

# APPLIED THEOLOGY



MONFORT

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BY

REV. F. C. MONFORT, D.D.

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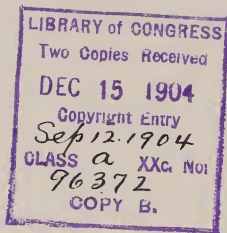
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## PREFACE.

The value of things depends on their use Art for Art's sake is beautiful to those who appreciate it, but "Art applied to industry" is useful to humanity. Pure mathematics is the perfection of mental discipline, but "Applied mathematics" is the better half of almost every other science. So Theology finds its best use when applied. Every doctrine has its practical side. Thoughts of God suggest duty and privilege. It is the purpose of this book to discuss doctrines with emphasis on their application to practical life.



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## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE.

The question of man's chief end is the great question of the ages. Religious teachers recognize this. Philosophers seek a "summum bonum," or highest good. The multitudes strive for happiness or success. All ask, "What is the best thing to do, or get, or become?"

The answers men give to this question are singularly alike in all ages. Some say: Pleasure is the one thing. Enjoy life—gratify appetite and passion to the fullest extent. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Others say that wealth, or power, or knowledge is the thing to be sought above all else; while still others hold that the highest good is a spirit superior to all lesser good, as well as evil—a stoicism indifferent alike to success and failure.

The Bible recognizes man's longing for the highest good. Solomon, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, tells the story of his effort to find out "what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under heaven all the days of their life;"

Micah declares how the Lord "hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;" Paul announces a supreme thing which, whether men eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, is at once their first duty and highest good; while Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares that the one good which men should "seek first" includes all lesser good.

The Book of Ecclesiastes may be read as a commentary on the words of Micah, Paul and Christ. Solomon tested, as perhaps no one else has ever done, all the answers ~~which~~ men give to the great question. He tried pleasure, the gratification of appetite and passion, and said: "It is vanity." He tried wealth, and said it does not satisfy—"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." He tried learning, and said: "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." He was a king, and gathered "the peculiar treasure of kings," "more than all that were before him," but found it "vanity and vexation." He set forth an ideal of family comfort—a man rejoicing with the wife of his youth and surrounded by his children in peaceful old age, but said though "he beget an hundred children and live many years, and his soul be not filled with good,

I say that an untimely birth is better than he." He was a stoic, indifferent to all about him, but found no comfort. He was a cynic, but warned men against cynicism. He tried every prescription of every land, and proved it a failure. After youth and manhood and old age, after pleasure and wealth and power, after study, and even after the exercise of many virtues, he wrote: "It is vanity."

Pleasure is good. Honor, wealth, power, home, friends and peaceful old age all are good, but they are not the highest good. There is something for which men long, and without which they must be eternally dissatisfied.

The end of Solomon's experiments and his answer to the old, old question, were: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Micah gives the same answer: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Paul said: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And Christ declared: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,

and all these things [all necessary good] shall be added unto you."

This question of the ages is not a question for theologians and philosophers alone. Every man and woman and child must answer it. It is a question for the school-room, the play-ground, the home, the store, the field, the office and the factory. What is the chief end of man? It is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. The highest duty and the highest blessing are one. God has put them together, and man can not put them asunder. To fear God; to seek his kingdom; to keep his commandments; to love what he loves, and to be holy as he is holy — these are to glorify him, and they who glorify him will enjoy him. His service will be a delight, and communion with him the highest joy.

This enjoyment will endure. He who worships pleasure enjoys it only for a little time. Riches take wings, and so do honors and power. Even friends and home are ours for a brief space, but he who glorifies God enjoys him forever. Christ promised them all that they require for this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. David said: "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right



hand there are pleasures for evermore." There is no enjoyment to compare with the enjoyment of God. It satisfies while it lasts, and it lasts forever.

