plan to it; that it is simply the ebullition of a mind diseased with liquor, the frothing of an inebriate’s intoxicated soul. But if Edgar Allan Poe ever experienced a sober, serious hour in his brief life, it was when he was composing “The Raven.” It is the wail of a lost soul, the outcry of a spirit already in “anguish in this flame.” He had misspent his life and thrown away his opportunities, and is now facing a dark and terrible future, and remorse wrings this stream of weird eloquence from his perturbed heart. He represents himself as in his room alone one stormy night, when suddenly there came a “rapping at his chamber door.” Think-

ing that some visitor was seeking admittance, he opened the door, and, peering into the darkness, he found no one present. Resuming his place, he heard the rapping repeated, but this time at his window, and, upon opening the shutter, "in there stepped a stately raven" and "perched upon the bust of Pallas just above his chamber door." Then ensued the following colloquy which is embraced in the poem:

"Prophet!" cried I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted,—  
On this home by horror haunted,—tell me truly, I implore,  
Is there—is there balm in Gilead? Tell me! tell me, I implore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" cried I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—

By that heaven that bends above us,—by that God we both adore,—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting.

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is  
dreaming,  
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on  
the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the  
floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore.

Think of spending eternity in that frame of mind! Contemplate receiving the lashes of remorse for ever and ever! Think of crying out from the depths of deepest anguish for relief, with no relief possible! It seems that God has gone to the limit and exhausted His resources in His efforts to impress upon the human mind the awfulness of the fate of those who die in their sins, and hence must be banished from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power for ever and ever! Think of the sensation of falling throughout eternity! Consider the horrors of wandering in utter darkness forever! Reflect upon the misery of having an undying worm gnawing at your vitals without ceasing! Meditate upon the fearfulness of swimming in a lake of fire and brimstone throughout the countless ages that make up eternity! Let these be figures of speech, which I am sure they are, and do they not represent something that must be inconceivably horrible? Every one of these figures is a flaming tongue appealing to the children of men to flee from such a fate, fall in with the overtures of mercy, and lay hold upon the hope of immortality that is so freely offered in the gospel of the Son of God.

Let no one lay the flattering unction to his soul that God in His infinite mercy will save him anyhow,

for the demands of infinite justice must be met before there is room for the exercise of mercy. In the mighty sweep of His goodness the Lord has made provision by which mercy may reach and save all those who become reconciled to God, believe in Jesus Christ, and obey the gospel of divine grace; and till this is done mercy has gone as far as it can go without compromising the principles of eternal truth and righteousness, and wrecking the universe. The mercy of God is truly wonderful, and what it has accomplished to redeem man from the condemnation of his own sins is something to astonish even the angels of God. That was a beautiful view of the mercy of God which prompted the Psalmist to utter the 136th Psalm, in which he exclaims twenty-six times, "For his mercy endureth for ever," and while this is the utterance of a great truth in which we should continually rejoice, still it should be remembered that Jehovah will not permit His mercy to trample upon justice nor thwart the ends of righteousness. God is the King of the universe and He reigns in righteousness, and men must not expect to be the beneficiaries of His mercy without complying with the requirements of His righteous law. God must maintain His word at all hazards, and to suppose that He will override His word to exercise His mercy upon the disobedient is a snare and a delusion. Jesus Christ became "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," and to look for salvation even through the Saviour of men, while living in open disobedience to Him, is to expect water from a dry well.

That was a great lesson that God taught in words that He addressed through Samuel to a disobedient king. Saul had been given specific instructions as to

how he should dispose of the Amalekites and their cattle—all were to be slain. But Agag the king was spared, and some of the best of the cattle were saved under pretext of offering them in sacrifice to God, who had given Saul the victory. But Samuel said to King Saul: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim" (1 Sam. 15:22, 23). That disobedience lost to Saul and his family the kingdom, and it stands there on the page of sacred history as a perpetual warning against disobeying the voice of the Lord. The following Scripture will make a fitting close to this discourse: "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."



# THE CHRISTIAN RACE

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”  
—Heb. 12: 1, 2.

THE keyword in this passage is the term “witnesses,” and the first thing to do in the interpretation of this Scripture is to ascertain the meaning of this term as here used, for the meaning that we attach to it will largely determine the meaning of the passage as a whole. As employed in common parlance, this word is used in two senses. It is used passively to indicate a spectator—one who sits or stands by and observes a transaction. And then it is used in an active sense to signify one who bears testimony to something he saw or heard. If a man is upon the street and sees a transaction, he is a witness in the passive sense of the term; but if he is called into court to tell what he saw, he becomes a witness in the active sense of the word.

In which of these senses is the word to be taken in our text? Probably the view most commonly entertained by expositors is that it is to be taken in the passive sense. It has been presented somewhat after the following fashion: The Christian is represented as

occupying the center of a hollow sphere so as to be the observed of all observers, and that the eyes of all intelligent beings are resting upon him as interested observers. Immediately overhead sits God looking down upon His child who is running this race, with deep and sympathetic interest, and intensely anxious as to the outcome. By His side sits the Saviour, who is also watching the runner as he presses forward in the race, and is deeply concerned as to the final result. Then come the angels and archangels, who are intently gazing upon the Christian as he bends forward in the race, and ready to be sent upon errands of relief and helpfulness if need be. The word of God says that they are all "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation," and this is a very encouraging assurance to the pilgrims of earth who are running the Christian race, sometimes amid circumstances of sorrow and discouragement.

Next to the angels stand the spirits of the just made perfect who were once runners in this race themselves, and came off victors and are now wearing their crowns. They, too, are interested in the race that the Christian is still running in this world, and are looking on with the deepest concern with respect to the outcome. It is not supposable that Christian people are less concerned for their fellow-Christians after they leave the race-course in triumph, than they were before they shuffled off the mortal coil. And who knows but that they may be sent forth to minister to their friends who are still upon the shores of time? "Angel" simply means messenger, and a redeemed spirit might be a messenger the same as any other being, and it might be a joy to such to be sent

on an errand of mercy and helpfulness to friends. Then come Christian men and women who are looking upon each other as they run this race, ready to speak an encouraging word and extend a helping hand to one another. This is the meaning of Christian fellowship, and what a blessed thing it is! For a man to feel assured that he is surrounded by kindred spirits who are in sympathy with him, and are ready to help him along the way, imparts strength and courage, and makes the burdens of life lighter. The people of God constitute a family that is held together by the bonds of love, and every member of the family feels bound to help and defend every other member. No member will speak evil of any other member, but, on the contrary, if one hears another spoken against, he will speak a word of defense. If Christian fellowship doesn't mean this, it doesn't mean much of anything.

Going now below the horizon, so to speak, we next encounter bad people who are watching the Christian as he is engaged in running this race, but watching with a desire to see him stumble and fall. They are the critics of the church and Christian people, and are always ready to find fault with those who are trying to live the Christian life. They won't come into the church because there are hypocrites there, and because they are just as good as church-members! These people do not compare themselves with the pious, godly, consistent members of the church, but with the weak and erring ones who, through their own frailty and the strength of temptation, go astray and fall by the way. These critics are the buzzards of the spiritual world. If you go out into the field some beautiful summer day, you will probably see a large bird circling about in the balmy air in a most graceful

and pleasing way. Below him, grazing in the field, are herds of fat, fine, sleek horses, cattle, hogs and sheep, but the bird pays no attention to them; they do not offer what he is looking for. Presently he turns his attention to a particular spot in the distance, and directs his course thitherward and alights. If you approach that spot, you will find the bird upon a putrid carcass, gorging himself with rotten flesh—that is to his taste. The bird is a buzzard! This is a good illustration of people who criticize the church and church-members. They pass by scores of excellent people who are living soberly, righteously and godly in the world, and spend their criticisms upon a few who are coming short of Christian obligation. But the fact that Christians are watched by this class of critics should admonish them to walk circumspectly, and deny ungodliness and worldly lust.

Next to these critics stand the disembodied spirits of wicked people, that are likewise interested spectators beholding the child of God in his efforts to run his race with patience and fortitude. It is impossible to tell the extent to which the spirits of the wicked dead are allowed to interfere in the lives of the living. It is reasonable to suppose that they are still concerned about the affairs of living people and seek to take part therein. Some good thinkers believe that the demons that were on earth when Jesus was here, and desired to enter into the bodies of living men and women, were spirits of wicked people who had died. It seems that these demons or disembodied spirits, if such they were, craved to be re-embodied, and so strong was their desire in this respect that they preferred the bodies of hogs to having no bodies at all, as is seen in the case of those that the Lord

expelled from the bodies of two Gadarenes. After these come fallen angels who kept not their first estate, but sinned against God and were expelled from the high and glorious courts of heaven, and are awaiting the condemnation of the judgment-day. These, too, are watching the Christian pilgrim as he struggles along the race-course of life, and are ready to gloat over any slip that the runner may chance to make, and declare the church to be a failure.

Last of all comes Satan, the prince of darkness, who observes the runner's efforts with the most intense interest and the most consummate hatred, desiring his failure and anxious to do anything he possibly can to bring that to pass. And as God sends forth His angels to succor His children in their struggles and trials along the way, so may Satan dispatch his angels to trip them and try to cause them to fall. We can see what he is and what he is willing to do to thwart the purposes of God in the matter of human redemption, from his effort with the Master Himself in the wilderness temptations. In that transaction his malevolence stands out in bold relief, and exposes itself to the view of universal intelligence; and we may rest assured that, if our Lord did not escape the wicked designs of this supreme adversary of God and man, we can not hope to avoid his venomous assaults. Holy Scripture warns us that our "adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," and we are admonished to be "sober and watchful." And thus this "cloud of witnesses" is supposed to be made up of all the intelligent inhabitants of the universe.

Now, while this striking figure no doubt represents a true state of the case, yet I do not think that this



is the meaning of our text. I am persuaded that the word "witnesses" is to be taken here in its active sense, indicating persons who bear testimony, and not mere spectators. This idea seems to inhere in the term used in the Greek, which is *marturoon*, from which comes our word "martyr." It is a very active and energetic word and indicates intensity and strenuousness on the part of the witnesses. No doubt the immediate reference is to the noble army of God's people mentioned and alluded to in the preceding chapter of this interesting and instructive letter to the Hebrews—the great faith chapter of the Bible. These witnesses testify to us that this race, however difficult and strenuous it may be, can be run successfully, and they testify out of their own experimental knowledge. As we bend our energies to the task in hand we may hear these witnesses telling us to be of good courage and press on, for they know that the race can be run triumphantly from the fact that they so ran it themselves, and are now basking in the sunbeams of the heavenly Father's smiles. This testimony imparts courage and inspires ambition on the part of those who are running, and prompts them to put forth the best possible efforts to succeed. When death snatches a babe from the arms of its mother and she sits beneath the willows weeping and nursing a broken heart, if a mother who has never lost a babe speaks words of comfort to the disconsolate one, that helps some; but it is not like it is if another mother who has also lost a babe offers to the freshly wounded heart the solace contained in words of sympathy and condolence. She has passed under the same rod and tasted of the same cup, and her words are like oil upon troubled waters.

So it is with respect to the testimony which this cloud of witnesses bears to those who are running "the race that is set before them." They speak from experience and personally know whereof they affirm. A traveler is pursuing his journey to a distant land, and is footsore and weary, and sometimes almost ready to faint and fall by the way. He looks ahead and sees a range of mountains that lies across his pathway and over which he must pass to reach the land of his destination; and as he gazes upon the lofty peaks and craggy sides of the frowning mountains, his heart sinks within him and he says: "I can never surmount those difficulties, and I may as well give up the race and lay the burden down here and now." But just at this critical juncture he lifts his eyes towards the mountain peaks and sees upon the summits thereof a company of people with palms of victory in their hands and songs of triumph upon their lips; and, listening, he discovers that they are exhorting him to press forward, assuring him that they traveled the same road, encountered the same difficulties, contended with the same trials, and triumphed gloriously in the end. There is that in the human breast which prompts an individual with some ambition to say, "What others have done, I can do," and so the weary traveler, electrified by the testimony of these witnesses, picks up fresh courage and presses on toward the goal. From crag to crag he makes his way up the mountainsides, keeping his eyes fixed upon the witnesses at the top, and his ears open to their words of encouragement. Higher and still higher he rises, till by and by he feels the handclasp of those who had helped him with their stimulating testimony, and joins in their pæans of victory and shouts of triumph, and,

with them singing as they go, he descends into the land of sunshine, flowers and joy.

And so it is with the Christian as he runs the race that is set before him. He meets with many trials, difficulties and discouragements along the way, but he is "surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses" who assure him out of their own experiences that he can achieve success through faith in God, who will give him grace and strength according to his needs. The circumstances and experiences of human life are practically the same in all ages, and history is continually repeating itself. The difficulties and trials that God's ancient servants had to encounter are about the same as those we have to meet, and their victories are full of encouragement to us in our struggles and toils. I know that sometimes we are inclined to think that our troubles are exceptionally great, and that our trials and temptations are greater than usually fall to the lot of man, but this is a grievous mistake. Hear the following words from the apostle Peter: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened to *you*" (1 Pet. 4:12). These Jewish Christians were scattered abroad by persecution, and they thought that their lot was exceptionally severe, but Peter tells them that they were only suffering the common lot of Christian people, and should not allow their trials to depress them overmuch.

But let us now examine the testimony of some of these witnesses who bear witness to the sufficiency of faith in God to enable His children to run the race of divine service successfully. Sometimes one is called upon to run this race under circumstances of embar-

rassment growing out of loneliness and isolation. A Christian finds himself surrounded by people who know not God and care nothing for His service. They are worldly people who are devoted to the things of the world and take no interest in matters pertaining to the kingdom of God, and they create a community atmosphere that is depressing, and the Christian racer feels that he is running against the tide of public opinion, and is liable to become discouraged almost to the point of giving up the race. Such a person needs the testimony of some one who has encountered and overcome similar difficulties, and such a witness is found in the person of Noah, and we place him upon the witness-stand for interrogation. Noah, do you know anything about serving God in the midst of a community that ignored God and set him at naught? "Yes," says the witness, "I know a great deal about that." Well, Noah, tell us about it. And Noah relates the following thrilling story:

"I lived at a time when the reign of wickedness was supreme, and the earth was filled with violence, and God determined to destroy man, whom He had created, from the face of the ground. I and my family, eight of us in all, were the only ones that feared God and lived uprightly, and the Lord planned to save us while He destroyed all the rest. He commanded me to build an ark, giving plans and specifications in careful detail. I went to my task in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation who hooted at the idea that the race was to be practically exterminated. They laughed and jeered and mocked as I went about my work from day to day. I was about six hundred years old then, and the people would talk among themselves and say, 'The old man is beside



himself. He has a cranky notion that there is going to be a mighty flood that will sweep mankind from the face of the earth, and he is working on a boat out yonder, in which he and his family are to be saved while all the rest of us are to be drowned,' and then would follow a tremendous guffaw."

"Well, Noah, how long did that go on?"

"About a hundred and twenty years."

"Didn't you sometimes become discouraged and feel like giving up your task and going with the crowd?"

"No, I never faltered for a moment, for I had a strong conviction that just what God had said He would bring to pass, and that I would be fully vindicated in the end."

"Well, Noah, how did it turn out?"

"It turned out precisely according to the words that the Lord had spoken. The ark was finally completed and I and my family went into it, took with us such things as God told us to take, and closed the door, leaving the ungodly world to perish in its wickedness. Soon the rain began to fall, and the streams commenced to overflow their banks, and still it rained on. At first the people made a joke of it, and laughingly made funny remarks about what old man Noah had said about a destructive flood. But the rain continued to descend, and the water spread out over the land in every direction, and the people began to take on a sober look, and to speak respectfully about Noah and his boat, and to wonder if they were all really to be destroyed. Higher and still higher the waters rose, and the people became panic-stricken, and were smitten with the most awful terror. And still the rain continued to fall, and the waters pre-



veiled exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh that moved upon the earth, both fowl and cattle and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man—all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land—died. But the ark rode the rolling billows triumphantly, and after awhile the waters abated and the ark made a safe landing, and its occupants came out wearing a crown of glory. I ran with patience the race that was set before me, reached the goal victoriously, and took possession of a new world.”

Hear this testimony, you who are lonely and weary, and take courage.

It not unfrequently happens that Christians have to run this race under circumstances of discouragement growing out of bodily affliction, and to such the testimony of some conspicuous servant of God, who has passed through the waters of bodily suffering, will be helpful. In such a case Job will make an excellent witness, and so we put him on the stand for examination.

“Job, have you any personal knowledge of bodily suffering while serving God?”

“Yes,” says Job; “I was a victim of severe bodily affliction at one time in my life.”

“Well, Job, tell us about it.”

“Gladly will I do so,” says our witness. “I was a strong, healthy, athletic man, but was suddenly stricken with boils, and became a mass of putrefaction from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and I suffered the most excruciating pain continually.”

“Well, Job, I suppose you had friends who comforted you in your affliction.”

“Well,” says Job, “there were folks who said they were my friends, and one time three of them came to see me, and when they saw me they were dumfounded, and they sat around my tent seven days without saying a word to me.”

Let us pause upon this item of Job’s testimony to study the reason for this silence on the part of the sick man’s friends. The idea generally prevailed at that time that people brought affliction upon themselves by sinning against God, and as they had always taken Job to be a righteous man, they could not reconcile his affliction with their philosophy, and hence their confusion. There was a tumult of emotions in their minds, but at last their philosophy triumphed, and they railed out upon the unfortunate sufferer, practically saying, “You old hypocrite you, your sins have found you out. While you have been pretending to be righteous, you have been secretly doing wickedly, and God has laid His chastising hand upon you for it.” Miserable comforters were they indeed.

“But, Job, I suppose your wife stood by you and was a source of comfort to you in your affliction.”

“My wife was a good woman, and it broke her heart to see me suffer so, and she came into my tent one day all broken up, and said, ‘Job, curse God and die. You have done something to offend God, and He has almost killed you for it; now curse Him and so anger Him that He will slay you, and thus you will escape your fearful suffering.’”

Job’s wife was dominated by the same philosophy in regard to bodily affliction that controlled Job’s friends.

“Well, Job, did you continue in the service of God under all these afflictions and discouragements?”

“Yes, I knew in whom I had believed, and I felt assured that He would in due time drive the clouds of adversity away, cause the sun of peace and prosperity to shine upon my pathway, and shield me from the shafts of my slanderers. And so it turned out. I got well, and became the same strong, hearty, athletic man that I was before. I ran with patience the race that was set before me, and received the crown of victory.”

Heed this testimony, ye children of affliction, and pick up courage.

Occasionally Christians suffer the loss of property, and become discouraged thereby and give up the race. Perhaps more of God's children break down at this point than at any other. I have known some instances in which men seemed to be faithful disciples of Christ as long as their worldly affairs prospered, but when adversity overtook them and they lost their property, they turned away from the Lord and gave up His service. It is under just such circumstances that we should be most faithful to the good Lord, and strive to get closer to Him so as to receive the protection of His overshadowing wing. We have His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and we can put the most implicit confidence in His pledge, and stand firm in His service. Storms may howl, seas roar, and billows roll, but God's promise is an anchor to the soul that holds it steady in the midst of it all.

But while Job is on the stand let us interrogate him on this point.

“Job, did you ever suffer the loss of property and pass from wealth to poverty?”

“Yes, I fell out of the lap of luxury into the arms of penury and want. I was rich in herds and flocks, man-servants and maid-servants, and fared sumptuously every day. I had wherewith to gratify every wish and satisfy every desire. I feasted upon the daintiest viands the land afforded, and clothed myself in gorgeous apparel, and whatever I craved was at my command. But presently marauding bands of depredators came through the country and drove off my oxen and asses, and killed my servants that had charge of them. And there came similar bands and took possession of my camels and slew the servants that were keeping them. And there came an electrical storm and burnt up my sheep and the servants that were tending them, and so I was shorn of all my possessions in a little while, and was hurled into the depths of povety.”

“And, Job, did you continue faithful in the service of God in the midst of all these distresses?”

“I did. I knew that my Redeemer lived, and that He would not abandon me to my sorrows. His rod and staff supported me, and enabled me to patiently endure my misfortunes, and by and by He reimbursed me for all my losses, and again poured out the contents of the horn of plenty into my lap.”

Give ear to that testimony, you children of God whom financial disaster overtakes and robs of your worldly possessions. Put your trust in God and persevere in His service, and He will see you through your troubles.

Sometimes a Christian feels handicapped in this race by sorrow resulting from the death of friends, and while Job is on the witness-stand we will question him in this regard.

“Job, did you ever lose a dear friend by death and carry a broken heart in consequence thereof?”

“Yes,” says the witness, “I had an unusual experience in that respect. I had a fine set of sons and daughters who were settled round about me, and we were extremely happy as father and children. But one time when they were all together in the house of the oldest brother, having a good time, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon them and killed them all. A messenger came with the news, not that one of my children had met with an accident and was dead, but that they had all lost their lives in the fearful catastrophe; and thus was I bereft of all my children by one fell stroke of the hand of death, and was left to nurse a lacerated heart as best I could.”

“Job, did you still continue in the race under this awful shadow?”

“Yes, I knew that He who had been with me in six troubles would not forsake me in the seventh, and I could by faith hear His gentle voice bidding me be of good courage, and feel His encircling arm pressing me close to His bosom. After awhile the clouds began to break away, and I found God a very present help in my time of need. By and by other children came, and I was restored to my former condition of joy and happiness. I ran with patience the race that was set before me, and I now hold in my hand the victor’s palm.”

Hear these words, you who are distressed on account of the loss of dear friends, and nerve yourselves for the race that is before you.

“And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah;



of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and holes of the earth." What a splendid array of witnesses who testify to us out of their varied and severe experiences that they ran their race successfully in spite of wonderful afflictions and misfortunes that befell them. We may bless God that we have no such crosses to bear, and at the same time praise Him for these examples of heroism, fidelity and perseverance in the service of the good Lord.

But the chief witness is to come yet: "Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." We may give our ears to the testimony of human witnesses and hear what they have to say, and gather comfort and inspiration from their triumphs; but we are to keep our eyes fixed upon Him who speaks to us from the cross of Calvary, where He was even forsaken by His

heavenly Father. Here in this supreme tragedy of the universe we see a most astonishing thing—a thing that must have seemed strange in the eye of universal intelligence. Jesus Christ, the only begotten and well-beloved Son of Jehovah, is forsaken by His Father and left to tread the fierceness of the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath alone! All of His disciples had abandoned Him and fled, and while this was a source of great grief to Him, yet He could bear that with marvelous resignation. But now to be forsaken in the supreme hour of His need and agony by Him who had been His stay and support up to that point, was something inexpressibly sorrowful. No wonder it broke His great heart, and wrung from Him the sky-smiting cry, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?" That was a part, and perhaps the most important part, of the death that He died for the sins of the world. Death means separation from the source of life, and when God forsook His Son separation took place between the two, resulting in death to the Son. That cry of agony was not answered in words, but its answer is written in plain letters on the very surface of the gospel of the grace of God. There the Father says: "My Son, I must forsake you in this your darkest hour, or forsake mankind forever." Wonderful to tell! God turns His back upon His Son, that He may turn His face toward a sinful and lost race! Wonder of wonders! Marvel of marvels!

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only one of God's children that He ever did or ever will forsake. He has always been with His adopted children as a very present help in their times of need, to comfort, strengthen and deliver them from all their troubles,

and He has promised never to leave or forsake them, although He did forsake His spiritualistically natural Son. Is it any wonder that an inspired writer admonishes us to fix our eyes with set gaze upon this supreme witness in the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us as we run the race set before us? The same writer, in immediate connection with our text, exhorts us thus: "For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." We have a fine illustration of the importance of keeping our eyes upon Jesus, and the danger of looking away from Him, in what occurred with the apostle Peter on a certain occasion.