## THE SCRIPTURES.

There is truth in the poet's description of man as an "infant crying in the night." Ignorance is darkness. Unaided humanity is conscious of need, and of longing, but knows neither what it wants nor how to attain it. Men feel after God if haply they may find him, though he is not far from any one of us. A parent may be near, but a child in the night knows it only by some word or touch. So God is near, and yet infinitely far, unless he make some revelation of himself. If he is to be known, he must speak. If the veil between the finite and the infinite is to be removed, the infinite must remove it. If there is any rule to direct man how he may glorify and enjoy God, it is a divine rule.

We rejoice that our race is not left in ignorance. The longings and tears of humanity are answered. There is a voice in the night. God who spake in times past by his prophets has in later days spoken by his Son, and his Word not only brings

quiet and comfort, but is our light and law.

There is a great deal in a name. When we speak of the Scriptures, certain writings are distinguished from all others as "*the* writings," for that is the meaning of the word. There were many writings known in Christ's day, but when he said, "Search the Scriptures," his disciples knew that he meant the particular writings known as the Scriptures, and of which we speak as the Old Testament. We now use the word in a wider sense to include the New Testament, made up of the writings of apostles and evangelists, the companions of Christ during his earthly life, who were commissioned to carry on his work. These two Testaments, the Old and the New, are the Scriptures, *the* writing as distinguished from all other writings. We speak of them also as the Bible; that is, *the* Book as distinguished from all other books.

The Old and New Testaments are two covenants. They are revelations of God, and of his will to men, with promises of blessing. One treats of a coming Redeemer. Its history, laws, ceremonies, prophecies and instruction all look forward to a Messiah to come. The other

treats of the Messiah who came in the fullness of time, and who is to come again without sin unto salvation. The two are one Book, and with it no other book compares. They are God's word to man. They meet man's necessities. They answer his longings. They are a light in his darkness. They show him, not only his highest good, but how it is to be attained.

The existence of such a book is not an accident, nor to be explained by the rules of ordinary criticism. The civilized peoples of the world have not given a volume such pre-eminence without reasons. The canon or catalogue of books which compose the Old Testament was established and recognized long before the coming of Christ, just as we have it to-day, while that of the New Testament was established very soon after the books were written, and continues unchanged. True, there have been discussions and controversies as to particular books, and some have held that the books of the Apocrypha should be included, but through it all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have held their place as the word of God. A thing is not necessarily true because it has been long believed, but when a book has

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held such pre-eminence for so many centuries, the burden of proof is with those who question its genuineness and authority.

Our belief, however, that the Bible is the word of God does not rest on the testimony of men, nor even on that of councils nor of the church which accepts it. It speaks for itself. A child is quieted by a word because it knows the parent's voice. So the devout soul knows the voice of the Heavenly Father. There is in the Book itself that which proves its divine origin. The more we read, the clearer it is that never man, writing his own thoughts only, wrote as the writers of the Bible have done. Its revelation of the divine character is not of the earth. No man could have conceived such a God as it describes. Its rules of conduct are not man's rules. Its revelation of the atonement is above and beyond human thinking. Its remedy for sin, so effective and yet so simple, proves its source. When the man born blind was asked of Christ, he said: "Whereas I was blind, now I see." "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." So we say of the doctrines of the Bible: "Whereas we were blind, now we see; whereas we were lost

and hopeless, now we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." If this Book were not of God, it could not do this. The success of a medicine proves the wisdom which prescribes it. So the efficacy of the doctrines of the Bible proves its divinity.

The perfection of the Bible and the harmony of its parts show its divine authorship. It is one Book, with one theme and one purpose, and yet it is made up of sixty-six different books, by no less than thirty-eight different writers living in different lands, and covering a period of more than fifteen centuries. Some one, writing of the British navy, says that in the center of every rope, little and large, on every ship, runs a fine colored thread, "the queen's strand." So through every book and chapter of the Bible runs a scarlet thread, the mark of divine mercy, which can not be mistaken. The perfect harmony of the writers proves a common inspiration. That the different parts of a machine, when put together, form a perfect whole, proves that they were intended to go together. We can not suppose that different men prepared the different parts with no agreement or controlling purpose. Equally unreasonable is it to think that the writers of the Bible, living hundreds of years apart, prepared books which merely hap-

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pen to fit, each in its place. The harmony of the Bible proves that it is God's Book.