After feeding a great multitude of people miraculously, the Master commanded Peter and some others to get in a boat and go to the other side of the lake while He sent the multitude away, and, having done this, He went up into a mountain to pray. While He was thus engaged, a storm overtook the boat in which Peter and his companions were sailing, and their lives were in jeopardy. The Lord saw them, as He always sees His disciples when they are in trouble. It is a blessed thought that no Christian's heart aches but that the Lord knows it—that no barque in which a child of God is sailing the waters of life is tempest-tossed but that the Lord sees it. Not only did the Master see that boat as it toiled against wind and wave, and know that its occupants were in distress, but He started to them, and He always does that too. He walked down the mountainside, strode across the narrow plain, and encountered the turbulent waters of the angry lake. Did He stop or hesitate? Not for

a moment. Neither mountains, plains, rivers, lakes nor seas present any insurmountable obstacle between Him and His people when they are in trouble. He boldly stepped out upon the raging water and walked upon it to go to His frightened disciples in the boat. When He drew near, the disciples saw Him and took Him for a ghost, as they believed in such apparitions, and they cried out for fear. But they heard the gentle voice of their Lord, saying: "It is I, be not afraid." Thus assured, impulsive Peter said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters." Poor, impulsive, fickle Peter! When the Lord said, "Come," "Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus." He took a few steps successfully, "but when he saw the wind" he got scared and began to sink. As long as he kept his eyes on Jesus he walked the waters in triumph, but when he turned his eyes away from the Master to consider the wind and the waves, he began to sink as an inevitable consequence. When troubles assail us and we begin to nurse them in our hearts and forget Jesus, down we begin to go! Peter bethought himself in time to turn his eyes back to Jesus and cry out, "Lord, save me"—just exactly the thing for Peter to do, and just exactly the thing for us to do when the billows of trouble are surging about us. The compassionate Master heeded His disciple's prayer, as He always does, and took hold of Peter, and, with a gentle rebuke for his lack of faith, He restored him to the boat, and "the wind ceased." Oh, what a willing and able Friend we have in Jesus, who cares for His people and will not allow them to be burdened above what they can bear if they put their trust in Him.

Our Exemplar ran the race that was set before Him, and He ran it triumphantly, "despising the shame" involved in the death of the cross, all "for the joy that was set before him"—the joy of doing the will of the Father and redeeming the human race from sin and eternal death. From this point of view we can see the force and beauty of this Scripture: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:5-11). Perhaps the phrase "to be clung to" would come a little nearer expressing the exact thought of the apostle, than "to be grasped." Christ was on an equality with God in heaven, but, seeing the human family in ruin, without God and without hope, He said: "I must not cling to the honor and glory that I have here, and allow the race of man to perish forever. I must go to their rescue and make a way for their escape at whatever cost on my part it may involve. I will take the form of a servant, and be made in fashion as a man, and suffer the agonies of the cross, that men may have life, and have it for evermore." All this He did for the joy of unselfishly serving others, thus teaching us that



the way to be happy ourselves is to make others happy. And thus the Master ran the race that was set before Him, and ran it successfully, overcoming all difficulties, and so sat down at the right hand of the throne of God; and He says to us: "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne." What encouragement and what a prize!

I close with the following thought: This race is "set before us," and we do not have to arrange it for ourselves. God marks out the race-course, and says, "This is the way, walk you in it," and that indicates our part in the matter. The good Lord has given us the New Testament as an all-sufficient guide in running our race, and it is our duty to follow that strictly, and in so doing we are sure to reach the goal and wear the crown of righteousness. Here is something that appeals to the very best that is in a Christian, and it certainly should incite him to put forth his best efforts to come off a triumphant conqueror and enter into the glory of the Lord. Let us then strive to lay aside every besetting weight that we may run this race without handicap, and in the end sit down with our blessed Lord in the throne of His glory.

# GOD'S PRECIOUS AND EXCEEDING GREAT PROMISES

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of God and the Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that by these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.”—2 Pet. 1: 1-4.

**I**T is remarkable what a large place promises occupy in the ongoing of the affairs of the world, and in the solution of the problems of human life. We see it in childhood. If a parent promises a child a nice present on birthday or Christmas Day, the child derives great satisfaction from that promise, and the reception of the thing promised is anticipated with exquisite joy. Perhaps a young man never experiences a more pleasurable moment than when his sweetheart promises to marry him, and in that promise he lives and moves and has his being, and upon it he founds his hope for the future. And when the nuptials are consummated, the mutual promises that are made at the marriage altar become the basis of fond anticipations of happiness in the years to come. I hold in my hand a little piece of paper which, as

paper, is almost worthless. But it is a promissory note which says, "The United States will pay the bearer one dollar," and that promise makes the piece of paper worth one dollar in gold; and such promissory notes constitute the basis upon which the business of the country is conducted. The promises of the Government are as good as gold, and upon them the commerce of the land is floated. Men invest their money in United States bonds, which are simply promises to pay, and feel as safe as if they had the coin in their hands. We could not get along without promises.

The most important and precious possessions that men can have in this world are the promises of the gospel of the grace of God, and without these the world would be dark and gloomy indeed, and the question, "Is life worth living?" would have to be answered in the negative. Without such promises we could have no hope with respect to the great future that stretches out before us, and life would be an intolerable burden. Even when men lose hope with respect to this life they sometimes seek relief in suicide. God's promises have reference to both time and eternity, and hence cover the whole period of human existence, as is clearly set forth in the following Scripture: "And exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7, 8). The promises of the gospel embrace the very best that is possible in this life, and presents to the eye of faith the glories of the eternal world as an attainable possession. Is not this a precious and exceeding great promise?

In close connection with our text, Peter, having instructed his readers how to build up a Christian character, says: "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Here is a promise of great preciousness to the child of God as he makes his way through this world, frequently along paths that are rough and thorny. The promise of a triumphant entrance into a kingdom of unending beauty and glory, where nothing can interrupt his peace and joy, fills him with a bliss that is unspeakable and full of satisfaction. In the possession of this promise the prospective heir of God realizes in his experience the blessed assurance contained in these words:

"From every stormy wind that blows,  
From every swelling tide of woes,  
There is a calm, a sure retreat,  
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat."

On the isle of Patmos John saw some visions that are full of precious and exceeding great promises to the Christian pilgrim as he trudges along the pathway of life. Consider the following: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe

away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:1-5).

What a rich cluster of precious promises this passage contains! There is the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, and Peter tells us that in this new heaven and new earth righteousness shall dwell, the idea being that righteousness alone shall dwell there to the exclusion of all unrighteousness. Righteousness dwells in this old earth, but so does unrighteousness, and they are very close neighbors. They dwell together in the same city, on the same street, in the same house, and even in the same heart, and the presence of unrighteousness here is the cause of all the unhappiness and sorrow that we experience. The prospect of an earth free from all unrighteousness, and full of the glory of the Lord, gives the soul a thrill that can not be expressed in words. And such an earth is to be the home of the saints of the Most High, and He shall dwell with them and be their God. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," expresses the sentiments of every heart that feels the tender touch of the fingers of divine love, and looks forward to the occupancy of such a home. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things," and partake of the "fountain of the water of life freely."

And God "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." How often have you felt the scalding tears running down your cheeks, wrung from your heart by the cruel hand of bitter grief! Yea, many times have you felt that you were struggling in a sea of tears, battling with its waves, and longing for a haven of



rest and peace where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary find rest to their souls." Such a haven belongs not to this world of sorrow and anguish, but thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the gospel brings to view a new heaven and a new earth to which tears are total strangers, and where joy reigns forever more. And blessed be the name of the good Lord, His grace has made it possible for the children of this sin-cursed earth to attain to that delightful and happy abode. To such a home we may look even through our tears, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and through our tears the bow of peace becomes visible and gives promise of a better day. It is only when the clouds are weeping that the beautiful rainbow makes its appearance upon the face of the sky as "a thing of beauty, and a joy forever," recalling God's promise not to destroy the world again with a flood. And when we weep, the eye of faith may see through our tears the bow of promise and hope, and find comfort in the pledge that God will by and by brush away our tears, and allow us to bask in the sunbeams of His glory world without end.

"And death shall be no more." And may we hope for a time when there shall be no death, and a world in which the grim monster shall have no sway? Death has turned this world of ours into a vast graveyard, and hung a pall of gloom over our present abode. Who has not felt its sting and writhed under its merciless blows? It came into this world on mischief bent, and has carried on a carnival of slaughter throughout the history of our race. It breaks family ties, and ruthlessly snaps asunder the tender ties that bind hearts together.

Its frosts nip the tender buds of hope that appear upon the parent stems, and cause them to wither and die in the arms of love and affection, thus breaking hearts and blighting prospects that were a source of joy and bliss, and turning a smiling sky into a frowning cloud of sorrow and disappointment. It turns the sweet and melodious music of the home into harsh discords, and converts laughter into cries of anguish and woe. We witness its devastations on every hand. There are the graves of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. There lie the remains of those who were bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and whose lives were as dear to us as our own. They were smitten down by the hand of death in our presence, and we were unable to do anything to avert the blow, though gladly would we have done it if possible. But the farewell had to be spoken, and the cold and lifeless forms of the loved ones had to be consigned to the gloomy and silent grave, and there they lie enswathed in the habiliments of death.

Death! I hate it! Why should I not? It slew my mother, and struck down my life companion. Ten of the eleven children of my parents have fallen victims of its insatiate greed, and I only am left, and it seeks my life. Well do I remember the night when as a lad I was aroused from my peaceful slumber by a messenger who said: "Get up, little sister is dying." I arose and entered the sick-chamber, and there sat my mother by the side of the little crib in which lay the dying and wasted form of baby sister, nursing a breaking heart while her eyes sent showers of scalding tears down her blessed cheeks. In a little while the sweet baby breathed her last, and we took

her remains to the graveyard and reluctantly committed them to the embrace of the tomb, and returned to a home made dark by the shadow of death. On the same night of the next week, about the same hour of the night, the same messenger again aroused me, saying, "Get up, little brother is dying;" and I arose to pass through the same bitter experiences as the week before. That was a long time ago, but the memory of those experiences pierces my heart with pain to this day, and I take pleasure in hating the cruel thing that broke the family circle in the long ago.

Death is spoken of in the Scriptures as an enemy, and never as a friend, and its work is that of a most malignant foe; and how I thank God for the consoling assurance that the reign of this enemy is by and by to come to an end. The promise that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" fills my heart with rapturous joy, and furnishes some compensation for sorrows that this relentless enemy has sent into my life. The king of terrors and the terror of kings is finally to abdicate his throne, and yield up his scepter to my gracious Friend who has power over death and the grave, and has brought life and immortality to light through His resurrection from the dead. How I rejoice that this great Napoleon of the kingdom of darkness is by and by to come to his Waterloo, meet his Wellington, and go down in irretrievable defeat. Then we may sing with Isaiah and Paul: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" "And death shall be no more." What a precious and exceeding great promise.

“Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more.” These words are freighted with hope and consolation that the world can neither give nor take away. They are parts of the glorious inheritance of those who are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our divine Lord and Master. Mourning constitutes quite a factor in our experiences in this life. How often are we called upon to sit beneath the willows, and mourn and groan under the weight of grief and sorrow! I remember the time, and so do you, when heart-strings broke, and the shadows of mourning hovered over us, and things seemed dark and gloomy. Then human words of comfort helped some, but oh, how far short they fell of binding up the broken heart and healing the wounded spirit! Look when and where you will, you see evidences of grief and mourning, and listen at any time, and you will hear the wail of sorrow. Often does it happen that life is one great sigh from the cradle to the grave, and the shadow of sorrow stretches itself all along the way from birth to death. In view of this background, how sweet the promise that mourning shall be no more, and that it shall give place to everlasting rejoicing!

“Nor crying, nor pain, any more.” Many times our eyes grow red with weeping and we are racked with pain at almost every turn in the road. You have experienced it, and so have I. It is the common lot of mankind, and there are no exemptions. The head aches, and the body suffers excruciating pain, and the coveted relief comes not. All the night long you are tossed by pain upon a sleepless couch, and wish for the day whose light will bring no relief. And bad as bodily pains are, there are pains and

aches that are worse and harder to bear. Heartaches are worse than headaches, and spirit wounds are worse than bodily injuries. Pain, pain, pain! They come one after another in rapid succession, and there is no escaping them here below. But we have the glorious promise that there will come a time when there will be no more crying nor pain, and when crowns of thorns shall give place to crowns of glory, and this promise inspires our hearts with that hope which is an anchor to the soul, and which paints the great future in the gorgeous colors of magnificent beauty.

Our text assures us that through these promises we are made partakers of the divine nature, and this assurance emphasizes their preciousness and greatness. To become a partaker of the divine nature is certainly a result to be devoutly prayed and labored for, and its attainableness appeals to the very best that is in us in the way of serving God, and brings into activity the noblest energies and ambitions of our being. The very essence of the divine nature is holiness, and the more holy one becomes the more does one partake of the divine nature. It has been said that the promises of God inspire in the human heart the hope of immortality and eternal life, and they also present the prospect of dwelling with God forever in the regions of light and glory; and John tells us that "every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The hope of immediate and personal association and fellowship with God prompts one to strive to adorn one's self with a character similar to that of the heavenly Father, for without such a character such association and fellowship would not be enjoyable even if it were possible. The uncouth mountaineer in his homespun garb would



not feel at home with cultured and refined people in silks and satins. No more would one with an unsavory character feel at home with God and His holy angels, and hence the hope of entering into the society of heaven stimulates one to array one's self with such a character as will make such society congenial to one. But this hope is based upon the promises of God, and it is thus that through these promises we become partakers of the divine nature.

The philosophy of worship is that it tends to assimilate the character of the worshiper to the character, real or supposed, of the object worshiped. The worshipers of Mars, the supposed god of war, became warlike and bloodthirsty in their disposition, and delighted in meeting a foe on the field of battle. The worshipers of Bacchus, who was regarded as the god of wine, by such worship cultivated in themselves the passion for strong drink. The worshipers of Venus, the goddess of love, were voluptuous, and were strengthened in fleshly passions. This principle prevails in the spiritual world as well as in the material, and the worship of the true and living God constantly tends to make the worshiper like Him in all the elements of His character. Under the influence of the worship of God a kind of spiritual metamorphosis takes place in the worshiper whereby he takes on the divine nature and becomes like God in disposition and character. This is no doubt what Paul refers to in the following language: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). Reflection and meditation upon divine things impart to the soul divine

characteristics, and change it into the image of the divine Being who sums up in Himself all that is excellent and glorious, and this presents to consciousness a most powerful incentive to set one's affections upon things in heaven rather than upon things on the earth.

This idea of transformation and conformation is presented in the twelfth chapter of Romans, first and second verses, as follows: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This passage sets forth the wonderful power of the gospel of the Son of God in molding human character and directing the course of human life. Thinking upon the divine things that are contained in great and precious promises renews the mind and impresses upon it the image of the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and transforms it more and more into the likeness of the great Head of the church. Thinking upon earthly things makes the mind earthly and devilish, and thinking upon heavenly and divine things makes the mind heavenly and divine, with the result that it *approves* (a better word than "prove") what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Being thus re-created in the image of God, the soul is in perfect accord with the divine will, and strives to govern itself accordingly. Being made a partaker of the divine nature, the divine will becomes the guiding hand that directs the renewed man day by day, and there is sweet fellowship between

him and the God of peace and mercy. The man who is reconciled to God by the death of His Son approves the divine law in all things, and strives to make it the rule of his life continually. The hope inspired in his heart by the precious promises of the gospel prompts him to labor to perfect the image of the Lord of glory in his life and character. It is only the willful violator of the law of God who quarrels with it, and seeks to get it out of his way, while he who accepts that law as the standard of his life approves it and strives to honor it, glorying in its requirements and rejoicing in its promises.

Just before Jesus was taken from the earth He made His disciples, who were greatly disturbed over the prospect of being separated from Him, the following blessed promise: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3). It is most delightful to dwell upon this promise, and revel in the blessed anticipation of being with the dear Lord throughout eternity. The Master, having died for our sins, and risen again for our justification, is now engaged in preparing places for us in the many-mansioned house of His Father and ours, that when we leave this world He may receive us unto Himself, and assign us unto everlasting habitations, where, with tearless eyes, we shall behold the beauty of the Lord, and enjoy the endless benedictions of Him who loved us and gave Himself up for us. The hope that is founded upon this promise is worth all the gold

that this world holds, and infinitely more, and Christian men and women should cling to it with unyielding tenacity. Simple faith in God's promises is a richer inheritance than all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and it should be guarded with the utmost care. Take care of your faith in God and His word, my brother, and allow nothing to destroy or weaken it, for it is your stay in life, and will be your comfort in death. It was this faith that brought victory to those splendid servants of God of old, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth." What but faith in God and His promises could have sustained those ancient servants of Jehovah in their afflictions and trials? Hold on to your faith and hope in God.

In Eph. 4:20-24 Paul presents a thought that is very close akin to the one he offers in Rom. 12:2, to which we have just given attention. Hear him: "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is



in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." Here we see the principle set forth in our text, at work in the re-creation of man, and endowing him with the divine nature. Sin marred the image of God as He imparted it to man in the Garden of Eden, and hence he needed to be made over that the divine image might be restored to him, and that he might again possess the divine nature, and the instrumentality that God ordained for the attainment of this sublime end is the gospel of promise and hope as presented in the New Testament Scriptures. This re-creation has its inception in the mind, and works thence out into the life and character, thus bringing the whole man into captivity to the will of God, and establishing the most delightful harmony between the new creature and God the Creator. In this process of transformation the affections are lifted from the things of earth and placed upon things in heaven, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, and holy meditation upon these new objects of affection changes the soul into the image of divine things. Here we have an example of the working of natural law in the spiritual world, for God works through law everywhere and at all times. In the spiritual realm He works through spiritual laws, and these laws are as natural to that realm as the laws of the material world are to that realm.

This idea of spiritual transformation, under the influence of reflection upon things embraced in the



promises of God, is further developed in the following language: "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:9-11). This renewing is "unto knowledge after the image of him that created" the new man, and this brings in the study of the word of God as a factor in the process of renewal. It is a physiological fact that our fleshly nature and disposition are influenced by the character of the food and drink that we take into our systems, and it is no less true that our spiritual nature and disposition are influenced by the character of the spiritual food and drink upon which we subsist. Many a boy has been ruined by reading wild-West stories of adventure and daring which gave color to his ambition and determined the course of his life, and this should put parents on their guard as to the kind of reading-matter that gets into the hands of their children, both boys and girls, for the former are influenced by what they read, no less than the latter.

From this viewpoint the beauty and force of the following Scripture can be seen and appreciated in all of its significance: "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a

spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:1-5). This spiritual milk is contained in the word of God, to which the apostle has just referred as "abiding for ever," and as "the word of good tidings [the gospel] which was preached unto you." As material milk contains all the elements necessary to physical health and growth, so does the spiritual milk of the word of God contain all the elements necessary to spiritual health and growth, and, without this, spiritual development is impossible. As a hungry babe longs for the milk of its mother's breast, so should the child of God long for the milk of God's love, that He furnishes so abundantly in His precious word. How sweet and refreshing is the milk contained in the "precious and exceeding great promises" which we find in the inexhaustible mine of divine truth, and how it causes one to grow unto eternal salvation, and into the image of the heavenly Father, whose we are, and whom we serve. Through this milk we "taste that the Lord is gracious," and are drawn closer and closer into His loving embrace.

Paul brings out the transforming power of the gospel in 1 Cor. 15:48 and 49 thus: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This passage is in striking harmony with the general trend of Scripture teaching on the subject, and in view of this teaching Christian people may rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. As they bear the image of their earthly parents, so may they, and so do they, bear the image of the heavenly Parent,

into which they grow by using the means of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. How diligent, then, should we be in the use of these essential aids to our spiritual growth, that we may be changed into the image of the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that by and by we may see Him as He is and be like Him. Such a promise enables us to even rejoice in tribulations, "knowing that tribulations work stedfastness; and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope; and hope puts not to shame." How glorious and high is the plane upon which a Christian lives and moves and has his being, and what grand and splendid prospects lure him on to still more exalted levels of living! Well might an apostle exclaim: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 1:1).

The promises of God are absolutely sure of accomplishment, and we can look forward to their redemption with the utmost assurance, and upon them we can build our hopes for the future. When Abraham was old and his wife well stricken in years, God promised him a son through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed, and the father of the faithful staggered not through unbelief, though all the probabilities, humanly speaking, were against him; and having patiently endured, he "received the promise," and Isaac came into his tent and into his life, and became a wellspring of joy in his soul. And so with all the promises of God: they are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus," and are as certain to be fulfilled in due time as that Jehovah reigns in the

heavens. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness," but will bring it to pass when His wisdom and good pleasure shall so determine, and we need have no fear of failure on His part, either from inability or unwillingness, for He is both willing and able to redeem His pledges. When we place our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus in their graves, we are cheered and comforted by the promise that they will by and by, under the mighty hand of God, come forth from their tombs with bodies fashioned like the glorified body of Christ, to enter into the eternal kingdom that God has prepared for those who love Him. This promise robs death of its sting, and, by anticipation, despoils the grave of its victory, and turns mourning into rejoicing. Then, Christian pilgrim, thank God and take courage, and press "forward for the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," knowing that sooner or later you will hear the happy plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord!"

Fellow-traveler to the judgment-bar of God, do you stand upon the top of this sunlit mountain of promise and hope, looking up to the Lamb of Calvary, and enjoying by anticipation a seat by the side of the Lord of glory? If not, why not? Surely God has done enough for you to induce you to fall in with the overtures of mercy, and set to your seal that God is true, by surrendering your heart and life to Him who died that you might have life, and have it to the full. Listen to the Master's blessed invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in

heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' The thing that this weary, sin-burdened world cries and sighs for most is rest—sweet, blessed rest; rest from burdens of heart and body; rest from care and anxiety; rest from pain and sorrow; rest from grief and disappointment; rest in the bosom of God in the regions of unending day. This rest may be had by heeding the blessed Lord's gracious invitation, and turning life over to Him who cares for His own, and it can be obtained in no other way. Then, why not make the surrender and pay the price? May God help you so to do.



# THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

## A SERMON

TEXT.—“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and, On their hands shall they bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”—Matt. 4: 1-11.

**T**HIS Scripture gives an account of one of the most thrilling, important and instructive events in the life of our Saviour on earth, and it may be studied with great profit. The event was more than a mere incident in the life and work of our Lord. It was an essential item in the program of redemption, and that program would have been incomplete and ineffective without it.

The transaction is interesting from the standpoint of the time when it occurred. Jesus had just been baptized, and, by audible voice and intelligible words, acknowledged as the Son of God, and designated as the promised Messiah, by the descent of the Holy Spirit in visible form. Thus acknowledged and designated, He appeared as the one and only hope of the children of men for salvation from sin and eternal death. The devil, who had been hounding Him to accomplish His destruction and thus complete the irretrievable ruin of mankind, was lingering about the baptismal scene, and saw and heard what took place, and no doubt said within himself: "This is my opportunity; if I can overcome Him now that in Him is the only hope of a lost world, I will thereby thwart the purpose of God and eternally blight the prospects of men for redemption." With this malevolent design in his heart, he only awaited a suitable occasion for the wicked attempt; and, to give him the opportunity, the Spirit *led* the Master into the solitary wilderness. The language here used is capable of implying that the Lord went against His will, and Mark's statement of the case leaves no room for doubt on this point: "And straightway the Spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness." This clearly shows that Jesus was forced into the wilderness to undergo the fearful ordeal of temptation, against His will; for He knew what was involved, and correctly anticipated the fearful test to which He was to be subjected, and, as He was human as well as divine, He instinctively drew back from the awful trial. And, in thus drawing back and showing a disinclination to encounter temptation, He teaches His disciples a very important lesson with respect to practical life; He thus says to

them in action which speaks more accurately than words: "You keep out of temptation whenever you can." All danger to spiritual life lies in temptation, and if we keep out of temptation we are not exposed to the danger of being entrapped' in the wiles of the evil one.

But it was necessary for our Saviour to pass through that ordeal, and do it just at the time that it occurred. He was about to come before the world with a most important and marvelous proposition—a proposition to deliver men and women from the power and thralldom of sin and Satan. He came into the world to "destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject unto bondage." But, before submitting this wonderful proposition to the world, it was necessary for Him to demonstrate His ability to accomplish what His proposal involved. By coming into the world and taking upon Himself the form of a servant, He showed His willingness to achieve the thing proposed; but one might be willing to do a given thing, but lack the ability to do it. And hence it was incumbent upon the Master to show His superiority to him who held the world captive at his will, and could therefore overturn his kingdom and deliver his captives; and to do this it was necessary for Him to meet the archfiend in single-handed combat, and overcome him. And for the test to be final and decisive, it had to take place under circumstances altogether favorable to Satan, and unfavorable to his intended victim. Had it been the reverse, the devil could have broken the force of the logic of the event by saying: "Well, it is true that He vanquished me, but I was defeated by unfavorable circumstances,

and not by my antagonist's superiority to me, either in strength or resources." It has often happened in the history of warfare that an inferior army has defeated a superior one on account of advantage in position. So, to make the issue of the contest decisive, the devil was allowed to have all the advantages of circumstances in his favor, and hence he could not shift the responsibility of his defeat from his own shoulders.

The Master had just passed through a period of fasting that lasted forty days, during which not a morsel of food or a drop of water passed His lips, and one need not have a very lively imagination to conceive how He must have appeared at the end of that trying period. His eyes were sunken, His cheeks pale and wrinkled, His muscles wasted, and His physical strength at a very low ebb, while His entire being was clamoring for bread. Oh, how hungry He was! And at this critical and favorable moment the tempter makes his appearance and begins to bring his seductive art to bear upon our blessed Lord. It is said that "man's extremity is God's opportunity," and it is equally true of man and the devil, and the latter is always ready to take advantage of any extreme position in which the former may be placed. It is interesting to note the tactics employed by his Satanic majesty in approaching Him whom he would destroy. He does not come as an open enemy, but in the guise of a friend. It is a mistake, a very serious and dangerous mistake, to suppose that the devil is not in anything that is not very ugly and repulsive. He understands his business well enough to know that there are people in the world whom he can not approach in his real character, and that

he can only gain entrance into some circles of society in disguise. He likes nice things and nice people, and when occasion so demands he dresses in the height of fashion. The rustle of silks tickles his sensitive ear, and the sparkle of diamonds gratifies his æsthetic eye. He loves to associate with men and women who live in fine mansions, clothe themselves in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. He delights in tripping the light fantastic toe, and revels in progressive euchre, knowing that he can thus euchre lots of nice people out of their souls!

Not only did Satan approach Jesus as a friend, but even as a benefactor. In effect he said: "Now, you are a starving man, and are already at the point of death, and no bread is at hand here in this wilderness; but I can suggest a plan by which you can get relief. If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." What a specious plea that was! The Master certainly had power to do the thing that the devil suggested, and bread was the thing that He most needed at that crucial moment; but it would have been sinful for the Lord to act upon the suggestion, otherwise there would have been no temptation in it. If you ask me wherein the Lord would have sinned if He had turned the stones into the bread that He needed, I frankly say that I do not know. I can see evil consequences that might have ensued, but that the act would have been sinful only on account of its consequences is not in evidence. No doubt the poison lay deeper than that, and the fact that I am not able to detect it teaches me a very important lesson; namely, that sin may exist where I can not see it. Some forms of sin are very gross, and lie upon the surface of things, but other



forms are so refined and sublimated that they are not easily detected, and there is where the danger is. Their discovery requires a high degree of culture and development on the part of our spiritual percepts, the same as the detection of some forms of poison demands a high degree of culture and development on the part of our physical faculties. An ordinary person might use as food something containing poison without detecting its presence through the sense of taste, whereas a trained chemist would discover the poison by touching the article to his tongue.

Here is a lesson for some people who say that they can not see that a given thing is sinful, and therefore it may be innocently indulged in. Have you cultivated your spiritual percepts by long seasons of prayer, reading the Scriptures, holy meditation, and the like? Are you sure that your ability to judge of such matters is a safe rule by which to be governed in the spiritual world? Perhaps it would be well for you to carefully consider the following Scripture: "For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:13, 14). Many "babes" in Christ, whose "senses are not exercised by reason of use" to discriminate between good and evil, fall victims to the wiles of the evil one because they make their own dull spiritual faculties the standard of action. But, you say, what is one to do if he can not trust his own judgment as to the moral character of a transaction? Well, do as you would do in a business transaction under similar circumstances. If you were going to buy a horse, and

were not a good judge of horses, you would seek the advice of some one that you knew to be possessed of good judgment in such matters. Carry that common-sense principle with you into the spiritual world, and if there is any doubt as to the moral character of a given course, seek the advice of men and women who have been long in the service of God, and have taken their spiritual faculties through an extended course of discipline and culture, and be guided by their judgment, and you are not apt to go wrong.

Now notice the Master's method of meeting this insidious advance. He acted promptly and positively, and in such a manner as to rout the enemy at once. If He had entered into a parley with Satan about the matter, He would thereby have encouraged the enemy to press his suit to the limit. But His answer implied a positive and stern rejection of the plausible suggestion, such as caused the devil to know that it would be utterly useless for him to pursue that line of attack further. He drew the sword of the Spirit and said: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In itemizing the implements of a Christian soldier's armor, the apostle Paul makes mention of the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," as an efficient weapon in the warfare in which the children of the heavenly Father are engaged, and this emphasizes the importance of knowing that word. It is impossible for the devil to make an assault upon a follower of Christ that can not be parried and rendered harmless by the use of an appropriate passage of Scripture. The Lord's answer brings out the dual nature of man, and stresses the fact that while the outer man, the body, depends upon

bread for its existence, the inner man, the spirit, must have a different kind of food, which God has richly supplied in His holy word. The devil dreads a man who is familiar with the Bible, believes it, and knows how to handle it, and delights in one who says he believes it, but throws doubt on its inspiration and infallibility.

Foiled in this attempt to beguile Jesus into following his advice, the enemy prepares for an attack from another angle, and takes the Master into the Holy City, and places Him upon the pinnacle (wing) of the temple, and says to Him: "If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone." Think of it! The devil pretending to quote Scripture! He had felt the keen edge of that shining blade, and seeks to wrench it from the hands of the Lord and turn it against Him! But whenever you find the devil quoting Scripture you may rest assured that there is something wrong about it. He will add something to it, subtract something from it, or so pervert it in some way as to render it nugatory. The first time he ever undertook to use it, so far as we know, he added one little word to it: "Thou shalt *not* surely die"—the exact law of God with the small word "not" added, and that little addition "brought death into the world, and all our woes"! In the case now before us he makes a subtraction. If you will examine the ninety-first Psalm, you will find that the passage which the devil pretends to quote, reads thus: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, *to keep thee in all thy ways*. They shall bear thee up in their hands,

lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." The clause that I have emphasized the tempter omitted from the passage, because, if he had quoted it, it would have spoiled his whole plot. He was aiming to make the impression upon the Saviour that God had pledged Himself to protect His children under all circumstances, and that He will not allow one of His people to be destroyed. "To keep thee in all thy ways" is the pivot of this passage, and to omit it takes the life out of this Scripture. The ways of a child of God are his by adoption, and not by invention. God says, "This is the way, walk ye in it," and as long as God's people walk in the way that He has marked out, He will take care of and protect them. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, to deliver them," is one of the most blessed assurances that the Bible contains, and, if we could fully appropriate it by faith, it would relieve us of many worries and anxieties.

It was the purpose of the devil to divert the Saviour from the true line of His work, and turn Him aside to sensationalism, and thus hinder Him in His real mission in the world. In effect he said: "Now, what you want is the attention of the people, and without that you can make no headway in your work; and if you will jump from this lofty height, and go down and down, and let an angel rescue and return you to the place you now occupy unharmed, you will get the attention of all men, and they will come from east, west, north and south, to see the man that can perform such a feat; and then you can teach them." And certainly He would have made a great sensation, and the people would have crowded Jerusalem to gape and gaze at the acrobat that had

thus exploited Himself. But how long would it have lasted? About as long as the fame of Blondin, the tight-rope walker; or of Webb, the world-renowned swimmer; or of the "human fly" who could scale a brick wall and thus reach the roof of a tall building—lasted. Who cares for, or thinks of, Blondin or Webb or the "human fly" to-day? They have died, or will die, "unwept and unsung." And so would it have been with Jesus if the devil could have enticed Him into the realm of sensationalism. But with the Master he utterly failed, though he has succeeded with hundreds of His professed followers who claim to preach in His name, as sermon subjects as announced in daily papers abundantly testify. Satan is enough of a theologian to know that the gospel is God's power unto salvation, and hence he seeks to divert the attention of both preachers and people from that, to that which has no power to save anybody. Jesus said, "Preach the gospel," and He also said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" and Paul said, "Preach the word," and both Jesus and Paul practiced what they preached, and steered clear of sensational matters that tickle the fancy for a moment, and pass out of sight forever and leave no permanent results for good. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:24, 25). It is the business of Christ's messengers to preach the gospel in all its simplicity, beauty, fullness and power, and when they do that they fully come up to the standard of their obligation so far as preaching is concerned, and well may they



say: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Away with human philosophy and speculation.

Again wielding the sword of the Spirit upon His assailant, the Master says: "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." When God says a thing, let that be the end of the matter, and don't put Him to the test to see whether He means what He says or not. Receive by faith what He says, for He can not lie, and when he says a thing He will bring it to pass. The devil aims to throw doubt on the word of God, and get men to wondering whether it is true or not, and if he can get them to doubting he thus starts them on the road to ruin. When once men begin to doubt, there is no place to draw the line and say: "Thus far mayest thou come, but no further." Speaking of the inroads that skepticism has made upon faith through so-called scientific methods, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, in his book entitled "The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas," makes use of the following significant language:

Finally, as the historical spirit began to spread in the late eighteenth century, and a saner view of the past became common, theologians awoke to the futility of the harmonistic method, and some of them were brave enough to abandon the notion of Biblical infallibility in the scientific and historical realms and to confine it to the spheres of religion and morals. This marked a great step in the emancipation of the Christian world from the bondage of an earlier day. But it was long before the masses of the church were willing to take it, at any rate in America, and only in our own time can the older view be said to have been generally abandoned.

But even here the process could not stop. The infallibility which was finally given up in other spheres could not in the very nature of the case be permanently maintained in those of religion and morals. The disintegrating process could not be confined to certain circumscribed areas. Doubt at one point

must in the long run engender doubt at other points as well. There are still multitudes who occupy the halfway position just referred to, who recognize the historical and scientific errors of the Bible while maintaining its infallibility and absolute authority in religion and ethics; but their number is steadily decreasing.

This is the pronouncement of one of that coterie of men who think that they are the people, and that wisdom will die with them. He is very much mistaken in the assumption that the old idea of inspiration and infallibility has "been generally abandoned." The truth is that radical and skeptical criticism has said about its last word, and is on the wane. Its conclusions have for the most part been conjectures and assumptions, unsupported by established facts, and the old Book has come out of the fiery furnace into which it was cast by the "critics," without the smell of fire on its garments. But the point in the foregoing excerpt to which I wish to call especial attention is the statement that "doubt at one point must in the long run engender doubt at other points as well." Here lies the danger to one's faith, and if Satan can only find a place for an entering wedge, he knows that such a wedge will make room for others, and that he will have his victim on the hip, and that a fair chance to accomplish the wreck of his faith will be his. My brother, take care of your faith, and allow not the evil one to shake it to any extent.

Foiled the second time in his nefarious designs upon the Master, the tempter prepares for a final and desperate assault, and takes the coveted prey to the top of "an exceeding high mountain" and causes to pass in review before Him "all the kingdoms of

the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." What an appeal was this to human pride and ambition! For a much smaller price Cæsar spurred his horse into the Rubicon, drenched the battlefields of Pharsalia in human blood, and hurried on to Rome to mount a throne of universal empire. In the hope of gaining a prize insignificant in comparison with this, Hannibal braved the difficulties of the Alps, and led the hitherto invincible legions of Carthage down into sunny Italy and on to the very gates of the imperial city, only to be thwarted by the bold strategy of Scipio. In quest of a prize that pales into insignificance when compared with the one Satan offered the Saviour, Napoleon led the magnificent army of France into the depths of the frozen snow of the North, only to behold the splendid blocks of Moscow melt away under the sweep of devouring flames, leaving him without shelter, to gather up the remnants of a demoralized army, and return in disgraceful defeat. All the kingdoms of the world, with all their glory, pageantry, pomp, wealth and power, were offered Jesus for one bow in recognition of the devil's superiority to Himself! That was the issue involved, and Satan made a tremendous bid to try to buy the Lord off and get Him to yield the point, and admit His inferiority. Let us praise God that the effort was a conspicuous failure, and that our blessed Redeemer was able to resist the temptation and come off a conqueror over His enemy and ours, and put him to flight. If He had failed, the wreck of this world would have been complete, and the very throne of God would have toppled into irretrievable ruin and desolation, and the

universe would have become forever enshrouded in darkness!

Do I hear some one say that the devil was not in possession of the things he offered, and could not have delivered the goods? In that event there could have been no temptation in the proposition. If I were to offer a man my check for a hundred thousand dollars to do a certain mean thing, I would simply make myself the butt of ridicule. The man would say, "What do you take me for? Your check for a hundred thousand dollars isn't worth the paper it is written upon," and there would be no temptation in it. But if a multimillionaire were to make such an offer, the man would probably rub his hands together, and say, "That's business," and fall into the trap. It is probably not true that "*every* man has his price," but you had better not be too liberal in your offer to *any* man, if you do not want to be taken up! There was a temptation—a powerful temptation—in the proposition that the devil made the Son of God, and hence he could have delivered the goods, thus shattering the last hope of mankind for salvation and deliverance from the dominion of his Satanic majesty. What is the Master's answer to be? Do angels cease their harping and tremble in suspense while they await the issue? If there was utter silence in heaven pending the outcome of that awful tragedy, it should cause no surprise, for the most stupendous and far-reaching issues hang upon the result. The eternal destiny of men and the authority and glory of God are involved, and if the Saviour falls, all is lost, and lost to all eternity!

But listen! "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and

him only shalt thou serve." Glory to God on earth and in the highest heavens! The enemy has been defeated and driven from the field of battle in humiliation and disgrace, and we may raise our Ebenezer, and lay hold upon the hope of immortality and eternal life. From this transaction we may learn that the way to get rid of the tempter is to deal positively with him, and show him no quarter. He goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and if we undertake to temporize with him we give him a great advantage, and encourage him to persevere in his attempts, and in the end he may triumph, and lead his victim captive at his will. But he understands plain language, and when he knows that the speaker means what he says, he gives up the fight. Luke, according to the Received Text, makes Jesus say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and that is probably an interpolation, yet it is permissible for us to use the expression, and we may be sure that it will be effective, for the devil will not occupy that position in the journey. He prefers to go as a leader, but if he is not allowed that position, he is content to go by one's side as a companion, hail fellow, well met; but he will not trail along behind as a dog, but will seek a more congenial environment. He fled from the victorious Lord with his banner trailing in the dust, and "behold, angels came and ministered to" the Master. Ministered to him in what? In the thing that he, as a human being, then most needed, and that was bread. These heavenly messengers had been hovering over that scene with bated breath, and with luscious loaves within the folds of their wings, ready to serve their Lord and Master at the proper time—a conspicuous instance of angelic ministry.



And now that "he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted," and as He "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," we can commit ourselves to His keeping with the utmost assurance that He can and will deliver us from all the wiles and power of our great enemy if we will only walk in the way He has marked out for our feet. It is a wonderful saying and a precious truth that our dear Saviour was tempted in all points like as we are, and hence He knows just what allowance to make for our weaknesses and shortcomings. Here it is necessary to do some generalizing and classifying. I do not suppose that Jesus ever felt the temptation that the libertine or the inebriate or the thief experiences, and yet He was tempted in all points like as we are. The following Scripture solves this difficulty: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory [pride] of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). All sins may be classified under these three heads, and every temptation approaches from one of these angles. No man or woman ever fell a prey to temptation except at one of these points. It came either through the lusts of the flesh, or the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life. Jesus was tempted at every one of these points. The first appeal was made to the lust of the flesh. Oh, how His flesh was lusting for bread, and urging Him to lay hold of any suggestion that promised relief! How many men and women have fallen into the clutches of sin and Satan by yielding to the lust of the flesh! The next appeal was to the pride or vainglory of life. Show the world what you can do as an acrobat, and your praises will

be acclaimed throughout the land. Thousands have stumbled over this rock of offense. The third and last appeal was to the lust of the eyes, and what an appeal that was. Thousands upon thousands have fallen over this precipice, and perhaps the devil was encouraged by the fact that it was through this means that he poisoned the fountain of the stream of humanity in the Garden of Eden: "And when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the *eyes*, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). And thus the wreck came, and man was plunged into the depths of ruin—all through the lust of the eyes. But the tempter now meets more than his match, and the Master closes His eyes to this seductive appeal, and His victory is complete.

Now He is ready to come before the world with His wonderful proposition, and extend His gracious invitation in these precious words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This language rings with the sweetest music in the ears of sin-sick and sin-weary men and women who groan under the burdens of sin and sorrow, and desire that blessed rest that the Saviour offers and is able and willing to bestow. Here is a hand held out to help weary pilgrims along the rugged paths of life, and guide them in peace and safety to the haven of eternal rest, and with what eagerness we should clasp that hand and accept

its guidance and protection. The Lord has shown Himself to be able "to save to the uttermost all those who come to God by him," and upon this basis He graciously says: "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." These precious invitations and promises fall upon the souls of sojourners here below like oil upon troubled waters, and prompt them to pick up courage to "press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Yes, blessed be God, weary pilgrims can pursue their journey through this world, singing

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee,"

and find in Him a safe refuge from "every stormy wind that blows."

With what zest we may sing that soul-cheering song that opens with the line, "Jesus, lover of my soul," when the storms of life howl about us and threaten us with destruction! There is a beautiful little legend, connected with the origin of that hymn, that is both thrilling and inspiring. It is said that its author, Charles Wesley, was promenading on the beach one day, and while thus engaged a great storm arose. The sky was overcast with angry and ominous clouds, the heavens gave forth peal after peal of roaring thunder, forked lightnings darted hither and thither, and incoming waves washed the sands at his feet. When the storm was at its greatest height his eyes were greeted with a sight that almost made him forget the angry mood of the elements. He beheld a timid dove chased by a ravenous hawk intent upon devouring the weaker bird. On they flew, the hawk gaining upon the dove by every stroke of a stronger

wing, and it seemed as if the chase would soon end with the timid bird in the clutches of its enemy. But all at once the dove espied the poet, and instinctively turned her course in his direction, thinking that in him she would find a safe retreat. On and still on they came, the dove in quest of protection, and the hawk bent upon securing a feast upon the luckless victim, while the poet's heart almost forgot to beat in his intense interest in the outcome of the chase. Imagine his surprise and joy when the quivering dove nestled in his bosom, and the hawk was frightened away. The timid bird was safe, and, gathering inspiration from the thrilling incident, the poet sang:

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
 Let me to Thy bosom fly;  
 While the nearer waters roll,  
 While the tempest still is high.

“Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
 Till the storm of life is past;  
 Safe into the haven guide,  
 O receive my soul at last.”

What a beautiful and apt illustration! We are in the midst of the storms and tempests of life, and frequently angry and threatening clouds lower above us, while the devil, our relentless enemy, pursues us with evil intent, anxious to get his cruel clutches upon us to destroy us. But yonder stands the dear Saviour with outstretched hands of mercy, ready to take us into His loving bosom and give us ample protection against the terrible monster who is hounding us along the way, all the time seeking opportunity to drag us down to eternal ruin. How can sane people reject such a Saviour and refuse to take shelter under His protecting wing? He is man's only hope. “And in

none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." And that name is above every other name, whether it be of "things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth," and in it we can put to flight the prince of the power of the air, and defy the armies of the king of darkness. Then, "take the name of Jesus with you" as a shield and buckler, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and escape the snares and pitfalls that he prepares to entrap you. By that name the apostles cast out devils, and by that name we may, in a figurative sense, do the same thing and triumph over every enemy.

Since Jesus, who has shown Himself to be superior to Satan in moral strength and resources, is for us, what does it matter who is against us? If we will keep Him between us and the tempter, He will ward off the enemy's blows and provide a way for our escape. In attempting to destroy our blessed Lord the devil sought to destroy the human family as a whole by one masterful stroke, but, inasmuch as he failed in that effort, he now aims to cut us off in detail by attacking us one at a time; and it can not be said that this plan is a signal failure, for he leads many individuals captive at his will. But he never succeeds with one who makes Jesus his shield and buckler, for all the resources of the universe are at His command. He could have called legions of angels to deliver Him from the hands of His enemies when He was passing through His Gethsemane, but that would have been to thwart the purpose of His mission in this world. However, he is under no such restraint with respect to His people, but is at liberty



to use such means as may be necessary to protect them against the assaults of their enemy. They have His promise that He will never leave nor forsake them, and this promise stands round about them as an impregnable wall of defense and safety. When attacked by Satan they may flee to the Rock that is higher than they, and therein find refuge from the would-be destroyer. He is as a mighty rock in a weary land, and in the shadow thereof His people may find rest and security. May God help us ever to take the name of Jesus with us. Amen.

# THE BIBLE

## *A LECTURE*

**W**HAT holy emotions the very sound stirs in the human breast! What sacred memories it brings to the surface in the human mind! What rapturous aspirations it plants in the human heart! In this divine Book is wrapped up the present welfare and future hopes of mankind, from its fountains spring the waters of salvation, and from its larder comes the bread of life. It is the pivot upon which the destinies of the world turn, the foundation upon which the brightest prospects of the race rest. It is the sun that has thrown its refulgent light upon the pathway of human life through the ages past, and it is the morning star whose bright rays paint the future in the colors of hope.

### WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

In the first place, it is a body of the world's best literature. For poetic beauty, rhetorical finish, biographical interest, historical fascination, and general literary attractiveness, the Bible occupies a unique position in the annals of men. Are you in quest of thrilling passages in the bewitching epic? You need not go beyond the Book of Job to find the object of your search. Are you on the lookout for entrancing figures of rhetoric? The prophets, both major and minor, supply the demand in abundance. Do

you desire beautiful and pathetic touches in biography? The stories of Jacob and Joseph are at hand with their stores of thrilling incident. Do you wish to store your mind with interesting and instructive history? The Pentateuch furnishes you with the very beginnings of authentic history, and other historical parts of the Old Testament come in with their cargo of reliable information as to the happenings of remote antiquity.

In the second place, it is a rule of life, presenting the very best possible standard of character, and the only absolutely safe guide in working out the destinies of men. When its principles of morality, virtue, sobriety, equity, truth and general righteousness are woven into the warp and woof of life, whether individual or national, the result is a character unimpeachable, and impervious to the shafts of enmity and criticism. The foremost men of the world have attributed their success in life, for the most part, to the molding influence of the Bible upon their thoughts and acts, and they have recommended it to young men as the polar star that should guide them in all their pursuits of life.

Thomas Huxley can not be said to be biased in favor of the Bible in his estimate of its value as an important factor in the affairs of human life, and he bears the following testimony on the subject: "By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in the vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space between two eternities, and earns the blessings or curses of all time, according to its effort to do good and hate evil, even as they are also earning their payment for their work? . . .

I do not say that even the highest Biblical ideal is exclusive of others or needs no supplement. But I do believe that the human race is not yet, possibly may never be, in a position to dispense with it." That is high praise from such a source, and the wonder is that a man with so fine a conception of the Bible as an indispensable factor in the affairs of the world, could for a moment regard it as the product of honest human genius, to say nothing of fraud or forgery. William Wilberforce said: "Read the Bible. Through all my perplexities and distresses I have never read any other book, I never knew the want of any other." When such a man could find the Bible to be of such inestimable value to him in the distresses and perplexities of life, other men may well bow at this shrine.