The Bible declares its divine authorship. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." The Revised Version says: "Every Scripture given by inspiration is profitable," and in the margin: "Every Scripture is given by inspiration and profitable." These different renderings emphasize the truth that "every Scripture," or "all Scripture" (meaning the books recognized as Scripture) is inspired. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It was God who "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets." The apostles declared that they gave not the word of men, but the word of God. The whole testimony of the Scriptures is that whatever part man may have had in their composition, God is their author.

With this and with all other proofs, there is also the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who witnesses with the Word and by it in the hearts of good people. His testimony is unanswerable. We are sometimes perplexed by arguments, and in doubt as to the value of testimony upon which we have relied, when, in an instant, and with no explanation, we have the conviction that this is God's word.



God himself seems to speak, as of old, and to say: "Hear the words of my mouth." Unbelievers may scoff at this, and some good people may only partially feel its force. It must be spiritually discerned. It does not take the place of other testimony, but supplements and strengthens it. It is a strong ground of assurance to them who live near to God. He who does God's will knows of the doctrine and of the book that they are of God. The happiest Christian life is that of the man who, by obedience, faith and devotion to God, continually invites the testimony of the Spirit of God.

The purpose of Scripture is to declare God's character and will, so that men may glorify and be blessed in him. "All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," to the end that God's people may be perfect in him. It is a rule, a standard, a light, a guide, and an instructor. It is to be studied, revered and obeyed. It is to be translated and circulated wherever there are souls in darkness. Its entrance is to give light, and its light is to increase until the whole world is full of the knowledge of God.

## WHAT IS GOD?

Is he a being high above the earth, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory, or does he dwell with men and care for them? Is he a Creator and a King, or a Father and a Friend? Is he a Judge, strict to punish sin, or is he gracious and full of compassion?

He is all of these, and more. He is a God, near and afar off. He is the Author of all things. He rules in heaven and on earth, the immortal, invisible, and only wise God, and yet he dwells with men, and is a companion of those who are humble and contrite in heart. He is the Judge of all flesh, and the source of all grace. He is "a consuming fire," and a God of peace. He is a law-giver, and a deliverer. He is holy; he is "light"; he is "love"; he "is a Spirit"; and in his being and attributes is infinite, eternal and unchangeable.

God is a person. We mean by this that he has individuality. He is a conscious intelligence. In announcing himself to Moses, he said "I am." The Bible begins

by telling what he did. He created the heavens and the earth. He is more than "force," and more than law. The former is his power, and the latter is his will. Neither law nor force creates itself. There is force in the spring of a watch, but back of the spring is an intelligent person who made and tempered it. So there is a force which moves worlds, as the hands of a watch move round their center, but back of this is a personal intelligence. A watch proves the existence of a watchmaker. So a world proves the existence of a world-maker, and a law the existence of a law-maker.

God is a Spirit. We associate personality with a form and features; but a spirit has no form which can be seen with natural eyes. It "hath not flesh and bones," as men have. We know, however, that flesh and bones are not all of man, nor even the best of his personality. Man is a spirit as well as a body. He does not live by bread alone, which nourishes his flesh, but by spiritual food. His body may be marred, or even buried and decay, but the spirit lives. Man was made in the image of God. His spirit was like the divine

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Spirit, and, though limited and changed by sin, will serve as an illustration, weak, but the best we have of Him in whose image he was made. Man is a spirit, finite and fallen. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable.

How shall the finite comprehend the infinite? No man can measure the immensity of space, or tell the length of eternity. Go as far as he will, and add figures to figures until all the paper at his command is covered, and no man can tell in mathematical terms what the figures mean in years or miles, and the limits of time and space are still unreachd. There is always more beyond.

God is infinite; he can not be measured. No man by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection. Our reason can go but a little way, and beyond that is still the infinite. God is everywhere, in heaven and on earth and in the sea. No man can flee from him, or hide himself. He fills the universe. He is in all things, and yet distinct from and above all things.

God is eternal. We count back and say we are so many years old, but with him is neither beginning nor end. The world

had its beginning when he made it, but he was from everlasting, and continues to everlasting.