Lord Bacon left the following testimony as to the value of this holy Book in the world's life: "There never was found, in any age of the world, either religion or law that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible." This philosopher and publicist did not make his statement too strong, and in view of his confidence in, and reverence for, "the old family Bible that lay on the stand," people of lesser note need not blush to acknowledge it as the Book divine. Daniel Webster, one of America's greatest orators and statesmen, bore this strong testimony to the value of the Bible in the life of the nation: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we or our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how suddenly a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

The following statements have the force of aphorisms: "Upon two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws."—*Blackstone*. "Young men, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with the truth, and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures. This is your certain interest."—*Benjamin Franklin*. "Let us cling with a holy zeal to the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the source of our religion."—*Joseph Story*. "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."—*George Washington*. "In regard to the great Book, I have only to say that it is the best gift which God has given to man."—*Abraham Lincoln*. "No book contains more truths, or is worthy of more consideration, than the Bible; for none brings more comfort to the sorrowing, more strength to the weak, or more stimulus to the nobly ambitious; none makes life sweeter, or death easier or less sad."—*Justice David J. Brewer*. "Every fair-minded, unbiased person who will carefully read the Bible, with the desire to master its contents, will find abundant evidence of its divine origin, and that it was designed to teach our duty to God and our fellow-men."—*Chief Justice Maxwell*. Sir William Jones has bequeathed to us the following beautiful statement: "The Scriptures contain more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than could be collected from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom."

In concluding an article in the *Twentieth Century Church* for January, entitled "When Shall I Give Up My Bible?" Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus gives us the following sublime and eloquent utterances in regard to the Bible: "Its lines, breathing life, order



and freedom, would inspire John Bunyan's dream, Algernon Sidney's fatal republicanism, and Puffendorf's judicature. With them William Penn would meet the Indian of the forest and Fenelon the philosopher in his meditative solitude. Kant, Locke, Newton and Leibnitz would carry it with them in the pathless fields of speculation, while Peter the Great was smiting an arrogant priest in Russia, and William was ascending the English throne. From its poetry Cowper, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning would catch the divine afflatus: from its statesmanship Burke, Romilly and Bright would learn how to create and redeem institutions; from its melodies Handel, Bach, Mendelssohn and Beethoven would write oratorios, masses and symphonies; from its declaration of divine sympathy Wilberforce, Howard and Florence Nightingale were to emancipate slaves, reform prisons and mitigate the cruelties of war; from its prophecies Dante's hope of a united Italy was to be realized by Cavour, Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel. Looking upon the family Bible as he was dying, Andrew Jackson said: 'That Book, sir, is the rock upon which the republic rests;' and with her hand upon that Book, Victoria, England's coming queen, was to sum up her history as a power amid the nations of the earth, when, replying to the question of an ambassador, 'What is the secret of England's superiority among the nations?' she would say, 'Go tell your prince that this is the secret of England's political greatness.' When infidelity, with all her literature, produces a roll-call more glorious than this; when out of her pages I may see coming a nobler set of forces for the making of manhood—then, and only then, will I consider any rival claims; then will I give up my

Bible; then, and only then, will I cease to pray and labor that it may be given to all the world."

The following tribute is from the facile pen of Walter Scott: "This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is given to you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents."

But, as I have already intimated, this Book not only elevates, ennobles and purifies individual life, but it does the same for national life. The greatest, purest and happiest nations on the footstool of God to-day are those nations that honor Jehovah and respect reverence and obey His word. England and the United States easily lead the procession in the onward march of the nations of the world, in everything that pertains to the substantial of national life, and they furnish illustrations of the declaration, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah." Considerably less than a century ago the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands

were cannibals sunken into the deepest depths of moral pollution and spiritual degradation. To-day they are civilized, the marriage relation is recognized and honored, the home is held sacred, and the islands are thickly dotted with temples dedicated to the worship of the only true and living God. A lady missionary, who spent years among those people, declares that now about the last thing one hears on the streets at night is the sound of prayer and praise that devout worshipers offer up to Jehovah around family altars, and that the same is repeated next morning. The islands have been redeemed from darkness and superstition, and the people translated into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What has wrought this marvelous transformation? The blessed Bible, in the hands and mouths of missionaries, found its way into those benighted and besotted regions, and caused the wilderness to blossom like a garden of roses.

S. L. Bowman, in his magnificent work entitled "Historical Evidence of the New Testament," in the last paragraph of Chapter V. presents this splendid summary of the benefits that the Bible has bestowed upon mankind: "Confessedly the foremost nations of the earth are those which have founded their laws upon the legislation of Moses in the wilderness and the sermon of Christ upon the mountain. Truly did that great judicial mind, Sir Matthew Hale, remark that 'Christianity is a parcel of the common law.' It does not enter the halls of legislation to dictate or make codes, but it teaches legislators right principles of equity, and molds the conscience to a sense of that which is right and just in ruling. In these nations alone has the spirit existed which destroyed

the infamous slave trade, which has broken off forever shackles of the bondsmen; has elevated the lowly to the possibilities and realizations of places of power and preferment; has enriched countries with educational institutions for the advantage and advancement of the youth; has created homes for the aged, societies for the protection of children, reformatories for the recovery of the erring and the fallen, founded hospitals for the sick and afflicted, and built churches for the salvation of the unsaved. They have organized the people into societies to prevent cruelty to brutes. Nay, it is the very spirit and law of the Christian religion to teach kindness in the home, care for the servants, help for the poor, respect for children, deference to parents, honor to woman, reverence for the aged, love for one's neighbor; to bring charities for the destitute, missions to the pagans, and Christ everywhere for the unsaved. With such a history behind it, and such objects of activity before it, and such a spirit within it, it is obviously quite too late to attempt to relegate Christianity to the rear, or politely bow it out of existence, or assign it a place among the common myths of superstitious people. The impotent sneer of the unbeliever is a confession that as a reasoner he has ceased to be rational, and feels that he can not refute the just and open claims of the religion of Christ."

And thus I might go on quoting page after page from the pens of the world's wisest and best men, with respect to the value and importance of the Bible in the ongoing of the affairs of men, but it is entirely unnecessary. What I have brought before you out of this storehouse of wisdom is sufficient to indicate to you that the Book you love above all other books

is not a worn-out, discredited and useless volume to be laid aside as having outlived its day of usefulness. I would fix upon your minds the pleasing conviction that, in espousing the cause of the Bible, you take your stand with the noblest, grandest and wisest men and women whose lives have ever adorned human history. Never be ashamed of this Book. Press it to your hearts; hold it aloft in your hands as God's beacon-light placed upon the shores of time to guide those who are navigating the seas of this life into the sure and peaceful haven of eternal rest. Unfurl its white banner and let it float out upon the breezes of divine mercy and love, that lost souls may rally to it and look to Him who holds its staff in His nail-pierced hands, for salvation and eternal life.

In the next place, the Bible presents to man the only possible channel by which he can escape sin and its direful consequences. Sin is the most fearful and blighting fact known to human history. We see it in the furrowed cheek and sunken eye; in the bent form and the palsied hand; in deformed bodies and feeble minds; in the tear of distress and the cold, clammy clay from which the spirit has taken its flight. We hear it in the wail of the suffering infant and the sigh of the anguished mother; in the shriek of suffering and the moan of sorrow; in the shout of debauchery and the clink of money in the gambling-hall; in the midnight revelry of the bagnio and the groan of the victim of foul murder; in the protest of the oppressed and muffled murmur of the down-trodden; in the fierce barking of the snarling dogs of war and the clash of sabers in the hands of contending armies; in the roar of mighty guns upon the tremendous battleship and the groans of the maimed



and dying; in the curses of the wicked and the cries of the damned. We feel it in the aching of the heart and the throbbing of the head; in the burning fever and the numbing chill; in the scourge of the epidemic and the lash of the tormentor; in the grip of the hand of avarice and the lash applied by the hand of greed; in the sting of adversity and the touch of the icy fingers of death.

What is it that offers relief from all these misfortunes and more? What is it that lays the soothing hand of comfort upon the aching brow and administers a satisfying potion of solace? What is it that touches the lacerated heart with the fingers of love and applies the oil of consolation? What is it that moistens the parched tongue of anguish and dampens the fevered lip of pain? What is it that speaks to the raging tempest and says, "Peace! be still!" and there ensues the restful calm? What is it that lifts the burden from the crushed heart and applies the balm of hope? What is it that breaks the shackles of oppression and deals out justice to all alike? What is it that turns the tears of grief into tears of joy? What is it that replaces mourning with laughter? What is it that digs up the thorn and plants the rose? What is it that offers an effectual antidote for that which "brought death into the world, and all our woes"?

Let the world be still and listen while the answer comes in the short phrase, "The Bible." Let him who hears take it up and shout it aloud, and send its echoes up and down the valleys, through the mountains, over the plains, across the seas, even unto earth's remotest bounds, till every ear shall hear the glad sound, "The Bible!" and heaven and earth

repeat together the refrain, "The Bible!" It is this Book that is to readjust the relations of capital and labor, so that no longer will hard-muscled laborers be herded together like cattle, live in thatched huts unfit for human habitation, subsist on \$1.50 per day, die on account of unsanitary conditions in their quarters, suffer from lack of medical attention, and grow bitter in their disposition because of the unequal and unjust distribution of wealth, while the millionaire, who appropriates to himself the wealth produced by the sweat of the brows of the toilers that have just been mentioned, lives in a marble palace, circles about the country in luxuriously furnished special cars, sleeps on downy beds, eats and drinks the richest viands of the land, and, for the amusement of the public, donates millions to colleges, churches and libraries for the rich! As soon as the Bible can engraft upon public sentiment the principle of the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," the mountains of unjust divisions of the proceeds of labor will be digged down, and the valleys of discrimination against the brawny toiler in the apportionment of dividends will be filled up, resulting in one common level upon which the capitalist and the laborer will walk and work together as brothers equally interested in the ongoing of the affairs of men, and enjoying a sweet fellowship that will give renewed and explained meaning to the angelic anthem, "Peace on earth, and good will among men."

Give this Book its rightful place in the thought, affection and conduct of the world, and individual selfishness will soon seek some cavernous hiding-place, and leave men under the domination of the apostolic

injunction, "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." This will give us back a Paradise regained, and fill the earth with the glory of the Lord and the supreme good of mankind. Till this comes to pass, the picture just imperfectly sketched will never be realized, but wars and rumors of wars will continue, nations rising against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms, and there will be the blood and fire and smoke of bitter contention and relentless antagonism. Capital will seek the advantage of labor, and labor will resentfully attack capital; employers will oppress the employed, and the latter will strike back in what they believe to be self-defense; the masses will have to bow their necks to the yoke of the classes, and the former will resist and resent the encroachments of their oppressors upon what they consider their rights, and by whatever means may seem to them best suited to the accomplishment of the end they have in view.

The world is in a state of commotion and unrest, and the waters of public life are in a state of wild agitation, with waves rolling high, and madcaps flying in every direction. Toss the Bible upon these surging billows, and see how quickly they will fall into the gentle sleep of quietude and repose. Make the Bible the rule of life and activity, both for the individual and the nation, and see how speedily the people will be molded into a loving brotherhood in which the general welfare will be the supreme object sought, and personal selfishness and ambition will give place to mutual care and sympathy. Give to men generally the spirit that breathes in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and every man will esteem every other man his brother, and regard himself as his

brother's keeper, and see to it that his brother gets a "square deal." Let the nations of earth exalt the Lord of glory to his rightful place in the world's life, and exultantly sing, "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all," and the sun of righteousness will bathe our common home in a sheen of light, and clothe it in a mantle of genial warmth.

But great and important as the Bible is in what it has done, is doing, and proposes to do, for men in this life, that is neither its only nor chief function. It makes possible through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God an abundant entrance into the kingdom of eternal glory. It offers us habitation in a city whose "maker and builder is God." And what glorious and exquisite visions come to view here! "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

"And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are



equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; and each of the several gates was one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And



there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.'"

#### THE BIBLE AN INSPIRED BOOK.

What this Book has already accomplished in the world, and what it reasonably promises to do for the world and men in the future, raises a presumption in favor of its claim to be of superhuman origin—that it came into existence under the direction of divine inspiration; for it is hardly probable that such an instrumentality could be the product of man. Judged by its fruits, its claims stand in the court of reason, and on this basis the idea of its inspiration might confidently be permitted to rest. But in view of the tremendous issues involved, and the immense interests that are at stake, I think it eminently proper to approach and examine the subject from other points of view.

Can God think? That question is almost startling. Go into a great watch factory, and observe the intricate machinery that is involved in the making of a watch. Bands and wheels and cogs and pulleys and saws, *et cetera*, are at work everywhere, and all harmoniously at work with reference to the accomplishment of a given and specific end; and the result is an instrument to mark time with almost perfection. Could the man that designed that marvelous piece of mechanism think? Look out upon the universe to

which we belong, and note the movements of the planets as they "fill the circuits marked by Heaven." The solar system is the only machine that keeps time with absolute and unvarying perfection. The most delicately adjusted watch will in process of time vary a little, and need the attention of an intelligent regulator. Not so, however, with this machine that God made, and upon whose various parts He has plainly written His name. One revolution of the earth around the sun measures off a year to a second, and it never misses it to the extent of the least conceivable point of time. Speaking of the precision with which the earth makes its revolutions, Prof. Herbert W. Morris says:

"To assist us in appreciating this, let us suppose that the solar system was first set in motion just six thousand years ago, and that the earth had fallen behind or been in advance of its designed and appointed speed only *five seconds* in running a million of miles, which would have been a small error indeed; yet at *this date* it would have amounted to more than six months, and our globe would have been at that point in her orbit marked by the first of January, when it should have been at that of the first of July. But no such reversion of seasons has taken place, therefore even this discrepancy has not occurred; so that midsummer and midwinter are to us where they were to Noah in building the ark, and to Adam when roaming amid the beauties of Paradise."

"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" Can the Being who built this timekeeper think? Yes, God can think. Can God talk? Can He who made man, and endowed him with the powers of speech, Himself speak? Can

He make known His thoughts to human intelligence? Is He who can think, dumb, and so hampered in His resources that He can not reveal Himself to His world and His creature man in language? If He is, then does He appear before the universe of intelligence as a very imperfect being, scarcely entitled to be called God, or revered as such. Can it be that God is able to think the greatest possible thoughts, and yet has no power to clothe His thoughts in the habiliments of speech? God can talk.

But has God spoken to men? If not, it is because He would not, and this hypothesis impeaches His goodness. If a human father were to place a couple of his young children on an island in mid-ocean, without that wisdom that comes of experience, would he leave them without instruction and advice as to how to work out their destiny to the best advantage? If so, he would justly call down upon himself the execrations of mankind. He is acquainted with the problems of life, and knows the dangers that beset people in this world, and is aware how best to meet and overcome them; and yet he abandons his children to themselves, and leaves them exposed to innumerable dangers seen and unseen, without a word of counsel, advice or admonition. No man would do it. And yet almighty God did that very thing, if He placed man in this world and left him to shift for himself without instruction as to the best way to work out the problems of life, and reach the goal of happiness! That our God and loving Father would do such a thing as that is improbable in the extreme. It is contrary to all just ideas of His benevolence and philanthropy, and clothes Him in a most unlovely disposition. The presumption is that, being able to

think and talk, and possessed of the attributes of love, kindness and philanthropy, He would speak to man, and that He has done it.

But we have the direct and positive testimony of as trustworthy men as ever breathed the breath of life, that God did speak to them, and authorized them to make His sayings known to others. How many times is it written, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying," Moses himself being the writer who made the record. There is not a solitary circumstance to indicate that Moses was either mistaken or that he prevaricated. The Israelites were not always on the best of terms with their leader, and, if he was either deceived himself, or was deceiving them, they would have detected it, and exposed him. He led them out of Egypt under the claim that God had met with him, talked to him, and commissioned him to deliver them from their cruel bondage. For forty years, some of them stormy ones, he went in and out before them; and though they had frequent quarrels with him, they never questioned his alleged commission from Jehovah. Take the sayings of God out of the Pentateuch, and what is left is but a lifeless, powerless skeleton.

The prophets of old declare that God talked to them, and commanded them to communicate His messages to the people. The evangelical Isaiah speaks as follows: "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Again: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be



as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Once more from Isaiah: "And the Lord spake unto me yet again, saying, Forasmuch as this people hath refused the waters of Shiloh that go softly, and rejoyce in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall sweep onward into Judah; he shall overflow and pass through; he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, says: "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I watch over my word to perform it. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething caldron; and the face thereof is from the north. Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land." Again the tearful man of God speaks thus: "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? For though thou wash thee with lye, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord." Once more from the same source: "The



word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord."

Ezekiel, the prophet of visions, testifies as follows: "Now it came to pass in the thirteenth year, in the fourth month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar." The same witness again says: "And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me." Still further from the priest prophet: "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward the mountain of Israel, and prophesy unto them, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord."

Daniel, the captive prophet, says: "Daniel answered before the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

Hosea bears this testimony: "The word of the Lord came unto Hosea the son of Beer, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

Joel speaks thus: "And the Lord answered and said unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith." "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof" (Amos). "Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom" (Obadiah). "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying" (Jonah). "The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morashite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Micah). "The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah" (Zephaniah). Other quotations might be made from others of the prophets, but the foregoing is sufficient to satisfy all reasonable demands. And for bearing such testimony many of the witnesses brought down upon themselves the wrath of kings and the hatred of the people, and they were without motive to speak anything but the truth.

The New Testament furnishes unmistakable and weighty testimony to the same fact. John the Baptist, who lost his head for rebuking unrighteousness, declares that God spoke to him and told him how he might know the Messiah. When Jesus was baptized, God broke the silence of heaven to say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and the same thing was repeated on the mount of transfiguration. When the Master prayed the Father to glorify His name through the Son, the answer came in audible words: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The apostles claim to have received communications from God, which communications they committed to writing for the benefit of mankind, and, with possibly

one exception, they gave up their lives in the holy service they rendered. From the premises now before us we must conclude that God can think and talk, and that He could communicate with men if He wished to do so. We have found a reasonable presumption that He would speak to His children on earth, and we have discovered from the most indubitable evidence that, as a matter of fact, He has done so, and that we have in the Bible what He said.

“Within this volume lies  
The mystery of mysteries;  
Happiest he of human race  
To whom God has given grace  
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,  
To lift the latch and learn the way;  
And better had he ne'er been born  
Who reads to doubt or reads to scorn.”

—*Scott.*

# THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

## A LECTURE

**B**UT few religious subjects have received more attention at the hands of Christian writers, or given rise to greater diversity of opinion, than that of inspiration. The literature of the subject is abundant, as might be expected in view of the importance and significance of the question. It would be neither proper nor profitable, on this occasion, to enter upon a discussion of the nature of inspiration, for here is where we encounter various and conflicting opinions, and perhaps nothing very satisfactory could be elicited by the fullest investigation that we could give the subject in the time to which we are necessarily limited. And practically it is not at all essential that we understand the nature of inspiration, for we can be assured of inspiration in the Bible, and enjoy its benefits, without comprehending its inherent nature, just as we can have and enjoy many material blessings without knowing the secret of their production.

But, in the investigation of any subject, it is necessary to have a definition that will serve as a practical working basis, for otherwise our labor would be liable to be nothing more than beating the air. As practically accurate and exhaustive, I accept the definition of inspiration given by that logical thinker and profound scholar, Prof. Archibald Alexander, who says that it is "*such a divine influence upon the minds of the sacred writers as rendered them exempt from*

*error, in regard to both the ideas and words.*" This conception of inspiration relieves it of a difficulty that has given some good thinkers perplexity in their reflections upon the subject. The attentive student of the Scriptures can not fail to notice the presence of individuality of authorship in these writings, as seen in the different styles that characterize the several productions. It has occurred to some, and that not without reason, that if the Holy Spirit dictated what was written, selecting not only the thoughts to be recorded, but the words to be employed in making the record, there would be but one style throughout all documents thus produced, the writer simply performing the function of a stenographer. But the view embraced in Dr. Alexander's definition left the writer perfectly free in the exercise of his individuality, and the employment of his own peculiar style, and free in the choice of his words within limits which guarded him from mistake. This gives us inspiration which assures us of infallibility in the Book which we accept as our guide in spiritual matters.

And here emerges the question, Have we an inspired and infallible Bible—a Bible free from error and bearing to us the truth on all matters upon which it speaks? This is a very vital and far-reaching question, and upon the answer which the inquirer gets to it will depend the reliability of the convictions that he bases upon it. If the Book is inspired and infallible, and we do not err in our interpretation and application of it, the foundation of our faith and practice, if fashioned thereby, is sure and steadfast, and the hope based thereupon anchors the soul to the eternal verities of the kingdom of God. On the other hand, if the Bible is neither inspired nor



infallible, or only inspired and infallible in part, then are we sailing upon a shoreless sea without certain chart or compass, and can not be sure as to the port in which we shall finally anchor.

At this point in our investigation it is expedient to distinguish between inspiration in a speaker and inspiration in a writer. When the speaker is also the writer, then of course both are inspired; but when the speaker is one person and the writer another, the writer may be inspired and the speaker not. Some speeches of Satan are recorded in the Bible, but of course his Satanic majesty was not inspired of God to make the speeches, though the recorder of them was inspired to make the record, and the record is inspired and infallibly correct. Even in some cases in which the speaker and the writer were identical, the speech was not inspired of God, though the record of it was. The recognition of this principle will save the believer in the inspiration of the Bible from serious embarrassment in regard to some parts of the record. Take, for instance, the imprecatory Psalms of David, in which he prayed that all kinds of misfortune might overtake his enemies and their children. The following words teem with anger, hatred and malevolence:

“Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of deceit have they opened against me: they have spoken unto me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause: for my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him: and let an adversary stand

on his right hand. When he is judged, let him come forth guilty; and let his prayer be turned into sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds and beg; and let them seek their bread out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let strangers make spoil of his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children" (Ps. 109: 1-12).

Sentiments are expressed here that can not be justified on any principle that God has ever given for the government of men in their relations to one another. Who can believe that the widow's God and the orphan's Father would inspire a man to pray that fatherless children might be vagabonds in the earth and have none to show them pity? David was a man of like passions with the rest of the human family, and he sometimes gave way to them. He confessed that he was hasty when he said, "All men are liars," and he did several very dastardly things in regard to his faithful friend and soldier Uriah. He was a man of strong impulses, and when he got to reflecting upon the treatment that he had received from his enemies, the impulse of hatred overcame him and he gave way to it simply as a human being possessed of the moral infirmities that belong to our common humanity. But God inspired him to make record of this outburst of passion as a warning to others, no doubt, and to present a true portraiture of human character. This preserves the inspiration of the Bible intact, and at the same time saves it from the reproaches of its enemies. It is perfectly correct and reliable in all its statements.

It is well also to note here that there is a difference between inspiration and revelation. Dr. Alexander makes this discrimination lucidly in the following paragraph:

“All revelations are not made by a suggestion of truth to the mind of an individual. God often spake to people of old by audible voices, and communicated His will by the mission of angels. Many persons have thus received divine revelations who had no pretensions to inspiration. All the people of Israel who stood before God at Mount Sinai heard His voice uttering the Ten Commandments, and yet no one would say that all these men were inspired. So also when Christ was upon earth, in more instances than one, a voice was heard declaring that He was the beloved Son of God. Indeed, all who had the opportunity of hearing Christ’s discourses might be said to receive a revelation immediately from God; but it would be absurd to say that all these were inspired. Dr. Dick is of opinion that the word ‘revelation’ would be more expressive, as being more comprehensive, than ‘suggestion,’ which last conveys the idea of an operation on the mind; whereas truth, in many cases, was made known in other ways. But, for the reason stated above, it would not do to substitute the word ‘revelation’ for ‘inspiration’; inasmuch as multitudes received revelations who had no claim to inspiration. And when inspiration is confined to those who wrote the books of Scripture, no other word would so clearly express the idea.”

Specific prediction necessarily implies inspiration on the part of the prophet. I do not refer to those forecastings of the future that simply follow the natural course of events to their legitimate results.

The statesman who understands the philosophy of history, and who is a close observer of human events and their tendency to produce certain results, can foresee the logical results of given transactions between men and nations. Long before the declaration of American independence and the booming of the first cannon in the Revolutionary War, there were those who were sure that that sanguinary struggle was bound to come. They saw it foreshadowed in taxation without representation, and the tea party that was pulled off in Boston Bay indicated the rising of a war cloud that would finally burst and deluge the colonies in the blood of American patriots. Years before the secession of South Carolina and the firing upon Fort Sumter it was perfectly evident to the minds of many that fratricidal war between the North and the South was inevitable. Henry Clay and others saw the shadow that coming events cast before, and lifted up the voice of warning that was not heeded.