He is unchangeable. He was never young, and will never be old. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever he had formed the earth, and after the earth is dissolved, even from everlasting to everlasting, in eternity past, present and future, he is the same unchangeable God.

He is the only God. There is no room for another; there is no possibility of another. The heathen have idols, but they are not gods. The ancients deified men, or qualities in men, but these were not gods. He is the living and true God, the creator and upholder of all things.

How shall man stand in his presence? Before him angels bow and the archangel veils his face. Before him cherubim and seraphim continually do cry: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!" The greatest thought which can fill the mind of man is the thought of God and of our relation to him. How shall man, finite and sinful, stand before him?

He is entitled to worship. For what he is, and for what he has done, our souls must bless and magnify him. He is a

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Spirit, and his worship must be in spirit; not with mere forms and bodily exercises, but with the devotion of the heart; not with lip service alone, but in sincerity and in truth. He who best appreciates the divine character, who has the clearest conception of God as a Spirit infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all that goes to make up his character, will have also the best appreciation of his own finite and fallen state, and will cultivate most successfully that humility and purity of heart which are the condition and earnest of his favor.

## THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

He who devoutly studies the being and character of God feels, first of all, his own weakness. The finite can not comprehend the infinite. He cries out with the Psalmist: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain it." No man can "find out the Almighty to perfection." And yet some knowledge of God and of our duty to him is possible. The direction, "Acquaint thyself with him and be at peace," is in harmony with the Savior's prayer for his disciples that they might "know" "the only true God," and with the declaration that to know him aright is life eternal. All that man needs to know of the divine character and will is before him in the divine Word and works.

God is revealed in nature, dimly it is true, but unmistakably. The heavens declare his glory. The universe tells his wisdom and power. His providence is an open book. "He left not himself without a witness in that he did good," supplying



the wants of his creatures. His eternal power and Godhead are manifest in his works, so that they who fail to see and serve him are without excuse.

The inspired writers call attention to this testimony of nature, and supplement it. They do not limit themselves to attributes revealed in creation and providence, but announce others, if possible, more glorious. God is infinite, not only in wisdom, power and goodness, but in justice, mercy, truth and holiness. If those who fail to see him in nature are without excuse, what is the condemnation of those who having his open word, ignore his salvation?

God is wise. A workman is known by his works. A skillful invention shows the wisdom of the inventor. So the wonderful mechanism and laws of the universe prove the wisdom of him who invented it. Those who study astronomy use a planetarium to show the motions of the heavenly bodies. A slight touch causes spheres to revolve and move about each other as the sun, moon and planets move in the heavens. To invent such mechanism one must be wise. He must have knowledge of the

universe that is represented in miniature as well as mechanical skill. What shall we say, then, of him who made the universe itself, and, as his crowning work, made man, endowing him with wisdom to understand and imitate the great design? He who gave man knowledge, shall he not know? The God who gave wisdom must himself be wise. The Scriptures declare that he is the "all wise" and the "only wise." No other wisdom is comparable to his. He is omniscient. In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the source of all wisdom. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and it shall be given him.

God's power equals his wisdom. An inventor sometimes sees principles and possibilities which he can not realize. His means are limited or materials are refractory; some obstacle prevents, or perhaps the earthly life is too short. God alone is able to do all that his wisdom devises. He is not only omniscient, knowing all things, but omnipotent, able to do all things. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth

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unto God." He doeth according to his will, and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou? He has power not only over worlds, but over men and evil spirits. He rules in heaven and in earth and under the earth. His people, whatever their trials, or the trials of the Church, are assured that he will bring all things to pass according to the wise counsel of his will. Those who rebel against him wage a hopeless strife, for what can man do in conflict with the Almighty?