These forecastings, however, were not predictions in the strict and proper sense of the term. By prediction I mean the foretelling of events that human sagacity could not work out of passing circumstances—events that the current of history does not seem to point to. Some such events have already been considered from another viewpoint in a previous lecture. When the overthrow and utter destruction of Babylon and Nineveh were foretold by prophets of God, there was no human likelihood that such would be the case. Those cities seemed to have as good a prospect for perpetual existence then, as London or New York has now. The same is true in regard to the city of Jerusalem, whose utter destruction Jesus predicted nearly a half-century before the catastrophe came. No wis-



dom short of divine wisdom could have lifted the curtain that conceals the future from the ken of men, and discovered that those ancient cities would ere the lapse of many centuries succumb to the devastating hand of the destroyer.

The fate of Jerusalem is especially interesting in this connection. When the Son of man walked her streets she seemed to stand as secure upon her rocky foundations as the everlasting hills themselves, and to human vision Chicago has no brighter prospect of standing through the coming ages than "the city of the great King" had when Jesus looked down upon her from the mountainside and shed tears of sympathy over her approaching doom. The prophecy was particular and minute, and it was particularly and minutely fulfilled, and it is still in process of fulfillment. It was to be trodden down by the Gentiles until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and such has been its condition from then till now; and no thoughtful person can seriously reflect upon these circumstances without clearly perceiving that it was infallibility that enabled the Master to predict and depict them with such precision.

There is another city in regard to which the evidences of prediction are strikingly manifest; namely, Tyre, one of the ancient cities concerning which our Lord said that if the mighty works had been done in them that were done in some of the cities of His day and country, they would have remained till His time. Tyre was a city of Phœnicia situated on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and was a city of great commercial and political importance. It was really a double city, part of it situated on the mainland, and a part on a near-by island in which was



built the temple of Hercules. One of the kings (Hiram) maintained very friendly relations with David and Solomon, and rendered conspicuous service in the building of the temple in Jerusalem. It planted a colony of its enterprising people on the northern coast of Africa, thus starting the great city of Carthage, and subjugated the island of Cyprus, where rich copper mines were opened. The fact that Shalmaneser and Nebuchadnezzar both laid siege to the city without subduing it, though the siege of the latter lasted for thirteen years, shows how strongly it was fortified, and gives additional emphasis to Scripture predictions concerning its overthrow.

God lifted the curtain that hides the future and allowed Ezekiel to see what awaited this great and powerful city, and the prophet wrote its future history as follows: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up; and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; and I will scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord. . . . I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more, for I the Lord hath spoken it, saith the Lord God. . . . I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: Though thou be sought for, yet thou shalt never be found again, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 26).

The boldness and confidence of this prophecy are most remarkable in view of the stable character of the city as just indicated. No one would ever have

dared make such predictions without being directed by divine wisdom. But the subsequent history of the city corresponds to the prophecy in the minutest details. Volney, who can not be suspected of any desire to prove the inspiration of the Bible, says of Tyre: "The vicissitudes of time, or, rather, the barbarisms of the Greeks of the lower empire, have accomplished their prediction. Instead of that ancient commerce so active and so extensive, Tyre, reduced to a miserable village, has no other trade than the exportation of a few sacks of corn and raw cotton; nor any merchant but a single Greek factor, who scarcely makes sufficient profit to maintain his family. . . . The whole village of Tyre contains only fifty or sixty families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little grounds and a small fishery." Bruce describes the city as a "rock whereon fishers dry their nets," the historian using practically the same language as the prophet.

Cotovicus, a Dutch traveler, who visited Syria in 1598, says "that this city, so often restored after being overthrown, now at length appears to be utterly ruined; so that it has ceased to be any longer a city, and only some inconsiderable vestiges of her former ruins are now visible. If you except a few arches and baths, and some ruined walls, and collapsed towers, and mere rubbish, there is now nothing of Tyre to be discerned." Dr. Shaw visited Tyre, and could find not even a secure port or harbor anywhere in the vicinity. But Maundrell's description of the utter ruin of the city, and the minute details of the fulfillment of prophecy in its destruction, are perhaps the most impressive and interesting that we have. He says: "This city, standing in the sea, on a peninsula,

at a distance promises something very magnificent; but when you come nearer, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes in the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of his prophecy. On the north side, it has an old, ungarrisoned Turkish castle, besides which you see nothing but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, etc., there being not so much as one entire house left; its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harboring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place, by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled His word concerning Tyre, that it should be 'as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.'"

The fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Jewish nation is interesting and instructive in this connection. Moses uttered some very specific predictions respecting the Israelites, which are recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. I direct your attention to a few of the conspicuous ones, together with their historical fulfillment: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." This prophecy found its accomplishment in the invasion of Judea by the Chaldeans and by the Romans, but particularly the latter. In predicting the Chaldean invasion Jeremiah uses language almost identical with that of Moses. He says: "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, saith the Lord; it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou

knowest not." Again he says: "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heavens." This applies with remarkable propriety to the Romans, who were a nation from afar, whose movements were swift and their conquests rapid, and whose language the Jews did not understand. Quite generally the enemies of the Jews were characterized as "a nation of fierce countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young"—a description that admirably suits the Chaldeans. 2 Chron. 36:17 declares that God sent against the Jews "the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, nor him that stooped for age." The Romans also treated the Jews very cruelly. Josephus says that when Vespasian came to Gadara, "he slew all, man by man, the Romans showing mercy to no age." Thus we see how remarkably the prophecies were fulfilled, thus furnishing unmistakable evidence of the inspiration of the prophets.

The besieging and taking of the cities of the Jews were foretold with wonderful exactitude: "And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst." This was amply fulfilled by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who besieged Samaria and took it; by Sennacherib, who laid siege to all the fenced cities of Judah, and by Nebuchadnezzar, who took Jerusalem, burned the temple, and broke down the walls of the city. In their sieges the Israelites were, according to prophecy, to suffer very greatly from famine, and sacred history informs us that, in the famine connected with the siege of Samaria, "an ass' head was

sold for fourscore pieces of silver." When Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, the famine was so severe that there "was no bread for the people of the land." It was foretold that in these famines mothers would eat their own offspring. Moses said: "Ye shall eat the flesh of your sons and your daughters." The spirit of prophecy also said: "The tender and the delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness . . . she shall eat her children for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates." Six hundred years after this remarkable prediction it was fulfilled in the siege of Samaria by the king of Syria, when two women covenanted to give up their children to be eaten, and one of them was actually eaten. It had its second fulfillment nine hundred years after its utterance by Moses, when the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem. Jeremiah says: "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children." And six hundred years later still, as we are informed by Josephus, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, a noble woman killed and cooked her sucking child, and, having eaten half of it, secreted the other half for another meal. Perhaps a prophecy less likely to be fulfilled was never uttered, for if there was anything that the Jews loathed it was the idea of eating human flesh, and especially the flesh of their own children.

It was also predicted that large numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed in these wars and famines: "And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude." In the siege of Jerusalem by Titus it is estimated that one



million one hundred thousand people perished by pestilence, the sword and famine; and perhaps never since the beginning of creation did so many people lose their lives in one siege as in this, thus verifying the declaration of the Saviour that there would be "great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be." The siege began about the time of the beginning of the celebration of the Passover, and this is the reason that so many people were shut up in Jerusalem to undergo the fearful calamities that were coming upon them.

It was likewise foretold by Moses that the Jews would be carried back to Egypt and sold for a mere trifle per head, even specifying the method of their transportation in the following language: "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, where ye shall be sold to your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." We learn from Josephus that when the city was captured, the captives over seventeen years of age were sent to the works in Egypt, but that eleven thousand of them perished for lack of proper care. The market was overstocked, and they were sold for the merest pittance. While the historian does not say that the Jewish captives were transported to Egypt in ships, there is a probability, amounting in strength almost to a historical certainty, that such was the cause, for the Romans had a fleet in the Mediterranean at that time, and that would be the most expeditious and economical method of conveyance. The particularity of these prophecies and fulfillments can not fail to get and hold the attention of the student of such matters.

Moses also predicted that the descendants of the people that he brought out of Egypt, and for whose entrance into the promised land he made provision, would be extirpated from their own country and scattered among the nations of the earth: "And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth, even unto the other." The fulfillment of this prophecy is one of the most remarkable in the record. One of the main purposes of the rationalistic critics in trying to modernize the dates of the writings attributed to Moses is to get rid as far as possible of prediction. But the very latest date that they have attempted to fix, leaves a margin of more than four hundred years for the prophecy before the fulfillment, thus showing that whoever made the predictions must have been inspired of God. The dispersion of the Jews was completed when the Romans in about the year A. D. 70 took away their "place and nation," and scattered them abroad in the earth.

By a public decree the Roman Emperor Adrian disallowed the Jews on pain of death to enter Jerusalem, or even to approach the surrounding country, and in the third century of the Christian era they were not allowed to enter Judea, and since then but few Israelites have inhabited the Holy Land. To-day they are wandering exiles from the country that was once theirs, and in which they were happy and prosperous whenever and as long as they obeyed God, and are scattered throughout pretty much every country on the face of the globe. But it was also prophesied that, notwithstanding their dispersion and hardships, they should remain a separate and distinct

people. The prophet said: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them." Commenting upon this wonderful prophecy, Bishop Newton says: "What a marvelous thing is this, that after so many wars, battles and sieges; after so many rebellions, massacres and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery and misery—they are not 'destroyed utterly,' and though scattered among all people, yet subsist a distinct people by themselves! Where is anything like this to be found in all the histories, and in all the nations under the sun?"

The prophecy further declares that "they should be oppressed and crushed always; that their sons and their daughters should be given to another people; that they should be mad for the sight of their eyes, which they should see." Commenting on these predictions, Dr. Alexander says: "Nothing has been more common, in all countries where the Jews have resided, than to fine, fleece and oppress them at will; and in Spain and Portugal their children have been taken from them by order of the Government, to be educated in the popish religion. The instances in which their oppressions have driven them to madness are too numerous to be stated in detail." The prophecy further states that the Jews should be everywhere in an uneasy and restless condition, and should not abide long in any one place: "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." Dr. Alexander speaks as follows of this prophecy: "How exactly has this been verified in the case of this unhappy people, even to this day! There is scarcely a country in Europe from which

they have not been banished, at one time or another. To say nothing of many previous scenes of bloodshed and banishment, of the most shocking kind, through which great multitudes of this devoted people passed in Germany, France and Spain, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, eight hundred thousand Jews are said, by the Spanish historian, to have been banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella. And how often, when tolerated by government, they have suffered by the tumults of the people, it is impossible to enumerate." The persecutions they are suffering in Russia to-day is in line with their history elsewhere and at other times.

In conclusion on this point, Moses likewise predicted that these people should become an astonishment, a proverb and a byword among all nations, and this is borne out in a most astonishing manner in their checkered history. They are literally "a proverb and a byword" everywhere, and among all people. "That beats the Jews" is a common adage throughout the civilized world. Dr. Alexander says: "Mohammedans, heathens and Christians, however they may differ in other things, have been agreed in vilifying, abusing and persecuting the Jews. Surely the judgments visited on this peculiar people have been wonderful and of long continuance. For nearly eighteen hundred years they have been in this miserable state of banishment, dispersion and persecution."

The prophecy of Isaiah concerning the restoration of the Israelites to their own land, after seventy years' captivity in Babylon, is particularly important and significant in this connection. Even the monarch under whose auspices the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem were to take place, was mentioned by name



in the prophecy: "Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth; who is with me? that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." This prophecy is wonderful in the circumstantiality of its details, and it furnishes a foundation both sure and stedfast for our faith in the inspiration of the Bible. Fully one hundred and fifty years intervened between Isaiah and Cyrus, and yet the prophet knew him by name and was acquainted with what he would do with regard to the Jews. This is so powerful an evidence of inspiration that the only escape for rationalistic criticism is to deny that Isaiah the prophet wrote it, and this they do, but do not pretend to know who did write it. Their claim is without the least historical support, and the "great unknown" has no place except in the mythology of radical criticism.

Josephus informs us that when Cyrus captured Babylon the predictions regarding himself were made known to him, and that he was overwhelmingly impressed that the writing was divine. This led the prince to treat the children of Israel with great kind-



ness, permitting them to return to Palestine, and furnishing them with facilities for rebuilding the temple. Ezra gives the following account of Cyrus' course in this transaction: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem." This whole transaction, from its beginning in prophecy to its consummation in history, is luminous with unmistakable evidence that Jehovah was in it, and that it was carried on under His supervision. One of the distinguished writers already quoted has this to say: "What nation hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country so long as these have done in their dispersion into all countries? And what a standing miracle is thus exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world! . . . Here are instances of prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago, and yet, as we see, being fulfilled in the world at this very time; and what stronger proof can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others, I know not, but for myself I must acknowledge they not only convince me, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression."

I will conclude this lecture by referring to some prophecies concerning Christ, and their fulfillment, although there is not time enough left to do this branch of the subject anything like justice. These prophecies are very numerous, and I can only call attention to a few of the more striking ones. Let us begin with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah:

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb; yea, he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living? for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord

to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

What a broad, pathetic, circumstantial and far-reaching prophecy this is! And even if some "great unknown" wrote it, instead of the historical prophet Isaiah, it was confessedly written four or five centuries before the Saviour lived on the earth; and yet it is as accurate and detailed as if it had been written after the crucifixion of the Lord of glory!

David portrayed the betrayal of Christ by a former friend, in the following language: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." This clearly points to Judas as the betrayer. Even the price that the betrayer was to get for betraying him is specified as follows: "So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me; Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah." This receives accurate fulfillment in the facts that Judas got thirty pieces of silver for his nefarious work, and that after the awful tragedy he took them into the temple and cast them down

there, and that they were used to purchase a potter's field to bury strangers in. In the thirty-fourth Psalm it is predicted that the Messiah's bones should not be broken in His execution, according to the prevailing custom; and we learn from the sacred record that, notwithstanding the bones of those who were crucified with Him were broken, His bones were not. This is a remarkable and impressive fact in connection with the whole transaction.

The twenty-second Psalm indicates what disposition would be made of Christ's garments, as follows: "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." We find the soldiers who crucified Him doing this very thing, thus furnishing strong testimony to the inspiration of the man who made the prediction. The Galilean ministry of Jesus is described by Isaiah thus: "But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali: but in the latter time he hath made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." The fourth chapter of Matthew records the fulfillment of this prophecy in very explicit terms. In the sixty-ninth Psalm we find this language: "They gave me also gall for my food; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all record the accomplishment of this prophecy in connection with the crucifixion. Jeremiah foretold the massacre of the children in and about Bethlehem in the following graphic language: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation,

and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are not." The history of the fulfillment runs thus: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the wise men." Isaiah predicted the birth of Jesus of a virgin in the following terms: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." You are familiar with the facts in this case as recorded in the New Testament.

The place of His birth was also foretold minutely: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel" (Mic. 5:2). Such was the case notwithstanding its improbabilities. The fact that His side was pierced was predicted: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). David foretold His prayer for His enemies: "For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer." His triumphal entry into Jerusalem was foretold by Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding on an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." You are acquainted with the history as recorded in the New Testament.



Thus the inspiration of the Bible is established to a certainty, and we can praise God for His goodness in giving us this Book to guide us in the way of truth and righteousness.

# THE PROVINCE OF THE HUMAN MIND IN RELIGION

## *A LECTURE*

**S**OME one has said that there is nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man but mind. Allowing mind to include man's moral and spiritual nature, this thought is true, grand and beautiful. As a system of animated machinery the human body is something to be admired for its ten thousand adaptations to the accomplishment of as many ends. But it scarcely has a feature that is not excelled by one or more of the animals. In strength it is weakness itself in comparison with the elephant. In speed it is eclipsed by the greyhound. In powers of endurance it is thrown into the shade by the ox and mule. In sharpness and strength of vision it is surpassed by the eagle. In keenness and quickness of scent it is easily led by the pointer dog. In things that are merely physical, man, by comparison, is a very inferior being.

But when he is regarded as an intellectual creature, he at once takes his place at the head of all things that belong to earth. To reason from cause to effect, and from effect back to cause, is a power that dignifies and glorifies the human mind. In invention, in adaptation of means to ends, in the field of discovery, in the matter of understanding and appreciating nature, in ability to lay hold of God and to even feebly apprehend Him, the mind of man occupies

a sphere all its own. It can not create in the absolute sense; it can not call worlds into existence and clothe them in beauty and glory; it can not so speak as to cause a delicate flower to spring forth resplendent in color and charming in perfume; it can not so order that, in response to its behest, a bird will come forth in gorgeousness of plumage and sweetness of song. But in large part it can follow the footprints of the Creator, discover His workmanship, and delight itself in a knowledge of His works.

The human intellect can roam the starry heavens, and, with compass, measuring-line and scales in hand, measure the distances of the planets, stars, suns, and systems of worlds from one another, take their dimensions and weight, and determine their courses and bounds. One of the greatest achievements of modern science was the discovery of the planet Neptune. It had been noticed by astronomers that there were irregularities and disturbances in the movements of Uranus, which was the frontier planet of the solar system as then known. Study of these phenomena led to the conclusion that there was a large planet lying outside the orbit of Uranus, whose power of attraction caused the eccentricities noticed in the movement of Uranus. On this hypothesis two men—Leverier in France, and Adams in England—assigned to themselves the task of discovering the disturbing stranger. Having determined by careful calculation about where the unknown body must be to produce the effects noticed, great telescopes were trained upon that part of the heavens, and, behold! there was Neptune leisurely moving along at the immense distance of nearly two billions and eight hundred millions of miles from the sun! Well might Professor

Harris say that this one achievement more than argues the divine paternity of the human mind.

Here let us institute and prosecute an inquiry as to the province and ability of this greatest of man's possessions in its relations to the realm of religion. In this field we find that the mind of man, great and wonderful as it is, has not the power of creation. That is, it can not create a true religion—a religion whose results in forming character and shaping life are satisfactory. This is attested by all history, and I must be content with the statement of the fact, without attempting to prove it here. The skilled painter can put a sunset scene on canvas with his magic brush, but in its best estate it falls very far short of the western splendor and glory that Nature paints upon the sky. The expert sculptor may hew a man out of a block of marble, but there is no flash of light and life in the eye, no rose tint on the cheek, no pulsation of vigor in the veins, no words of eloquence and power dropping from the tongue like the drippings of the honeycomb. The artificial man pales into nothingness when compared with the natural man. So it is as regards the human mind in respect to the domain of religion. With all of its inventive genius its every creation in this field is artificial, and fails to satisfy.

In philosophy, science, art, political economy, etc., the mind of man has made discoveries that have been of incalculable benefit to the human race. In dealing with material things, and even with purely mental phenomena, the accomplishments of man have already reached the marvelous; and what remains to be achieved along these lines the future alone can reveal.

But as to finding out God and discovering the true relations that exist between Him as Creator, and man as creature, all human efforts have been conspicuous and signal failures. Indeed, when we consider the intellectual powers of man in their relations to the material universe, and view them in their operations in the sphere of the natural sciences, we can not fail to notice the limitations by which they are circumscribed. Though human knowledge is vast, when it is brought into contrast with universal truth how contracted it becomes! What we know about our own solar system is microscopic in comparison with what we do not know in regard to it. How little we know of the history, the conditions, the functions, the inhabitants of Jupiter, or Saturn, or even Mars! The reversionary movement of the satellites of Uranus is a perplexing phenomenon to modern astronomy, and only unsatisfactory theories have been propounded in explanation of it.

There is almost unlimited territory, in the domain ruled by the sun, that man has not yet explored, and about which he knows little or nothing. And when he transcends the limits of this little system, and tries to think about the regions that lie beyond; when he undertakes to grasp the idea of infinite space with its infinite contents; and when he sees that it is as difficult to think of space as limited, as it is to comprehend it as unlimited—he stands appalled and paralyzed in the presence of the problems that rise before him. The celebrated saying of Newton, the “childlike sage,” is in place here: “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a



smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." There is a shoreless ocean of unnavigated truth by the side of which all that we know is reduced to the dimensions of the merest lakelet.

It is the fact of the limitations that belong to the very constitution of the human mind that makes it necessary for men to be specialists in the various departments of thought and investigation. No man can excel in law, medicine and mathematics at the same time. Occasionally, but only occasionally, a great mind comes upon the scene that can take a cluster of similar branches of study, and become expert in all of them. Michael Angelo is said to have been equally distinguished as painter, sculptor and architect; Shakespeare excelled alike in comedy, farce and tragedy; Agassiz was a master in four different departments of science, and easily stood at the head of his class in each of them. But when you combine all that all these men knew, how insignificant is the sum total as compared with all truth. If all the great minds that have ever figured in human history could be thrown together as one mind, in a happy combination of all faculties, the result would be a mind marked by the limitations of the finite; and its unified knowledge would be infinitesimal in comparison with universal truth.

Seeing that man can not come to a knowledge of the true and living God by the unaided powers of his reason, it is proper to pay some attention to intuitional knowledge. That there is such a thing as discovering and receiving truth by intuition, apart from the processes of reasoning, is an uncontroverted proposition. Mathematical axioms present truth that is

received in this way. We see such truth at once, and do not attain a knowledge of it by formulating premises and drawing conclusions. There is a short cut to such truth, by which the mind reaches it without the use of intermediate knowledge or discovering processes. That two and two make four is a truth which the mind receives without question. That the whole is greater than any of its parts can not be made plainer than the mere statement of the fact. This intuitional knowledge is the basis of all reasoning, and the mind could not reason at all if there were not starting-points that do not have to be reasoned out.

The power to reach truth in this way differs widely in different individuals. That one and one make two is a truth that every sane mind accepts at once. But when a great many different numbers are involved, most minds have to discover the sum by calculation. Yet there are some that can give it at once, and are not able to tell how they reach the result. It comes by intuition. Newton and Pascal could see truth at once, while other strong minds would have to plod, and reach the conclusion step by step up the ladder of the ordinary processes of reasoning. But this faculty is hampered in the most richly endowed, by limitations. There is but one mind that knows all truth by intuition, and of course that is the mind of the infinite One. Even Newton and Pascal and Hamilton had to pursue the beaten path of reason to reach some truth. But the sum of all human knowledge, whether it comes by reason or intuition, is subject to limitations.

Is there such a thing as satisfactory intuitional knowledge of religious truth? This interrogatory lies

at the very basis of the question now under consideration. Upon the answer it may receive will depend the validity of much of our reasoning upon the evidences of Christianity. Any religion that can satisfy the needs and cravings of the human soul must have as its very heart a concept of God as infinite in wisdom, omnipotent in power, and boundless in love and mercy. Can intuition originate such a concept? So far as intuition speaks at all, it must speak the same language to all men everywhere at all times. In the circle of reason there are numerous considerations that operate to lead different minds to different conclusions on the same subject. Reason in the hands of some of the five senses may be led to false conclusions. Of this, color blindness is a striking and interesting example. Sight tells one man that a given object is of one color, while it reports to another that the same object is of a different color. If intuition reports at all, it makes the same report to every man. This faculty in man is very closely akin to instinct in animals, and this power is uniform in its operations and manifestations. The instinct of the American horse is exactly the same as the instinct of the Arabian horse, and it speaks one and the same language the world over. There is no confusion of tongues in this regard. Precisely so in regard to intuition. If it tells an Englishman that two and two make four, it makes the same report to an Egyptian. If it informs a Russian that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts, it imparts the same information to a South American. If it assures a Turk that two different objects can not occupy the same space at the same time, it gives the Australian Bushman the same assurance.