God is holy. No truth is more frequently announced in the Bible and under more varied forms than this: "The Lord our God is holy." Holiness is the sum of all perfections and the absence of all sin and weakness. Heathen religions know nothing of it. They ascribe to their deities wisdom or greatness, or even goodness, but never holiness. Man is naturally sinful, and the thought of holiness is foreign to him. This is possibly the reason God's holiness is so emphasized in the Bible. "There is none holy as the Lord." "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." His thoughts are holy. His purposes, works, laws, house,

day and word all are holy. His people are commanded to be holy. "Be ye holy as I am holy." His worship is to be holy. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

God is just. A holy God can not be unjust. He is true. A holy God can not be untrue. He is faithful. Hath he said it, and shall he not bring it to pass? He is good. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Holiness is like light or harmony. Other divine attributes are the colors of the spectrum or the notes of a chord. The colors blend into pure white light, and the notes into a harmonious sound.

God is merciful. At the mention of this attribute the mind reverts to his justice. It confronts also the fact of sin. How shall sinners expect mercy from a just God? With the earliest revelations of the divine character came declarations of his justice and mercy. "The Lord God merciful and gracious," "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." The study of these brings us face to face with the Gospel. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "God is love." In the atonement of Christ "mercy and

truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

In all these attributes God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. He is everywhere and always the same. He is not just to one and merciful to another, but just and merciful to all alike. If in dealing with us his justice seems to overshadow the milder attributes, it is because of sin. If mercy is magnified, it is because his people find their refuge in it. To the pure he shows himself pure, and to the froward he appears froward.

God's people delight to dwell upon his mercy, and even when they think of other attributes the thought of mercy is present. His wisdom and power alone would terrify, his justice dismay and his holiness overwhelm, were he not also merciful; but united with mercy his wisdom and power are their strength, his justice their salvation, and his holiness their rejoicing and the goal of their endeavor.

Oh, to be like Christ, who was God manifest in the flesh, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person; to let the same mind be in us which was also in him; to live by the faith of the Son of God; to be holy as he is holy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. When we are like him, we shall see him as he is. Then we will truly know him whom to know is everlasting life.

## DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

I once saw a miniature stage upon which toy men and women were players. They represented kings and queens, nobles and soldiers and peasants. They moved as of their own will, and plotted and fought as their historical originals had done. There were also voices which seemed to come from their lips.

So much could be seen from the front. But there were two sides to the stage. From the rear I saw that what seemed the acts of many players were the acts of one man; and what seemed the voices of many speakers were one voice. There was a power behind the throne and behind the peasant's stool. By means of wires, skillfully laid and worked, one man played the play.

Here, I thought, is a representation of God's sovereignty. Men read biography and history, and study the course of nature, as I witnessed this performance. They see from the front, and do not know the power which holds the hearts of kings



and of common men, and, all unseen, "turns them as the rivers of water." The devout student will go behind the scenes. He will note effects and their causes; the rising of the sun and the power which ordained it; the fall of empires, and the reasons of their fall. He will weigh the acts of men as free, responsible actors, and yet see in their success or failure the controlling hand of God.

At one point the illustration from the miniature stage fails. Men are not mere puppets, moved by wires, but intelligent beings, having the power of choice; influenced by motives and responsible for doing or refusing to do what God commands. Indeed, at this point any illustration will fail, for just here is a mystery too deep for human understanding. We know that God is sovereign. He could not be God and be anything less. A being infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, the maker of all things, must be the lord of all things. At the same time we know that man is free to choose good or evil; to do right or to do wrong.

How are these apparently contrary facts to be reconciled? How are we to explain

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the existence of sin and suffering? God is holy and sovereign, and yet man is a sinner. God is merciful, and yet man suffers. God decrees, and yet man chooses for himself. We can not reconcile these things, and are not called upon to do so. If Christ, the Captain of our salvation, "was made perfect through suffering," who can tell the part which sorrow plays in our spiritual education? Temptation may be a means of blessing. Warfare with sin may give one a conception, impossible without it, of the holiness of God. The trial of faith worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. Gold is purified by the refiner's fire. So God for his own glory may develop in his people a character higher and nobler than that of angels who have not been tried. To this end he may, for a time, permit that which is hateful in his sight. We do not know. We may think upon these things, but our hearts need not be troubled because we do not understand them. They belong to the domain of mystery and of faith.

The Bible declares God's sovereignty. It represents him as in all things and above all things; as the one disposer of

events; by whom and for whose glory all things come to pass. He was in the beginning, when nothing else was. He made and controls the universe. "He directeth it under the whole heaven." Whatsoever comes to pass is according to his decree. "He causeth it to come, whether for correction or for mercy." He governs men as well as things, and nations as well as men. By him "kings reign and princes decree justice." He is the King of kings. "The Lord reigneth." His is no limited monarchy, either in extent or right. "He removeth kings and setteth up kings." "He putteth down one, and setteth up another." He ruleth "in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." Perhaps this may seem strong doctrine, but it is mainly Scripture language. The Bible teaches that while men are free and responsible for their acts, God rules; that he controls all things, and that whatever happens is with his knowledge and according to his counsel.

This doctrine is one of exceeding comfort. God's people exult in it. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice!" It means the triumph of righteousness and the overthrow of iniquity; it means the vindica-

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tion of God's people, the security and success of the Church, the reign of order and law in the State, and of temperance, purity, justice, peace and love everywhere. He who believes it wears an armor which can not be pierced; adversity will not harm him; taunts will not confuse nor threats disturb him. He can say with Elisha: "Greater is he that is with us than all they that be with them"; or with Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He will have no more fear of difficulties than of dangers. The church which believes and realizes it is invincible. Neither poverty nor oppression can harm it. The cross will be the symbol of triumph. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." All obstacles will disappear before absolute faith in the sovereignty of God.

## THE TRINITY.

There is one, and only one, God. So the Scriptures assert. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." "There is none other God but one." These positive statements are in harmony with the whole tone of inspiration. God fills all space and is from everlasting. He made all things. He is supreme. There is no power, nor life, nor effort, independent of him. There can be no other God.

At the same time the Scriptures refer to the Father and to Christ and to the Holy Spirit in such a way as to distinguish between them. The Father says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Son says: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." The Spirit is referred to as one who shall not speak of himself, but shall take of the things of Christ and show them to men. He is represented as teaching, and men are represented as resisting or yielding to him. The apostolic benediction in Second

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Corinthians, the basis of our doxologies, contains the names of the three, as does also the baptismal formula given by the Master himself. There are also frequent references to them individually, in which, now to one and now to another, are ascribed the names, attributes, work and praise of God.

At the giving of the law, God said: "I am the Lord thy God." John declared that Christ, the Word, which was made flesh, was God. Christ himself said: "I and my Father are one." The same truth had been announced in prophecy. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given"; "and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father." His name, Immanuel, "God with us," was an announcement of his deity. So was the promise that his name should be called "Jehovah our righteousness." The disciples knew him as "God blessed forever," "the Almighty," the "King of kings and Lord of lords," and he is divinely addressed: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" In these and numerous other passages the names of God are applied to Christ.

In other passages the Holy Spirit is dis-

tinguished in the same way. Some of these passages are obscure, and require comparison of Scripture with Scripture to bring out their force. Utterances ascribed to God in one place are in another ascribed to the Holy Ghost. One passage, however, is so plain that standing alone it would sustain the doctrine of the deity of the Spirit. Peter, speaking to Ananias, said: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." There is also the much disputed passage in First John: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

The attributes and works of God are ascribed alike to the Father, Son and Spirit. Each is spoken of as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Each is represented as the Creator. A comparison of the first chapter of Genesis with the first of John and the 104th Psalm shows this clearly. "God created the heavens and the earth." "All things were made by him;" that is, Christ. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created." These three assertions can be reconciled only when we accept the truth that the Father, the Son and the



Spirit are one God. It is just here worthy of notice, though some do not regard it as bearing on the question, that the name of God used in the first chapter of Genesis is in the plural, and that God is represented as saying: "Let us make man in our own image." The same plural form is used in the giving of the law: "Jehovah, our Elohim, is one."