Now, has intuition originated a uniform religion the world over? Has it spoken the same language everywhere concerning God? Has it given all men the same conception of right and wrong? Has it everywhere given the same idea of virtue and honor? Has it sung the same song around the world as regards a future life? Has it taught the same lesson at all times on the subjects of truth and righteousness? Has it impressed all men with the correct idea of the unity, nature and character of God? To ask these questions is to answer them to the satisfaction of every man of a fair degree of intelligence. No human faculty has spoken a uniform, universal language in this sphere of thought and experience, and the resulting conclusion is that intuition has not spoken at all in this realm. On this plane it is powerless and speechless and sightless. This accounts for the confusion and conflict to be found all along the line of transcendentalism, from Plato to Comte and Hegel. Perhaps I could not render you a better service than to give you the following quotation from "The Evidence of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century," by Albert Barnes: "There is no agreement among those who rely upon this as to what is the true system. From Plato downward to Kant and Comte, men have speculated on this point, and in regard to what is claimed under this system—the 'true,' the 'absolute,' the 'infinite'—as to what God is, what man is, or what is the moral system of the universe, it is impossible to refer to any system on which men have speculated at all, in respect to which there is a greater variety of opinion, or in which more that is incomprehensible has been proposed to the faith of mankind. It would be very easy for any one

to make extracts from Hegel and Kant so far above common apprehension, so mystical, so difficult of interpretation, so destitute of apparent meaning, as to turn the whole matter into ridicule if it should be held seriously that this was to be the faith of mankind at large. Besides, who is to decide which is the true system? Or who, holding one system on this theory, has a right to call in question the truth of the system preferred by another?"

Thus it becomes manifest that there are limitations upon human intuition that incapacitate man for the task of devising a true system of religion. This explains the historical fact that all systems of religion that have been originated by man have either crumbled, or are crumbling. Many have passed away, and the rest are doomed to extinction. Thrones erected by men have toppled into destruction; empires that were established by human genius and power have gone down in ruins; cities constructed by the art of man have succumbed to the hand of the destroyer. Human religions, like all things else human, must go the way of all the earth, for the reason that they are not true, for truth is imperishable and eternal. Excepting Hinduism and Buddhism, all the religions devised by man before the Christian era have passed away to return no more. The temples of Baalbec fell to rise not. Mexican altars will never rise from the ruins into which they have fallen. The Parthenon will never again throw open its doors to invite worshipers to its shrines. The Pantheon will never more be a receptacle for the gods of all nations. The splendid and elegant mythology of Greece is a thing of the past. The following sentences from Albert Barnes are eminently worth reciting here: "Every altar that stood



in the time of Paul has long since been overthrown, not to be rebuilt; the splendid temples on which his eye rested when he stood on Mars' Hill have disappeared. Even the Parthenon is in ruins, and there has not been vitality enough to perpetuate it in its beauty as a work of art; as a structure for the worship of Minerva it is to be entered no more forever. There was nothing in the ancient religion of Greece, or in her philosophy as bearing on religion, that the world could lay hold of as worth perpetuating, and the religion of Greece, the highest result of human wisdom—of the speculation of the profoundest and acutest intellects of the world—has departed; the ruin of the ancient religion is universal. Not more entire is the ruin of kingdoms, dynasties, empires—of thrones and palaces—than is the ruin of temples and altars. All lie in promiscuous ruin: Karnak, Baalbec, Birn Nimrod in Babylon; the splendid temples in Athens and in Corinth; the temples of Jupiter and Janus and Apollo—all in Rome save a little temple and the Parthenon—all are in ruin. No part of the world is now in the slightest degree influenced by the Egyptian, the Persian, the Assyrian, the Roman, the Greek religions, by the religion of the Druids, or of any of the old Teutonic or Scythian races.”

It will scarcely be contended that the efforts of the future will surpass those of the past, or that the human mind will in the future produce results along this line that will be more satisfactory or enduring than those that have been produced by former generations of men. The fruits borne by the intellects of Aristotle, Plato, and all the great philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome; of Hume, Gibbon, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Lord Herbert and Hobbes; of

Kant, Hegel, Strauss, Renan and Comte, with the rest of the philosophers of England, France and Germany—will not be excelled in richness and beauty by the products of minds yet to be brought into existence. The human mind is not capable of creating a satisfying, lasting, purifying, soul-saving, heart-cleansing, charity-producing, God-honoring religion.

What, then, is the province of the human mind, if it has any, as regards religious truth? The question assumes that there is such a thing as religious truth, and the assumption rests upon a very strong presumption. All experience, observation and history combine to show that man is a religious being—a being whose consciousness prompts him to worship, and whose conscience tells him that he ought to worship. Here are some of the essential and elementary factors of human nature—principles without which human nature would not be what it is. The physical and mental constitutions of man require certain things that are essential to his existence and welfare as a physical and intellectual being, and we find that his environment abundantly furnishes him with those things. As a physical being he needs food, drink, raiment, warmth, etc., and his physical environment places these things within his reach. As an intellectual being he needs food for thought and reflection, and his intellectual environment furnishes him with this. His physical nature requires physical truth, and that is at hand. His mental nature requires intellectual truth, and intellectual truth lies before him. So far there are no misfits between man's needs and his surroundings.

As a religious—a spiritual—being, man is characterized by certain religious or spiritual needs, and this

suggests the existence of a religious or spiritual environment, and gives rise to the idea of adaptation of environment to needs in this sphere of human existence. As a religious being man's primary need is that of religious truth; and here comes out in bold relief the presumption that his religious environment contains religious truth that is adapted to him as a religious being. This presumption is so strong that I shall not attempt to prove it by direct argumentation, as it manifests strength enough to enable it to stand alone. And now we are in direct and immediate contact with the problem of the relation of the human mind to the truth which the religious environment embraces.

We have already seen that the mind does not sustain to this truth the relation of creator or originator. Hear me while I express a doubt as to man's ability to create truth of any kind. He did not create the physical truth that the sun shines, nor that the earth revolves on its axis, nor that food taken into the system will strengthen and build it up. He did not create the intellectual truth that three and three make six, nor that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts, nor that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. He can not create a star, but he can see, appreciate and enjoy one. He can not create a law of gravitation, nor any other law that influences matter or mind; but he can perceive, appreciate, enjoy, and to some extent understand, such laws. This suggests the true relation of the mind of man to religious truth. While he can not create such truth, yet, when it is presented to his mind, he can perceive, appreciate, enjoy, and to some extent understand, it. Thus reason and revelation

come together and blend themselves in an affectionate and harmonious embrace.

Religious truth, as well as all other truth, must be weighed to the human understanding in the scales of reason; and when a proposition comes to the human mind in the name of religious truth, reason must pass judgment upon it. It is only thus that the mind can discriminate between truth and error in this department of thought and experience. Here lies the only protection that man has against imposture and imposition in the domain of religion. I would not be understood as saying that the decision of reason is final, nor that the rejection of a proposition by reason proves the proposition to be false; nor am I saying that the reception of a proposition by reason shows the proposition to be true. When the proposition that a sack of flour weighs twenty pounds is rejected by a given pair of scales, that does not absolutely settle the matter, for the scales may be out of order. Just so as regards the reason of an individual. What the decision of a given mind may be will probably be influenced by a number of factors lying outside of pure reason. Prejudice, education, habits of thought, likes and dislikes, etc., are considerations that make their impress upon the coinage of reason. And yet every man must bring his reason into play in considering matters pertaining to religious truth, and no man can intelligently receive as truth that which does not commend itself to his reason. Any religion, whether true or false, must take this into the account in asking approval and acceptance at the hands of human intelligence.

I do not mean to affirm that a man can not receive as true a thing that he does not fully comprehend.



A farmer knows but little of the principles of life and growth in vegetation. But few people know much about the laws of life by which food is digested, converted into blood, and assimilated to the various parts of the body as flesh, bones, nerves, brains, etc. The wisest philosopher is quite limited in his knowledge of the law of gravitation, electrical phenomena, the movements of comets, and the like. But intelligent people receive these imperfectly understood things as true, and act upon them as true in the ordinary affairs of life. A well-ordered and properly balanced mind will accept things as true when it is more reasonable to thus accept them as true than to reject them as false; and not very many minds can reach a higher plane than this. It is the plane upon which the most interesting and important problems of ordinary and practical life are solved.

But an apparent difficulty comes into view here, which it is proper to recognize and try to remove. For various reasons but few individuals can enter upon a thorough personal examination of the evidences of Christianity, so as to assure their reason, from the standpoint of personal investigation, that it is true. What shall be done by those who can not make this examination for themselves? This embarrassment is not peculiar to the realm of religious truth. On the contrary, it is encountered, as has already been intimated, in every department of thought and life. Not many men are able to work their own way to the conclusion that the earth and sun are about ninety-three million of miles apart. Only a few know from personal examination that the sun is the center of the system, instead of the earth. Few and far between are the minds that can forecast an eclipse by personal



calculation, and tell the time of its beginning to a second. It does not fall to the lot of many to be able to trace the course of a comet and fix the time of its reappearance in our part of the heavens. Only one here and there can tell by diagnosis that a patient has typhoid fever, and what the proper remedies are. And yet in all these matters there is a legitimate place for the exercise of reason on the part of the great masses of the human family. The ordinary mind—the mind that has neither time nor facilities for personal examination—says that it is reasonable to accept conclusions that have been reached by minds having all the opportunities and facilities needful for a thorough and adequate investigation, and it is unreasonable to reject them. Thus the difficulty is met and removed as regards scientific truth.

The same principle will relieve the situation of embarrassment with respect to the circle of religious thought. Here there are specialists as well as in the various departments of scientific investigation, and when they reach a conclusion with a fair degree of unanimity, it is more reasonable to accept that conclusion than it is to reject it; and the one who does so acts from the standpoint of reason and is guided by common sense. It is true that he may not occupy the highest plane of reason; but all men can no more occupy the same plane of reason here than in other fields of mental activity. A vast majority of those who have made a specialty of the study of Christian evidences have reached the conclusion that Christianity is true and divine, and it is more reasonable for the common mind to accept that conclusion than to reject it. England's greatest premier said that he had been intimately associated in public life with sixty-five of

the world's greatest men, and that sixty of them believed in Christianity. It is much more reasonable to follow the sixty than the five. Perhaps this is the strongest argument that a preacher can use before a promiscuous audience. The common people know that they act on this principle in nearly all other matters, and this consideration will lead them to see that it is reasonable to act upon it in regard to religion. But there is a danger at this point that should be guarded against as far as possible; namely, the danger of encouraging people to fall into a condition of mental indolence in regard to the matter. Every mind should exert itself to the fullest extent of its ability to think and investigate along this line. It may well be doubted whether there can be such a thing as a sound, healthy, vigorous, soul-sustaining faith without some personal thought and investigation as to its foundation. I verily believe that we have now reached solid, firm, permanent ground with respect to the right use of reason in relation to religion.

But perhaps this argument would not be complete if it should not take some notice of the fact that in the case of some investigators their reason has led them to reject Christianity as false. Ought not the laws of reason to produce uniform results? and if reason tells one man that Christianity is true, ought it not to make the same report to every man? The question is legitimate and deserves attention. Pure reason, unaffected by disturbing elements and acting normally through its inherent laws, ought, it seems to me, to produce uniform results. In view, therefore, of different and conflicting results, it behooves us to inquire whether foreign and disturbing factors have intruded themselves into the kingdom of reason, thus

obstructing its laws in their operations, and causing them to produce abnormal results. When a ball is fired from a great gun perpendicularly into the air, the law of gravitation is temporarily overcome, and the result is that, instead of falling, the ball rises. But the phenomenon is easily explained when the propelling force of the explosive in the gun is taken into consideration. The ascension of the ball is at least an apparent exception to the rule that objects in the air without adequate support descend. The reversionary movement of the satellites of Uranus is an exception to the rule that the planets and their satellites revolve from west to east. The exception has not yet been satisfactorily explained, but the probable explanation is that those satellites are operated upon and influenced by forces that have not yet been discovered, and whose discovery would make the matter plain.

The rule is that those who investigate the claims of Christianity for themselves reach the conclusion that those claims are well founded. Those who have come to a contrary conclusion furnish exceptions to the rule, and we know that exceptions do not invalidate a rule, and that it is safer to follow a rule than the exceptions. Can these exceptions be accounted for on reasonable grounds such as will confirm the rule rather than break it down? I believe that they can, and, by way of approaching the subject, I cite the following language from Prof. Archibald Alexander: "There is no just cause for apprehending that we shall be misled by the proper exercise of reason on any subject which may be proposed for our consideration. The only danger is of making an improper use of this faculty, which is one of the most common

faults to which our nature is liable. Most men profess that they are guided by reason in forming their opinions; but if this were really the case, the world would not be overrun with error; there would not be so many absurd and dangerous opinions propagated and pertinaciously defended. In one sense, indeed, they may be said to follow reason, for they are guided by a blinded, prejudiced and perverted reason." These sentences are full of valuable suggestions looking in the direction of the solution of the problem before us. If an individual declares that an object is green, when the overwhelming majority of intelligent people say that it is white, it is manifest that there is something wrong with that individual's vision. He followed his sense of sight, but that was in an abnormal condition, and hence it led him to a false conclusion. So may it be in regard to reason. It will lead to wrong conclusions if it is perverted and influenced by disturbing and hindering elements.

Skeptics of the Hume-Renan school exhibit perversion of reason when they say that the claims of miracles are to be rejected without investigation. Such a decision not only hampers and disables reason, it almost dethrones it. If there is an intelligent God, unperverted reason says that He can perform miracles; and when it is alleged by respectable and intelligent witnesses that God did actually perform miracles, it is unreasonable to say that the testimony is to be rejected without investigation, and there is something wrong with the reason that so declares, however brilliant it may be in other respects. Such a decision is an exception to the rule, and is explainable on rational grounds. I quote again from Professor Alexander: "One large class of men are



accustomed, from a slight and superficial view of the important subject of religion, to draw a hasty conclusion, which must prove in the highest degree detrimental to their happiness. They have observed that, in the modern as well as the ancient world, there is much superstition, much imposture, much diversity and variety of opinion, many false pretenses to divine inspiration, and many false reports of miracles and prophetic oracles. Without giving themselves the trouble of searching diligently for the truth amidst the various claims, they draw a general conclusion that all religions are alike; that the whole affair is a cheat, the invention of cunning men who imposed on the credulity of the unthinking multitude; and that the claims to divine revelation do not even deserve a serious examination. Does right reason dictate such a conclusion as this? If it did, and we were to apply it to other concerns, it would make a sad overturning in the business of the world. Truth, honesty and honor might, on these principles, be discarded as unmeaning names; for of all these there have been innumerable counterfeits, and concerning all of them an endless diversity of opinion." These words are strong and salutary. To bundle Christianity up with religions that are admitted to be false, and cast it out as rubbish with them without examination, is not a dictate of reason in a normal condition. It is as if an assayer should act as follows: Fifty specimens of ore, taken from as many different localities, and all claiming to possess precious metal, are brought to him to be tested. He applies the test to forty-nine of them and finds them worthless, and then refuses to test the fiftieth one and throws it away as without value, because the forty-nine have



been found to be worthless. The fiftieth one might prove upon examination to be of great value.

There are those who are willing to examine the claims of the Christian religion, and they make a show of following reason; but they are dominated by a desire to find it false. Men of this disposition, however strong their intellects, and however profound their learning, can not reason coolly and impartially, and their conclusions are very apt to be distorted and misshapen. It may be that their desire to find Christianity false is produced by the fact that their lives are controlled by passions which are under the ban of the Christian religion. If they find that this religion is from God, they will find themselves under the disapproval and condemnation of Him, and hence they lean towards their desires all the time, and their conclusion is tinctured by their passions. Conspicuous examples of this are found in such men as Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, whose lives were blackened by the grossest immorality, and their reason, as brought to bear on religion, was warped and vitiated, and thus these exceptions are explained.

There are disbelievers who claim to be governed by reason, and really think they are thus governed, but they abuse their reason by examining but one side of the question. They only read and study arguments that are constructed with the view of overturning the religion of Christ. They do not read the Bible, nor do they study arguments that have been made in defense of it. All they know about the Book is what they have learned from its enemies, and this is generally a false knowledge received through misrepresentation and misinterpretation. A skeptic of more than ordinary intelligence admitted to me

that about all he knew about the Bible he had gotten from books that had been written against it, such as skeptics usually read with relish. They never inquire whether the arguments they read have ever been answered, nor look into what has been said on the other side. It is perfectly manifest that reason will go wrong under such circumstances.

There are still others whose reason is obscured and perverted by metaphysical speculation, and who do their reasoning in the fog of profound mysticism, and hence reach false conclusions. Of these, Professor Alexander speaks as follows: "They are the cold, speculative, subtle skeptics who involve themselves in a thick mist of metaphysics, attack first principles, and confound their readers with paradoxes. The number of those who belong to this class is perhaps not large, but they are formidable; for while the other enemies of the truth scarcely make a show of reason, these philosophers are experienced in all the intricacies of a refined logic; so that error in their hands is made to appear in the guise of truth. Should we yield ourselves to the sophistry of these men, they will persuade us to doubt, not only the truth of revelation, but of our senses and of our very existence. If it be inquired how they contrive to spread such a coloring of skepticism over every subject, the answer is, by artfully assuming false principles as the premises of their reasoning; by reasoning sophistically on correct principles; by dextrous use of ambiguous terms; by pushing their inquiries beyond the limits of human knowledge, and by calling in question the first principles of all knowledge. It is not easy to conjecture what their motive is; most probably it is vanity. They are ambitious of appear-

ing more profound and acute than other men, and distinction is not so readily obtained in the common course as by flying off in an eccentric orbit. It can not be any sincere regard for truth which influences them, for, upon their principles, truth and reason are equally worthless. They pull down everything, but build up nothing. Truth has no greater enemies in the world than this Pyrrhonic sect; and it is to be lamented that sometimes ingenious young men are caught in the wiles of their sophistry, and are led so far into the labyrinth of their errors that they are never able to extricate themselves, and all their fair prospects of virtue and usefulness are obscured forever."

Enough ground has now been traversed to explain the irregularities and eccentricities in the movements of reason, and account for the fact that some minds reach the conclusion that Christianity is not true. But for these extraneous influences all investigating minds would move directly to the same point, and be as uniform in their results as the law of gravitation. And this is what might be expected if God is the author of both human reason and the Christian religion. On this hypothesis the adaptation of revelation to reason may be supposed to be as perfect as the adaptation of light to the eye, or air to the lungs.

I close this lecture with a reference to two conspicuous examples of the triumph of reason over prejudice and predilection. Lord Littleton and his friend Gilbert West were pronounced skeptics, and withal men of brilliant intellects and fine literary culture. They entered into an agreement that each would write an essay to disprove the Christian religion, Littleton taking for his subject the life and

epistles of the apostle Paul, and West selecting for his topic the resurrection of Christ. They were honest enough to give themselves to a careful and candid study of their respective topics, and the result was that they became convinced of the truth of Christianity, and went to building up that which they meant to tear down. Their reason, though disturbed for awhile by interfering factors, had inherent force and vitality enough to get back into its proper orbit, and move on to the correct goal.

Our final, and, as I believe, infallible, conclusion is that the *province of the human mind in religion is to investigate, perceive, accept and enjoy truth.*

# THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

## *A LECTURE*

**T**HIS topic suggests two of the greatest, grandest and most important subjects for consideration that can engage the attention of the human mind, and they should be approached with reverence, humility and candor. In this lecture we are to study the relation between the Bible and science, in an attempt to discover whether that relation is one of harmony or conflict. If it should appear that there is harmony between the two, we may conclude that both are true and reliable; but, if we should discover that they conflict with each other, we shall be obliged to conclude that one or the other is wrong and unreliable. It is very important that we get before us the exact issue involved in the investigation, for, if we do not, we are liable to go far afield, and reach no logical conclusion. We are not to compare interpretations that men have put upon the Bible with mere scientific theories, for here contradiction can easily be found. We are to compare Bible statements with scientific facts—facts that have been established beyond any peradventure, and are generally accepted in the scientific world. Many scientific theories have been advanced, and afterwards abandoned, to give place to others doomed to be overtaken by the same fate. Here is room for all kinds of speculation and guesswork, presenting an arena for interesting, but not edifying, scientific gymnastics.



Sir J. W. Dawson, that pastmaster in geological science, in his "The Story of the Earth and Man," makes some judicious observations that are well worthy of a place in this connection. Speaking of mere theorists in science, this distinguished author says: "Geology as a science is at present in a peculiar and somewhat exceptional state. Under the influence of a few men of commanding genius belonging to the generation now passing away, it has made so gigantic conquests that its armies have broken up into bands of specialists, little better than scientific banditti, liable to be beaten in detail, and prone to commit outrages on common sense and good taste, which bring their otherwise good cause into disrepute. . . . In the more advanced walks of scientific research, they are to some extent neutralized by that free discussion which true science always fosters; though even here they sometimes vexatiously arrest the progress of truth, or open floodgates of error which it may require much labor to close. But in public lectures and popular publications they run riot, and are stimulated by the mistaken opposition of narrow-minded good men, by the love of the new and sensational, and by the rivalry of men struggling for place and position. To launch a clever and startling fallacy which will float for a week and stir up a hard fight, seems almost as great a triumph as the discovery of an important fact or law; and the honest student is distracted with the multitude of doctrines, and hustled aside by the crowd of ambitious groundlings." These timely words should admonish readers and students that not every theory in science that may be advanced is to be accepted as true, and not to reject the Bible because some scientific theory may seem to contradict

the Bible. "Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good."

A few years ago (not so much now) a great deal was said about an alleged conflict between the Bible and science, and this clamor was so persistent and emphatic that it carried many people off their feet, and led them to seriously doubt or positively reject the Bible as an inspired and reliable Book. Even some level-headed scientists were borne away on this wave of skepticism, and brushed the Bible aside as unworthy of their attention. Professor Romanes, a distinguished English biologist, started out in his scientific work upon the assumption, to use his own language, that "Christianity is played out," and set sail upon the foggy sea of agnosticism. It is gratifying to know that sober second thought arrested him and caused him to investigate the matter carefully from a scientific standpoint, and his investigation cured him of his skepticism, and convinced him that Christianity is a revealed and true religion. I would advise people who are interested in this line of study to procure and read his "Thoughts on Religion," edited after his death by Canon Gore. The Bible does not care to enter into controversy with mere theorists in science, nor submit its claims to the arbitrament of scientific theories. But it courts comparison with well-grounded scientific facts, and is willing to stand the test of the most scrutinizing examination from this viewpoint.

I have said that the Bible is not a scientific textbook, and that is true; but now and then it makes a strike in a scientific direction, and whenever it does that, its range is point-blank. It will be interesting and instructive to notice a few instances of this fact.

In Isa. 40:22 the following language is applied to Jehovah: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." This may refer either to the globular form of the earth, or to the circular form of its orbit, or possibly to both; but whether to the one or the other, or to both, it was spoken a long time before science found out that the earth has any circle of any kind. It was supposed to be flat and stationary. In Job 26:7 we read as follows: "He stretcheth out the north over empty space, and hangeth the earth on nothing." It was a puzzle to the ancients as to the support of the earth in space, and some amusing and ridiculous theories were advanced to account for this phenomenon; but it remained for a man of God to unravel the matter, and declare that God "hangeth the earth on nothing." When science discovered the truth in the case, it called it gravitation, but I am not so sure but that Job's name for it is about as good as the name that science applies to it, for what is gravitation? It is simply the name of a phenomenon that we know but little about. Men sometimes think that they do wonders when they discover a phenomenon in nature and name it, even though they give no explanation of it. Gravitation is about as near nothing as can be imagined—it has neither length, breadth nor thickness. Job knew that the earth has no material support in the heavens, and hence he said that it hangs "on nothing." In the ninetieth Psalm, which scholars attribute to Moses, the writer says: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." We have here a beautiful figurative presentation of the

origin of mountains, the figure being based on the fact of the birth of a child. The mountains are represented as coming forth or being born out of the womb of the earth, and later science came along and confirmed this view of the matter. It was noticed that all great ranges of mountains run about parallel with seacoasts. It was also observed that the abrupt face of a mountain range looks seaward, while the gradual slope runs back into the interior. It was likewise discovered that the base and height of mountains are proportionate to the size of the ocean along whose coast the range runs. In view of these facts the scientific mind concluded that oceans had something to do with the formation of mountains, and the following theory was wrought out, and is now generally accepted as correct: When the earth began to emerge from the waters that originally completely enveloped it, and the waters began to collect in given localities, oceans by and by became too heavy for the strength of the crust of the earth along their coasts, and consequently the crust broke and bulged up and formed ridges which were cut up into peaks by running streams. Thus the Rockies were formed on the western border of the American continent by the Pacific Ocean, and the Appalachians on the eastern coast by the Atlantic; and upon these considerations may be based the following problem in compound proportion: As the Rockies are to the Pacific Ocean, so are the Appalachians to the Atlantic. Thus we see that while the Bible is not a text-book on science, yet it has pioneered the way for modern science, and is sufficiently scientific to indicate that it is from God.

In the days when the allegation was most stoutly and confidently made that science and the Bible do



not agree in important particulars, skeptical scientists made their attack upon the Scriptures largely from the standpoint of geological science. They said that according to the Bible the earth was created only about six thousand years ago, while, according to well-established facts in science, it has been in existence for millions of years, or even decades. This is to contrast what men have said about the Bible with scientific facts, and the Bible is not to be held responsible for what men have said about it. Scores of systems of chronology have been wrought out by men, and there is a margin of twenty thousand years between the extremes. And these different and conflicting systems of chronology all claim to be based on Bible data, and this suggests that the Bible makes out no system of chronology for itself. It dates some of the events that it records, but it does not attempt to give the dates of all the transactions that it records, and hence it does not furnish data for a chronological system. It is nowhere said in the Bible that the earth was created six thousand years ago, or any other definite number of years ago. Here is what the Bible says for itself on the subject of creation: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That statement is absolutely without date, and no odds how far back into the dim and distant past science may carry the drama of creation, the Bible makes no resistance—it is still the "beginning." It will aid us in our investigation to parallel this first statement in Genesis with the first verse in the Gospel of John, which reads thus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There is not the semblance of a suggestion here as to date. It was simply "in the begin-



ning." Just so as to the passage in Genesis. God created the heaven and the earth "in the beginning," and there is no conflict between this statement and any fact of science.

"And the earth was without form and void." I prefer the rendering of the Common Version here, because it is truer to the Hebrew, and also to the facts of science. Sir J. W. Dawson, who was a fine Hebrew scholar as well as a great geologist, studied the first chapter of Genesis carefully, and gave an excellent translation of it from the standpoint of scholarship and science. His rendering of the statement now before us is as follows, "And the earth was formless and empty," and this is practically the same as the rendering of the Common Version. I desire to emphasize the declaration that when the earth was created it was without form, or formless. This statement is well calculated to arrest the attention of a careful student, and put his wits to work to solve the problem of the formlessness of the earth when it was created. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive of any body of matter which exists independently of all other bodies of matter, as being without form. Oceans have form, lakes have form, continents have form, trees have form, stars have form—everything that has independent existence necessarily has form. And yet there is the Bible statement that the "earth was without form." Is that in conflict with the facts just enumerated? Let us see.

Science teaches that originally all the matter from which our universe, the solar system, was made, was in a gaseous condition on account of an intense degree of heat. This theory is known as the nebular hypoth-

esis, and it is generally accepted among scientists as the working basis for astronomical science. The constituent matter of the earth was in that conglomerate mass, but, having no independent existence, it had neither form nor function as a planet—it was “without form and void.” The statement is strictly scientific, and shows that the writer was far in advance of his age in scientific knowledge. This mass of nebulous matter in some way was set to revolving on its axis, and as a result of this motion it bulged out around its equator and flattened at its poles. In process of time, and under the process of cooling, the particles of matter on the outer edge of the bulge became fixed, and no longer yielded to either centripetal or centrifugal force—they neither descended toward the center of the mass under the influence of centripetal force, nor went off at a tangent in obedience to centrifugal force, but remained stationary. But the mass of matter was cooling, and consequently contracting, and these processes would by and by bring about a separation between the stationary particles and the general mass, and leave a ring around the contracting body. This ring continues to revolve as a ring, till it finally breaks and runs together and forms a globe, and in running together it receives the rotary motion and revolves upon its axis, and the track that it occupied as a ring becomes its orbit in which it revolves around the mass from which it was detached.

This was the beginning of the manufacture of the planets of the solar system, and the first one to be thrown off, according to the present state of astronomical knowledge, was Neptune, which threw off a satellite or two. After that came Uranus, which

was followed by Saturn, and next came great Jupiter, and then Mars in war paint—all in regular order. After Mars came the earth, and when it was thus detached and given separate existence it assumed both form and function. Perhaps I can make my meaning a little clearer by means of an illustration. The desk upon which I am writing was once a part of a tree, and while it remained so it had neither form nor function as a desk, although its material existed, and the tree contained the desk. By and by the tree was felled, taken to the mill and sawed into lumber. A part of the lumber went into the hands of a mechanic who shaped it into a desk and thus gave it form and function as a desk. So it was with the earth. When it was created as a part of the general mass of matter it was “without form and void,” but when it was separated and given separate existence it was otherwise. Thus we discover a beautiful harmony between the statement of the Bible and the facts of science in regard to the creation of the earth

“And darkness was upon the face of the deep.” This is a most significant asseveration, and deserves particular attention. Its meaning turns upon the signification that we attach to the term “deep.” This word is commonly taken to refer to some body of water on the surface of the earth, but I am constrained to believe that this is a mistake. I do not mean to say or imply that it does not have that signification in the Scriptures, for it frequently has. But it sometimes has a different meaning, and hence that is not necessarily its meaning in the declaration now under inspection. In Gen. 7:11, 12 we read as follows: “In the sixth hundredth year of Noah’s life,

in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." In Gen. 8:2 we find the following language: "The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained." It appears from the first of these quotations that the rain resulted from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the opening of the windows of heaven, and the second passage indicates that the cessation of the rain was consequent upon the stopping of the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven. Prov. 3:20 reads thus: "By his knowledge the depths [deeps] are broken up, and the skies drop down the dew." Here the descent of dew from the skies is represented as resulting from the breaking up of the deeps. In all these passages "deep" seems to refer to the great deep of space by which the earth is surrounded, and when it is said that "darkness was upon the face of the deep" the idea appears to be that darkness pervaded space, and there was no light anywhere. That condition would necessarily characterize space occupied by matter in a gaseous condition. Take a mass of iron and make it red hot, and it will illuminate a portion of surrounding space. Raise it to white heat, and its illuminating power is increased. Melt it, and it still gives light. Vaporize it, and it is still somewhat luminous. But when it is thrown into the gaseous condition it has no illuminating power, and darkness fills the surrounding space—darkness is "upon the face of the deep." Here, again, the Bible and science are in perfect agreement.



“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” This is said to have occurred on the first of the creative days, and here skeptical scientists join issue with the Bible, and say that there is contradiction between the statement that light began on the first day, and the declaration that the “great light” (the sun) to rule the day was made on the fourth day. All natural light, it was said, is from the sun, and how could there be light four days before there was any sun to make it? This was thought to be a poser for the friends of the Bible, and the changes were rung upon it with the greatest confidence and gusto. But let us look at the matter calmly and in the light of scientific facts. Returning to the nebular hypothesis; and noting what would naturally occur in the process of cooling and condensation, we find that this mass of nebulous matter, upon emerging from the gaseous condition into the vaporous state, becomes incandescent or self-luminous; and this would necessarily occur before the system was completed and the sun placed in the heavens as the light-bearer, and hence it appears that the alleged contradiction does not exist, and the Bible is found to be in harmony with science again. The Bible says that there was light before there was a sun, and by and by science comes along and confirms the statement. And this throws light upon language used by Paul in 2 Cor. 4: 6, where he makes this declaration: “Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness.” How beautifully that harmonizes with the scientific fact just adverted to. When God said, “Let there be light,” His behest was obeyed, and light shone out of the darkness, and God called the light day.



It has been said that, according to the Bible account of creation, the whole process was begun and completed in six ordinary days, whereas science shows that it took ages upon ages for the earth to reach its present condition, and therefore there is irreconcilable conflict between the two. This conclusion is based upon the unwarrantable assumption that the days of creation were solar days of the length of twenty-four hours each. It is remarkable how large a place assumptions occupy in the reasoning of skeptical scientists. There is no proof that "day" in the Bible account of creation means a period of twenty-four hours, or any other definite number of hours, and inferences that appear to flow from facts contained in the Mosaic story militate against that idea. In studying any subject, all the known facts must be taken into consideration before a just conclusion can properly be formulated, and the omission of a single fact may vitiate the whole process of reasoning. The fact that, according to the Mosaic account of creation, the sun did not appear in the heavens as the light-bearer till the fourth day, is an important factor in this investigation. The first day was begun and finished, the second day was begun and finished, the third day was begun and finished, and the fourth day was begun, all before the sun was appointed to rule day and night, and therefore those days were not solar days, or days resulting from the earth's relation to the sun. If this reasoning is not sound, I am utterly unable to discover its defects. If there was no sun to cause those days, of course they were not sun-made days, or days of twenty-four hours each.

There is another consideration that greatly strengthens this contention. On a certain occasion

the Saviour healed a cripple on the sabbath day, and his enemies made it the occasion of accusing Him of breaking the sabbath. In vindicating Himself, the Master said: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." What bearing has this remarkable statement upon the question at issue between the Lord and His accusers? In what way does it justify Jesus in doing cures on the sabbath? Now listen: It was purely a work of benevolence that Jesus had done on the Jewish sabbath, and that kind of work Jehovah had been doing on His sabbath from the time of its institution till the time when the Master healed the cripple at the pool of Bethesda. God's sabbath began at the close of the drama of creation, and had not ended when Jesus was on earth, and that sabbath was the seventh of the days mentioned in connection with the work of creation, and on that day Jehovah had been doing such works of benevolence as causing day and night, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, spring and autumn, the early and latter rain, etc., and Jesus simply did on the Jewish sabbath a work similar to the works that His Father had been doing on His sabbath all the time. This shows that the sabbath which the Lord sanctified and set apart as His day of rest was still running when Jesus was on earth, and, for anything that we know to the contrary, it is running yet. Here, then, are five of the seven days mentioned in connection with the work of creation that were not solar days, and this indicates that Moses was dealing with days of that character. His days were indefinite periods of time, each one of sufficient duration to allow ample time for the work assigned to it in the first chapter of Genesis.

That this is not an unnatural and forced interpretation of the word "day," as employed in the Bible, becomes evident upon an examination of its use in the inspired volume. The term is used about fourteen hundred times in the sacred Scriptures, and with by no means a fixed and uniform signification, and is quite frequently employed to indicate an indefinite period of time. "Unto this day" is an expression that occurs again and again in the inspired writings, and it does not refer to any particular day. It means "unto this time." "The day of trouble" is another phrase that inspired penmen used to indicate an indefinite period of time, as the following instances of its use clearly show: "The Lord heareth thee in the day of trouble;" "And call upon me in the day of trouble;" "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;" "This day is a day of trouble;" "For in the day of trouble they shall be against thee round about;" "For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, from the Lord, the Lord of hosts, in the valley of vision;" "The time is come, the day of trouble is near;" "That I might rest in the day of trouble."

It is perfectly manifest that "day" as used in the foregoing passages simply means a period of time without fixed limits, and in one of the passages "time" and "day of trouble" are used interchangeably. And it is equally obvious that in many other passages the term is used in the same indefinite way. Witness the following: "And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt;" "Nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them;" "Also in the day of your

gladness;" "Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day;" "For the day of their calamity is at hand;" "And thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day;" "Shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day;" "They that come after shall be astonished at his day!" "His goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath;" "They came upon me in the day of my calamity;" "In the day of prosperity be joyful;" "For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian;" "And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far?" "But the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and desperate sorrow;" "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness;" "Yea, since the day was, I am he;" "In the day of salvation have I helped thee;" "For the day is a day of the Lord, the Lord of hosts, a day of vengeance;" "Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven;" "I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city;" "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day;" "That ye may be unreprouable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "In the day of salvation have I succored thee;" "That I may rejoice in the day of Christ;" "As that the day of Christ is at hand;" "But let us who are of the day be sober;" "In the day of temptation in the wilderness."

Numerous other passages could be adduced to the same effect if it were at all necessary. Those already

cited show conclusively that the term "day" is used in the word of God, many, many times, to indicate time without specific limitations, and its meaning in any given case is to be determined by the context and the subject under consideration. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that this word could hardly have been used in the Bible account of creation to indicate a day of twenty-four hours, or a period of time marked off by one revolution of the earth on its axis. It is obviously used there to indicate an indefinite length of time, and every period may have been millions of years in length, so far as anything to the contrary is said in the Bible. Hence those days make room for all the time that may have been necessary for the accomplishment of the work involved in the drama of creation, and consequently there is no conflict between the facts of geological science and the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject of creation. From this point of view he who believes the Bible to be an inspired Book, and reliable in all its statements, has no occasion to become alarmed as to the foundation of his faith, for that foundation is as firm as the everlasting hills, and can stand the test of the severest scrutiny. The Book that our God has given us to guide our footsteps in the right way has passed through many trials and conflicts, and out of them all it has come with flying colors, uttering its voice of cheer and encouragement, and pointing the children of God to the heights of eternal glory. The Bible and true science are both from God, and while they move upon different planes, yet they occasionally touch each other, and whenever they do, it is in perfect harmony and agreement, and there is no discord in their pronouncements.



When there is no danger of hurtful effects the Bible accommodates itself to popular conceptions of things, and speaks of them from the standpoint of appearances. We do this when we speak of the rising and setting of the sun, although we know that that is only an appearance, and not a fact, and nobody is misled or injured thereby. There was a time when the wisest men in the world thought the earth to be flat and have corners, and Bible writers accommodated their messages to that conception, and no one suffered injury therefrom. But if those writers had spoken from the viewpoint of modern science, the people would have rejected their messages, and suffered incalculable harm in so doing. Nothing was lost by addressing the people from their own point of view, but much gained, and our God is wise enough to adapt His messages to the children of men, to existing conditions, and thereby secure desirable results. But, as already pointed out, an inspired man of God made it known that he was aware that the earth is spherical and not flat, and this increases our confidence in the infallibility of the Book that we accept as from God, and rely upon to lead us in the way of truth and righteousness. We can, with the utmost assurance, receive it as a "lamp to our feet, and a light to our path," and walk in the light without any fear of stumbling.

A few excerpts from the writings of some of the world's greatest men will furnish a fitting close for this lecture. Sir Isaac Newton bears this testimony to the trustworthiness of the Bible: "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatever." This sweeping statement from such a source is well calculated to arrest the

attention of every thoughtful mind, and add strength to our faith in the Bible as a true and reliable Book. Sir John Herschel, a distinguished scientist, gives utterance to the following ringing declaration concerning the Book of life: "All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the sacred Scriptures." These words are freighted with wisdom and knowledge, and are worthy of a place upon the tablet of human memory. That great American geologist, Prof. James D. Dana, of Yale University, speaks forth the following words of truth and soberness: "By proving the record true, science pronounces it divine; for who could have correctly narrated the secrets of eternity but God Himself? The grand old Book still stands, and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the sacred Word."

The foregoing words of wisdom are especially commended to the consideration of young men who are disposed to take up with the current of skeptical thought, and turn the Bible down as an effete and worthless Book that should be relegated to the junk-heap of useless rubbish. The pronouncement of a Herschel is of more weight and value than all the skeptical productions that are teeming from the modern printing-press, while the sober judgment of a Dana ought to outweigh, and really does outweigh, the frequent assertions of unbelieving, would-be scientists in all the world. As the distinguished Yale professor turned the leaves of "this old earth" in the study of geology, his favorite science, he found confirmatory evidence of the truthfulness of "the sacred Word" on almost every page, and he who accepts the Bible

as correct in all of its teaching, and as containing revelations of divine truth, can hold up his head in the presence of all the facts of science, and rejoice in the hope of eternal life that the gospel of the grace of God plants in his soul. No believer in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures need feel that he belongs to an insignificant company of men who are antagonized by the world's leaders of thought. A short time before his death, W. E. Gladstone, England's "grand old man," made use of language like this: "I have been associated in public life with sixty-five of the world's greatest men, and sixty of them were devout believers in the inspiration of the Bible." And this expresses about the true proportion between believers and unbelievers among the world's greatest thinkers. Cling to your Bible, and allow nothing to dim your faith in its reliability. It will give you help in life and consolation in death.

# THE BIBLE AND EVOLUTION

## *A LECTURE*

**I**T is the firm opinion of your speaker that the Bible account of the origin of man is in direct conflict with the theory of evolution, and as this theory has occupied a large share of the attention of educated people for a good many years, being regarded by some as fully established in the world of science, it seems to be opportune and highly expedient to examine, with care, patience and candor, the grounds upon which its claims are founded. The reason for the statement that there is conflict between the Bible and evolution as to the origin of man is as follows: According to evolution, life took its rise in some unknown way in the vegetable kingdom, and by "continuous and progressive change, according to certain laws, and by means of resident forces," lifted itself from lower to higher organic forms, and then by transmutation the highest vegetable form produced the lowest animal type. From this point the process went on in the animal kingdom, each lower form transmuting itself into the next higher, till finally the highest possible form was reached in man. According to this theory, the male and female marched along through the mazes and labyrinths of this process, species piling themselves upon one another, till by and by the human species appeared in the simultaneous production of a male and a female. According to the Bible account of this interesting phenomenon, a man

was made—a complete, full-grown man—before there was a woman, and afterwards a woman was built up of material taken from the man's side; and thus the first human pair came into existence without the ordinary processes of generation. That there is irreconcilable and irrepressible conflict between these two theories is obvious to common intelligence—they can not both be true, and hence war must be waged between them till one of them goes down in irretrievable defeat.

From this point onward our investigation will have reference to evolution as a question in science, and it may as well be stated here that its standing in the world of scientific thought is by no means as good as it was a quarter of a century ago. The tide that had been flooding the coast of the continent of scientific speculation for so many years, sweeping multitudes of good thinkers off their feet, began to recede about that time, and sober second thought began to assert itself; and for several years some of the former advocates of the evolutionary hypothesis have been saying that its claims are not well founded. Perhaps Professor Haeckel may be justly regarded as the greatest advocate of the theory of evolution after Darwin, and he, in the language of another (Patterson, p. 7), “complains bitterly of the opposition of many of the scientists of Europe, and that many once with him have deserted him.”

The whole system rests upon two stupendous assumptions. It assumes the existence of matter and of life to begin with. Materialistic or atheistic evolution assumes the eternity of matter, and spontaneous generation to account for the beginning of life. A little attention to these assumptions is in order here.



Science, as expounded by that great astronomer, the lamented Professor Proctor, of England, teaches that matter is steadily and surely marching on to a condition of fixity, beyond which it will undergo no further change or modification. Now, it is axiomatic that, if matter is now on such a march, there must have been a time when it started, and there will come a time when it will stop. But this is wholly inconsistent with the proposition that matter is eternal. Matter must have started on this march under the operation of its own inherent laws, and has not yet had time to complete the cycle of its changes, and therefore it can not be eternal. Herschel says that the smallest particles of matter bear the marks of manufactured articles, and from this point of view it does not appear to be eternal—there must have been a time when it was manufactured.

But let us generously give evolution some matter to begin with. Then comes the no less perplexing problem of the origin of life. Science teaches to a certainty that there was a time in the history of this earth when it carried no life of any kind. The very conditions necessary to life were absent. Heat was immensely intense. Subject a piece of the brood-comb of honey-bees to a comparatively low degree of heat, and you can evolve no living thing from it. How did life get its start? Speaking of the origin of our mental powers, Mr. Darwin says: "In what manner the mental powers were first developed in the lowest organisms is as hopeless an inquiry as how life itself first originated." Professor Winchell, himself an enthusiastic evolutionist, says: "Whence this life originated science is unable to declare." Here materialistic evolution is brought face to face with a difficulty that

seriously threatens its very existence, and, in attempting to escape, it has to run its barque upon the reefs of spontaneous generation.

This difficulty has risen to perplex the champions of the theory of evolution throughout its entire history, and Professor Tyndall makes the following effort to solve it: "In the exercise of our scientific imagination we may consider that in a whiff of cosmical vapor there is the promise and potency of all future life." But the idea of spontaneous generation is now quite generally discredited and given up, although Prof. Oscar Schmidt, of Strasburg, still contends for the possibility of it, and makes this alleged possibility the foundation of the evolution for which he contends. Regarding this matter Pasteur says: "There is not one circumstance known at the present day which justifies the assertion that microscopic organisms come into the world without germs or without parents like themselves. Those who claim the contrary have been the dupes of illusions and ill-conducted experiments which they know not how either to perceive or avoid. Spontaneous generation is a chimera." The distinguished German chemist, Professor Virchow, says: "Whoever recalls to mind the lamentable failures of all the attempts made very recently to discover a decided support for the *generatio equivoca* in the lower forms of transition from the inorganic to the organic world, will find it doubly serious to demand that this theory, so utterly discredited, should be in any way accepted as the basis of all our views of life." And even Professor Tyndall, having suppressed his "scientific imagination," and come down out of his "whiff of cosmical vapor" upon the *terra firma* of scientific fact, says: "I affirm that no shred of trustworthy experi-

mental evidence exists to prove that life, in our day, has ever appeared independently of antecedent life." Spontaneous generation has gone the way of all other fads in science, and with it the materialistic theory of evolution.

But the theistic school of evolutionists must now receive attention. These gentlemen, to avoid the rock upon which their atheistic brethren ran their craft, grant the existence of an intelligent First Cause to create matter and begin life in the world. They have a little piece of living protoplasm to start with. Now, gentlemen, go to work with your evolutionary machinery, and evolve from your germ cell all those types of life, high and low, beautiful and homely, vegetable and animal, intellectual and moral, that confront us in the realm of nature. Mr. Darwin presses the button as follows: "In this piece of living protoplasm was an inherent tendency to vary; that is, to produce offspring slightly different from itself." As to the cause of variation the great naturalist confesses ignorance, and hence there is an *X* factor in the very foundation of the superstructure. This offspring and these unaccountable variations invoke the laws of a "struggle for existence" and "natural selection," or, as Mr. Spencer puts it, "the survival of the fittest." Some of the variations are advantageous to the individuals possessing them, and in the struggle for existence the accidentally favored ones survive, and transmit their advantages to their offspring, while the accidentally neglected ones perish and leave no posterity. Thus there is a constant uplift in the progress of life.

Mr. Darwin illustrates his theory by applying it to the giraffe, on the assumption that this animal

formerly had low shoulders and a short neck, like other hoofed quadrupeds. There came a time when food was insufficient to sustain all giraffes, and there was a struggle among them for existence. On account of variation some individuals had necks a trifle longer and shoulders a little higher than the rest, by reason of which they could reach higher and procure food from limbs that the others could not reach. Thus the favored ones survived and transmitted their advantages to the next generation, when the same thing occurred; and thus the process went on till the present type of giraffe, with its elevated shoulders and elongated neck, appeared.

But Mr. Darwin sees a difficulty in this illustration, which he states as follows: "Why, in other quarters of the world, various animals belonging to the same order have not acquired either an elongated neck or a proboscis, can not be distinctly answered; but it is as unreasonable to expect a distinct answer to such a question as why some event in the history of mankind did not occur in one country while it did in another." That is, you might as well ask why the American Revolution did not occur in France as to ask why a natural phenomenon did not occur in one country while it did in another! Distinct questions requiring distinct answers are a terror to evolutionists. Pressed, however, by this difficulty, Mr. Darwin assigns some vague reasons with which he is manifestly not satisfied, and adds: "Except by assigning such general and vague reasons, we can not explain why, in many quarters of the world, hoofed quadrupeds have not acquired much elongated necks, or other means of browsing on higher branches of trees." Here is an amusing note of doubt and misgiving.