To each of the three is ascribed supernatural power for the regeneration and sanctification of men. Each is to be worshiped and his favor entreated. The Book of the Revelation is full of praise to the Son, who is declared worthy to receive honor and glory and blessedness, even as the Father is worthy. His grace is invoked in the apostolic benediction, as is that of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Baptism into the name of the three is an act of the highest worship, an acknowledgment of their deity, and a pledge of service. The rejection of the Son is declared to be the rejection of the Father, and the sin against the Holy Ghost is named as the one sin which has no forgiveness, either in this world or the next.

We freely admit that the doctrine of the three persons in one God involves myste-

ries which we can not explain, but mysteries are to be expected when we deal with the infinite. He who tries to limit God to the finite measure of the human mind, lacks the first conception of his character. Eternity and infinity are as incomprehensible as triunity. The thought of a being without beginning or end, or any limitation, is as foreign to finite thought as that of the three persons of the Godhead. The Bible is full of mysteries. The incarnation of Christ, the unity of the divine and the human, is the great mystery of godliness; a duality no less marvelous than the trinity. God's dealings in providence are mysterious. The operation of the Spirit upon men's souls is mysterious; the natural birth and the new birth, the laws of electricity and of light and of grace, all are mysterious. Should we not expect something above and beyond us, too deep and vast for our understanding, in the being who ordained these laws? If we can not understand his providence, shall we stumble at his Word? If all our scientific study leaves us in doubt as to the operation of his most familiar agents, shall we doubt because we can not find him out to perfection? Nay, rather let us rejoice

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that while clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. We can not know him to perfection, but we can trust him and serve him, and seek and be sure of his favor.

The doctrine of the trinity, though itself beyond our understanding, helps to make real many things in the divine character. God is a father. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Christ as the Son is not only our Savior, but our brother, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, heart of our heart, and soul of our soul; tempted in all points like as we are, and able to succor us when we are tempted. The Spirit is an abiding helper and teacher and comforter. "God with us" is a reality. Our baptism signifies and seals our engrafting to Christ, who is one with the Father and Spirit. The benediction which we receive with bowed heads is an assurance of our Father's grace, our Savior's love and the all-prevailing help and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

## CREATION.

Some things are so certain that they need no proof. Human footprints in a desert prove that some one has walked there. The prints could not make themselves nor come by accident. A house in the desert proves that a builder with intelligence and skill has wrought there.

The relation of cause and effect is not always so apparent as in these illustrations, but the principle is established. Every effect must have a cause. A clock proves a clock-maker; a piano, a piano-maker; a ship, a ship-builder. A book proves an author, a printer and a manufacturer of printing machinery. A railway with cars suited to its track, and with bridges, tunnels and switches, proves not a builder only and a maker of machinery, but a designer and controlling mind.

Philosophers have recognized this argument and have sought the cause which is behind the universe. There must be a cause. The world did not make itself nor come by accident. The sun and moon did

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not happen to be what they are. Neither did the law of gravitation, nor the law of reproduction and growth. The adaptation of light to the eye, of air to the lungs and of food to the body can not be mere chance. As a house proves a builder, so a world proves a creator. So the evidences of design in the eye and in other organs, and indeed in the whole universe, prove a designer.

Unaided philosophy, however, though recognizing this principle of causation, failed to solve the problem of the universe. It was necessary for God to announce himself as the creator. The opening sentence of the Bible is an advance upon all the possible results of human scholarship. It is a declaration that God, the eternal and self-existent, is the first cause and absolute author of all things.

In the inspired narrative of creation important facts are stated in the fewest possible words, with almost no rehearsal of details. These facts are plain to the humblest mind, while beyond them the wisest can only speculate. Who shall attempt to fix the date of "the beginning"? Who can tell anything about it? We only know that in the beginning God was, and that

he created the heavens and the earth. The strongest word which could be selected is used to describe absolute creation, the making out of nothing of all materials.

God did not at once produce these material things in finished forms, but simply called them into being. Some say they were star-dust, filling immeasurable space and having the potency of future worlds and life. It may be so; we can not tell, for the Scripture does not affirm it. It only says that God created them. Afterwards—we do not know how long; perhaps immediately, perhaps after myriads of years—the earth assumed its separate identity. Even then, however, it was not like the world to-day. It was without form, empty and dark. Here some give wings to fancy, claiming that certain changes were in progress, and estimating the number of years required. They may or may not be correct,—the Scripture does not say, and there is no other authoritative testimony. After this came light, the dissipation of vapors which enshrouded the earth, the separation of land and water, vegetation, the sun and moon, fish, fowl and beasts of the field, and last of all, man. Each had its time and all were declared good.