If I may be permitted, I would suggest that the distinguished savant first shifts the ground of the difficulty, and then dodges it. He is not required to tell why other quadrupeds in other parts of the world did not acquire long necks like the giraffe. It is conceivable that the alleged circumstances might have occurred in one country and not in another, and this would be a sufficient explanation. This is not the real difficulty. Why did not other hoofed quadrupeds in the same country and in the same environment acquire elongated necks? Here is the difficulty that Darwinism is called upon to explain. We need not, nay, we must not, leave Ethiopia, where the giraffe is found in a state of nature, to seek a solution of this difficulty. There we find the little zebra living alongside the giraffe. Now, if there came circumstances in that country that caused a struggle for existence, which, through natural selection, put a long neck and elevated shoulders on the giraffe, why did it not do the same for the zebra that browsed by his side? And if short-necked and low-shouldered giraffes perished on account of a lack of adaptation to the environment, how did the zebra happen to survive? But there is another difficulty in the way of Darwinism in this illustration. The idea that the giraffe ever underwent such a transformation is purely imaginary. There is no evidence among living or fossil giraffes that this animal ever had a shorter neck than the living specimen of our day. Of course such a transformation would have been very gradual, and there would have been innumerable intermediate links between the original form of the beast and the type existing at the present time. But not one of these intermediate links that the supposition demands has



ever been discovered, and the theory is left standing on thin air instead of solid facts; and as it is here, so it is all along the line of the assumptions upon which the claims of evolution rest. Where facts are lacking, assumptions are made to fill up the gap, and the evolutionist goes on his way rejoicing in his dream.

But to return to our protoplasm: We want to inspect the process of evolution in the formation of some highly specialized organ. Let us give attention to Professor Tyndall on the formation of the eye. His description of this evolution is as follows:

“The senses are nascent, the basis of all of them being that simple tactual sense which the sage Democrites recognized twenty-three hundred years ago as their common progenitor. The action of light in the first instance appears to be a mere disturbance of the chemical processes in the animal organism, similar to that which occurs in the leaves of plants. By degrees the action becomes localized in a few pigment cells more sensitive to light than the surrounding tissues. The eye is here incipient. At first it is merely capable of revealing differences of light and shade produced by bodies near at hand. Followed, as the interception of light is in almost all cases, by the contact of the closely adjacent opaque body, sight in this condition becomes a kind of anticipatory touch. The adjustment continues; a slight bulging out of the epidermis over the pigment granules supervenes. A lens is incipient, and, through the operation of infinite adjustments, at length reaches the perfection that it displays in the hawk or eagle.”

A purer piece of fiction than this never flowed from the tongue or pen of man. There is not a

scientific fact within human knowledge to mark the various stages of the process here described, or to indicate that any such process ever took place. This fully justifies Professor Drummond, though an evolutionist himself, in referring to this theory as "the last romance of science, the most daring it has ever tried to pen." This thing of romancing in the field of scientific investigation is indeed a bold and daring matter, interesting though it may be as an intellectual exercise. The absurdity—apparent, at least—of the formation of an eye by the alleged process of evolution, led Mr. Darwin to express himself as follows: "To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberrations, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree. . . . To arrive at a just conclusion regarding the formation of the eye, with all its marvelous, yet not absolutely perfect, characters, it is indispensable that the reason should conquer the imagination; but I have felt the difficulty far too keenly to be surprised at others hesitating to extend the principle of natural selection to so startling a length."

But the principle must be extended to so "startling a length" or wholly abandoned. If it is a true principle, it not only originated, developed and perfected the eye, but every other organ of the most highly organized body. And if the eye was thus developed by evolution, paleontology ought to show that the eye of some animal has undergone the modifications implied in the theory. Does any known fact indicate such modifications? Was the eye of any living animal

ever less perfect in its remotest ancestry than it is now? It is true, as Mr. Darwin suggests, that our reason should conquer our imagination; but, in that event, what becomes of Professor Tyndall's "mere disturbance of the chemical process in the animal organism," "the localization of this disturbance in a few pigment cells," the "formation of an incipient eye," the "slight bulging out of the epidermis over the pigment granules," and the "formation of an incipient lens to be perfected through the operation of infinite adjustments"? If we are to be governed by reason operating on the ground of fact and experiment, the ground of true science, these speculations must all be relegated to the region of the Professor's "scientific imagination," and denied admittance to the firm and high ground of scientific belief.

Let us now examine some facts in the case. The eye can be traced about as far back in geological history as animal life itself; whereas, if it was originated and developed according to the theory of evolution, there would have been indefinite ages during which there could have been nothing but eyeless creatures. The trilobite existed in the primordial seas in early Paleozoic time, and in its various species continued on down into the coal period. This creature was well organized and specialized—notably so as to its eye. It lived alongside of the lower forms of the same period, without giving the least hint that it was derived from them. It points back to no ancestry lower than itself, nor does it point forward to a posterity higher than itself. It came from nothing lower, and it produced nothing higher, though it must have lived millions of years. Concerning the eye of this animal, Professor Dawson says:

“The eyes of the trilobite of the old Silurian rocks are fitted for the same condition with respect to light with those of existing animals of the same class.” This primitive creature from the depths of remote geological antiquity shows no marks of an incipient eye to be perfected by the imaginary process described by Professor Tyndall, or by any other process. Speaking within the facts, it began life with an eye as perfect as that of animals of the same class at the present time. A distinguished Bohemian scientist made the study of this little creature a specialty, and his conclusions are summed up by Professor Dawson as follows: “Barrande, the great Bohemian paleontologist, has recently, in an elaborate memoir on the trilobites, traced these and other points through all their structures, and their whole succession in geological time, thereby elaborating a most powerful inductive argument against the theory of evolution, and concluding that, so far from the history of these creatures proving such a theory, it seems as if expressly contrived to exclude its possibility.”

But let us return to the theory of resident forces lifting life, both vegetable and animal, from lower to higher planes by the transmutation of species. The following facts are interesting and significant in this connection: Early in the last century a French gardener discovered in a bed of acacia a sprig without thorns. He propagated that variety from cuttings, and it is said that all the thornless acacias in the world came from that one sprig. But these acacias produce seed, and to this day every seed that is allowed to germinate produces an acacia with thorns. “The domesticated hog,” says Dawson, “differs in many characters from the wild boar. In South Amer-



ica and the West Indies it has returned in three centuries or less to its original form." These and many similar facts show that there is present and active in nature a tendency to revert to primary conditions, instead of reaching upward to higher forms.

Several years ago a series of experiments was conducted in Paris, France, in the matter of crossing two different species of the silk moth, in which a fertile hybrid was produced and propagated through several generations. On these experiments and their results Mr. Darwin bases an argument in favor of the transmutation of species; but he suppresses two important facts that sap the foundation of his argument. On this point Professor Quatrefages has this to say: "In the last edition of his [Darwin's] book, he quotes what I have said of the cross between the *Bombix Cynthia* and the *Bombix Arrindia*; he speaks of the number of generations obtained, but he forgets to mention that disordered variation appeared in the second generation, and that reversion to one of the parental types was almost complete at the termination of the experiment." These facts, and a thousand others with which every careful breeder is acquainted, show that nature, when left to herself, and even when interfered with from without, instead of leaving original types behind and going on to better forms, strongly tends to break over barriers that are thrown in her way, and get back to primary conditions in the kingdom of life. Perhaps the pigeon has been varied more under domestication than any other family of animals, as there are, I believe, about one hundred and fifty varieties. Yet it is said that if a flock of these birds, representing every known variety, be turned loose and allowed to propagate without artificial



intervention, they will ultimately return to the original rock pigeon.

Here it is proper to introduce an interesting and significant statement from no less an authority in science than Professor Huxley, who says: "What is needed for the completion of the theory of the origin of species is, first, definite proof that selective breeding is competent to convert permanent races into physiologically distinct species; and, secondly, the elucidation of the variability." Stripped of all unnecessary verbiage, this statement may be reduced to the following sentence: "What is needed to substantiate the theory is the proof." This high authority, though an evolutionist, admits that there is no definite proof that the transmutation of species ever did or ever can take place. But the distinguished naturalist seems to overlook a very serious defect in his hypothetical argument. He says "selective breeding." But it is to be remembered that, by hypothesis, the process of evolution went on in the absence of intelligence to direct "selective breeding." Man himself, the only being in this world capable of manipulating intelligent "selective breeding," was a product, and the highest product, of these unintelligent processes; and with all of his intelligence and resources he has been able to add nothing in the way of new species. According to evolution, chance breeding did what intelligent selective breeding in the hands of the highest intelligence belonging to this world is unable to do. In my humble judgment the theory goes to pieces before the facts that marshal themselves against it.

Let us now try this vaunting theory by a very plain and just criterion. If, in view of a given hypothesis, certain phenomena ought to exist, and they

are found not to exist, there is a very strong presumption that the theory is erroneous. According to evolution, the following state of facts ought to obtain: Lower types ought to precede and higher ones follow; and every higher type ought to begin where the next lower leaves off. That is, the lower members of a higher type ought to be as high as the highest members of the next lower type. A lower type ought to develop up to its highest capability as a type, and the bottom members of the succeeding and resulting type ought to be at the top of the preceding type. Evolution must move steadily forward and upward all the time.

But what do we find as a matter of fact? We find higher and lower types existing together in the primordial seas, with no hint that one came from the other. Radiates, Mollusks and Articulates are found together in the earliest fossiliferous rocks, with no indication that a Radiate ever produced a Mollusk, or a Mollusk, an Articulate. And when the fourth and highest type—the Vertebrate—appears, it brings with it no indication that it sprang from a lower type. In this connection the following words from the immortal Louis Agassiz are appropriate: “The Radiate begins life with characters peculiar to Radiates, and ends it without assuming any features of a higher type. The Mollusk starts with a character essentially its own, and in no way related to the Radiates, and never shows the least tendency to deviate from it, in the direction of either the Articulate or Vertebrate types. This is equally true of the Articulates. At no stage of their growth are their young homologous to those of Mollusks or Radiates, any more than to those of Vertebrates, and

in their final development they stand equally isolated from all others. . . . These results are of the highest importance at this moment, when men of authority in science are attempting to renew the theory of general transmutation of all animals of the higher types out of the lower ones. If such views are ever to deserve serious consideration, and be acknowledged as involving a scientific principle, it will only be when their supporters have shown that the fundamental plans of structure characteristic of the primary groups of the animal kingdom are transmutable, or pass into one another, and that their different modes of development may lead from one to the other. Thus far embryology has not recorded one fact on which to base such doctrines."

Not only do we find this state of facts at variance with the theory in question, but it is also true that every higher type starts at a plane far below that on which the next lower type terminates. That is, the lowest individuals of a higher type are much below the highest individuals of the next lower type. The highest Radiates are more highly organized and specialized than the lowest Mollusks, though the latter as a type are higher than the former, and so on through all the types. This ought not to be, it could not be, if the evolutionary theory is true, unless there was a reversal of operation whenever there was a new type to be made, which is absurd. The testimony of the rocks has led Professor Dana to depose as follows:

"The earliest species under a type are not necessarily the lowest. If we may trust the records, Echinoderms, or the highest types of Radiates, were represented by species . . . long before the inferior

type of Polyyps existed. . . . The highest group of Cryptograms, the ground Pines, were a prevailing form of terrestrial vegetation before there were mosses. There were huge Crocodilians in the world long before there were limbless snakes like those of the present world. The great Labyrinthodonts were vastly superior in every respect to modern frogs and salamanders."

Again: There ought to be, either among the living or fossil forms, a traceable chain of innumerable parts, joined together link by link without a break, from the lowest to the highest species of living things. Mr. Darwin says: "So that the number of intermediate and transitional links between all living and extinct species must have been inconceivably great. But assuredly, if this theory be true, such have lived upon the earth." That such a chain has been discovered so far is not pretended by the warmest supporters of the evolutionary hypothesis. There are notable, admitted and wide gaps, at intervals, all along the line. Professor Guyot says: "I know well the wide distance which separates inorganic from organic nature. I will even go further than is ordinarily done, and I will say that there is an impassable chasm between the animal and the man. It is my belief that naturalists are chasing a phantom, in their search after some material gradation among created beings, by which the whole animal kingdom may have been derived by successive development from a single germ, or from a few germs."

Let us now look at some of these gaps as seen by the friends of evolution themselves. Take the animals known as "Chambered Shells," whose fossils first appear in the Cambrian rocks of Paleozoic time.



On the introduction of these interesting creatures Professor Winchell discants as follows:

“Here are the oldest examples known of this type. Here, we might say, was its first introduction to the world; and we might begin to query how it came here. We should be inclined to think that it was an abrupt introduction, without predecessors gradually more and more simple as we should trace them into remoter ages. If an abrupt introduction, it was not an evolution from some older form, because evolution proceeds by gradual transitions. Such is the conclusion of some scientific men; and if we were obliged to form a conclusion on the whole question from the facts connected with the first appearance of chambered shells, I think we should all say they did not appear according to the method of evolution. We must be candid, however, and consider all the circumstances. We only wish to ascertain how the facts were—not to make ourselves think them different from the reality. If chambered shells appeared according to evolution, that is the thing we want to know; and it would be a pity to make ourselves believe something not in accordance with God’s ordination of things.” This is to pave the way for a pitiable *petitio*.

This serious embarrassment to evolution Professor Winchell attempts to modify on the plea of the destruction of the earlier and less perfect fossils by metamorphic influences. “We may feel confident,” says the Professor, “that if any shells or corals had been originally inclosed in the sediments, they would have been destroyed. Especially would carbonate of lime have disappeared. Therefore we are not certain that no chambered shells existed before the Cambrian. They may have existed.”



Unfortunately for this theory, that is intended to support a mere "may have been," which in turn must support the evolutionist hypothesis, the Professor's short memory leads him to contradict the foregoing supposition. Having penetrated the Eozoic rocks, which are older than the Cambrian, in which the first chambered shells are found, he finds what is known as "Eozoon Canadense," or the "dawn animal of Canada." Scientists are not agreed as to whether this specimen is organic or inorganic, but this does not affect the point I am about to make. Dawson, Winchell and others have no doubt that it is an animal fossil. In describing it, Winchell says: "In the mass we notice a concentric or laminated structure, as if the organism were formed of numerous layers wrapped one about the other. These layers, in most cases, consist alternately of serpentine and carbonate of lime. The serpentine, as is believed, occupies the place of the fleshy part of the animal, while the carbonate of lime is its skeleton."

This utterly destroys the theory put forth to account for the absence of chambered shells older than those found in the Cambrian rocks. If the highly metamorphosed Eozoic rocks of New York, Bohemia, Ireland, and elsewhere, could and did preserve the carbonate of lime that was in the skeleton of the "dawn animal" and even its flesh in the serpentine of the fossil, surely the same could and would have been the case as regards the ante-Cambrian chambered shells, if any had existed. The fact of the preservation of carbonate of lime in the Eozoic rocks destroys Professor Winchell's "may have been," and takes from evolution even this vaporous foundation, and throws it back upon assumption.

One of the wide and remarkable gaps along this line is found between Invertebrates and Vertebrates. Through many weary cycles did the earth march towards its destiny without the support of a backbone, till this important member was supplied by the advent of a fish. This animal came into the world unheralded as to its most conspicuous differentiating member. Of this break in the geological record, Professor Winchell says: "We have now stirred up all the old bones—the oldest bones buried on our planet—so far as we know. But I do not think we have found the first fishes yet. There must have been some forms still less like fishes than these. Perhaps if we could carry the line back, we should find fish-like creatures approximating more and more to crustacean creatures."

Now, why "must there have been some forms still less like fishes than these"? Simply and only because the theory of evolution demands it, and must go down without it; and here, as elsewhere, evolution most pitifully begs the question. If the oldest fishes, like the oldest chambered shells, came into existence abruptly, they did not originate by evolution, and the theory breaks down at this point. Certainly a theory whose friends can prop it up at vital points only by a "may have been," a "perhaps," and an "if," rests upon a supremely weak foundation. In this case, and those yet to be noticed, even metamorphic influences can not be invoked.

The gap between reptiles, animals that propagate their kind by producing eggs, and mammals, those that bring forth their young alive, is a striking and obvious one, and should arrest the attentions of the student. At this point Professor Winchell says:

“Another triassic mammal has recently been described by Professor Owen, from South Africa, as large as a gray fox, and remarkably specialized. All these mammals are distinctly mammalian. They do not look like first attempts of nature. There is nothing transitional about them. They bring with them no reminiscences of reptiles, birds or fishes. If they had descended from humbler forms, it must have been by many generations, and many connecting links must be totally lost. If these facts were an isolated group, we might think these little mammals abruptly ushered into being; but the question receives light from so many directions that we must at least hesitate to accept that view.”

How the idea of abrupt introduction would be strengthened if these facts were an “isolated group,” is not apparent. It is the fact that they are not an “isolated group” that strengthens this view.

In regard to the first appearance of mammals, Professor Le Conte says:

“The suddenness of their appearance is very remarkable. In the very lowest tertiary, without warning and without apparent progenitors, true mammals appear in great numbers, in considerable diversity, and even of the highest order—Primates, a monkey tribe. Now, in Europe, where there is a decided break and a lost interval, this is not surprising; but even in America, where the Laramie passes without break into the Tertiary, the same is true. At a certain level the great dinosaurs disappear, and the mammals take their place. A new dynasty and a new age commence. It is impossible to account for this by natural causes, unless we admit times of rapid progress.”

We now come to the most interesting and important of these gaps—that between animals and man. Speaking of this break, Professor Le Conte says: "We have not yet been able to find any transition forms or connecting links between man and the highest animals. The earliest known man, the river-drift man, though in a low state of civilization, was as thoroughly human as any of us." Professor Huxley says: "Neither in quarternary ages, nor at the present time, does any intermediary being fill the gap which separates man from the Troglodite. To deny the existence of the gap would be as reprehensible as absurd." Mr. Durham testifies as follows: "It is true that no remains of man's progenitors have been found connecting him in the far-distant past with lower animals." Professor Winchell deposes thus: "There is no structural gradation from man downward to half men and apes. This has sometimes been claimed, but the highest verdict opposes that claim. There are links missing between man and his mammalian predecessors. From the ape, from the horse, the deer, and other living types, we trace, through fossil bones, a gradation downward in rank, and backward in time, to the organisms which made their advent at the beginning of the Tertiary. Here is a pretty complete chain of being in each case, from a primitive extinct form, down quite to the living form: but not so with man. The chain is broken—the links are lost. We can not explain this at present. As long as the interval remains, we can not affirm from facts that man is the outcome of ordinary evolution."

Professor Dana, of Yale, gives this testimony: "In the case of man, the abruptness of transition is still more extraordinary, and especially because it occurs



so near to the present time. The highest man-ape, the nearest allied of living species, has the capacity of the cranium but thirty-four cubic inches; while the skeleton throughout is not fitted for an erect position, and the fore limbs are essential to locomotion; but in the lowest of existing man, the capacity of the cranium is sixty-eight cubic inches, every bone is made and adjusted for the erect position, and the fore limbs, instead of being required in locomotion, are wholly taken from the ground, and have other and higher uses. Forty years since Schmerling found fossil bones of ancient man in Europe; and for the past fifteen years active search has gone forward for the missing links; and still the lowest yet found, and this probably not the oldest, has a cranium of seventy-five cubic inches capacity. Some of the oldest yet discovered have a large cranium and a high facial angle, although rude in implements and mode of life. No remains bear evidence of less perfect erectness of structure than is civilized man, or to any nearer approach to the man-ape in essential characteristics."

Now let us reason for a moment upon one of the differences pointed out by this great and distinguished geologist; namely, that between the brain capacities of the largest man-ape skull and the smallest human skull. The difference is thirty-four cubic inches. On the hypothesis of evolution, this gap must be filled up by gradual and almost imperceptible gradations. *Natura non facit saltum*—"Nature makes no leap," says Mr. Darwin. Now, how long would it have taken, and how many intermediate generations must have lived, to raise the capacity of the skull thirty-four cubic inches? Let it be supposed that each generation added a cubic eighth of an inch. There are sixty-four



cubic eighths in a cubic inch, and hence sixty-four generations would have been necessary to add one cubic inch; and as the difference is thirty-four cubic inches, 2,176 generations would have been required to fill up the gap. If twenty years be allowed to the generation, we have 43,520 years as the time that would have been requisite to accomplish this task. So that on this basis a chain of 2,178 links is missing, and a period of 43,520 years is a total blank. But a cubic eighth of an inch would have been somewhat of a leap. Let the basis of calculation be reduced to a cubic sixteenth of an inch, which would be an appreciable advance. There are 4,096 cubic sixteenths of an inch in a cubic inch, and this would require 4,096 generations to increase the capacity one cubic inch. But the difference is thirty-four cubic inches, and therefore 139,144 generations would be necessary to fill up the gap. Allowing twenty years to the generation, we have 2,782,880 years as the time requisite. On this basis a chain of 139,144 links is gone, and a period of 2,782,880 years is left without the sign of a record.

Now, how do evolutionists attempt to account for this state of facts? According to Mr. Darwin, the geological record is imperfect, or, as Professor Le Conte puts it, there are "lost intervals." But is it not somewhat remarkable that the geological record is imperfect, and that many and immense intervals are lost, just where evolution is most in need of completion? This very improbable assumption is essential to the integrity of the theory, as Mr. Darwin admits as follows: "He who rejects this view of the imperfection of the geological record will rightly reject the whole theory."

That this idea of "lost intervals" is simply a convenient hiding-place in which evolutionists aim to take refuge from difficulties under which their theory must otherwise sink, is virtually confessed by Mr. Darwin in the following language: "But I do not pretend that I would ever have suspected how poor was the record in the best preserved geological sections, had not the absence of innumerable transitional links between the species which lived at the commencement and close of each formation pressed so heavily on my theory."

In view of the facts that are now before us, the boldness, not to say recklessness, of no less a distinguished man than Professor Haeckel, that is displayed in the following language, is almost marvelous: "The human race is a branch of the catarrhine group; he was developed in the Old World, and sprang from apes of this group, which has long been extinct." Notwithstanding the fact that this assertion is made with all the confidence, apparently, that could characterize the statement of the plainest historical matters, there is not a shred of scientific evidence, in the shape of fact, to sustain it.

In tracing man's genealogy through the mazes of evolutionist speculation, Haeckel finds an amphibious animal in the line, which he calls the "Sozoura," of which he says: "The proof of its existence arises from the necessity of an intermediate type between the thirteenth and fourteenth stages." That is, the theory demands it, and therefore it is proved! Mr. Durham, having admitted the gap, accounts for the lost interval between animals and man as follows: "But this is not to be wondered at when we consider that the place of his origin was in all probability the vast

upland plains of Asia, which have never been explored by the geologist." On the contrary, Professor Winchell says: "It is now generally admitted that man's birth was in a region covered at present by the waters of the Indian Ocean." This is also Haeckel's view, and it is much safer than that of Durham, because the geologist can not explore the bottom of the Indian Ocean!

Professor Dana bears this testimony against these rash assumptions: "The existing man-apes belong to lines that reach up to them as their ultimatum; but of that line which is supposed to have reached upward to man, not the first link below the lowest level of existing man has yet been found. This is the more extraordinary in view of the fact that, from the lowest limit in existing men, there are all possible gradations up to the highest; while, below that limit, there is an abrupt fall to the ape level, in which the cubic capacity of the brain is one-half less. If the links ever existed, their annihilation without a relic is so extremely improbable that it may be pronounced impossible. Until some are found, science can not assert that they ever existed."

In view of preceding premises, we are enabled, I think, to see the justness and wisdom of the conclusion reached by Professor Quatrefages in a most powerful and lucid argument on and against evolution. Speaking of those conservative scientists who seek to make sure of their footing by keeping on the solid ground of fact, experiment and observation, he says: "But when they meet with questions the solution of which is at present impossible, and will perhaps always be so, they have not hesitated to answer: *We do not know*; and when they find purely meta-

physical theories are being imposed upon them, they have protested in the name of experiment and observation. I venture to say that I have always remained faithful to the ranks of this phalanx, to which the future distinctly belongs. For this reason, to those who question me upon the problem of our origin, I do not hesitate to answer in the name of science: *I do not know.*" The reason he says he does not know is that he rejects the Bible account of the origin of man.

I believe that, in view of known facts and just reasoning, the conclusion that man did not originate according to the theory of evolution is inevitable, and, this being the case, the Bible account of our origin by direct creation holds the field.

Turning now from these romances of scientists, let us give reverent attention to the statements of the "old Book" on the subject: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. . . . And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. . . . And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." This harmonizes with Paul's declaration that "Adam was first formed, then Eve," and these plain statements positively set aside the dreamy speculations of evolution. Here are the two contradictory theories—let the man of both reason and faith choose between them.





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