Here, again, some follow theories detailing the various steps, and declaring how long the evening and morning of each day must have been. They may be right, but no man can prove it. The word translated "day" may mean a day of twenty-four hours, or an indefinite period. God could have made the world in six solar days, or he could have taken a longer time. We need to guard against the realistic speculation of Milton, which some confuse with inspiration, as well as against the more scientific speculation of modern times. The record is plain, and we need not go beyond it. Mr. Beecher, speaking of evolution, says that "an hypothesis is a glorious guess." All theories beyond what is written as to the steps in creation are guesses, glorious possibly, but only guesses.

The crowning act of creation was the making of man, and here, as at every preceding step, we find mystery. We do not know the method of Adam's creation. The record is that God created man in his own image, that "the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Whether this



creation was instantaneous, and followed by an immediate inbreathing of divine life, or whether God worked by slow, mysterious processes, we do not know. Those who contend for any details beyond the record must bring the proof. Some believe that Adam was evolved through many forms and myriads of years, and not a few Christian scholars believe that after such evolution God breathed into the perfected physical form the breath of life, and that man then became man. All this is hypothesis or guessing. No one can prove it. The most its advocates can claim is that it seems to them to explain some facts, that it furnishes a working theory according to which investigation may proceed, and that it does no violence to the story in Genesis.

It is wise to avoid positive assertions which can not be verified. The facts are simple and plain. God created the heaven and the earth. He created man. Afterwards he created woman out of man, and the two were given dominion over other creatures, and commanded to increase and multiply and replenish the earth. All this we receive by faith, because God has declared it. "By faith we understand that

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the worlds were made by the word of God, so that things which are made were not made of things which do appear."

The study of creation reveals the character of the Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God." "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." "The invisible things of him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." The deity, power, wisdom, goodness and justice of God are so manifest that men who refuse to serve him, and meet the punishment of sin, can blame no one but themselves.

The purpose of creation is the divine glory—"The Lord hath made all things for himself"—and yet so identified is his glory with the happiness of men that all things work together for good to those who serve him. They that glorify him shall enjoy him forever.

## THE FALL.

The Bible history of man is that he was made in the image of God; that he was holy and happy; that he disobeyed the command of God; that his nature was corrupted, and that he lost communion with God, and became a subject of wrath, liable to punishment, both in this life and forever.

All this may be said of Adam, the father of the race, and of Eve, the first mother, individually and as the representative of their posterity. God placed them under law, announcing in advance the penalty of disobedience. Eating of the fruit of a certain tree was made the test of their loyalty to their Creator, and death was declared to be the punishment of disobedience.

We do not know what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which stood in the midst of the Garden was, nor why the particular command was given, nor why Satan should have been allowed in the Garden, nor even why man should have been tempted at all; but the fact stands revealed that God, for his own wise purposes, put

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man to a test, and that man under this test failed and fell.

We do not know how God breathed into man the breath of life, nor exactly what is included in the statement that man was "made in the image of God," but we do know that there was a communication of spiritual life, and that man was endued in some measure with the divine attributes; that he was wise, pure, just, good and true, and that he had knowledge and power to do all that God commanded. He was not infinite in these attributes, as God is. Neither was he unchangeable. He was free to obey or disobey, and responsible for his acts. Disobedience carried with it its own penalty. To eat was to die. The first transgression was the seed of death. In the day that they ate of the fruit death began. Their hearts did not then cease to beat, for that was not the meaning of the words. They died spiritually. They were no longer holy and happy. Their bodies also partook of the curse, and became the prey of disease. Forces began to operate which in time took them to their graves.

What was true of our first parents individually was true of them in their representative capacity. They sinned and suf-

ferred, not for themselves alone, but for their posterity. It was the law of creation that every living thing should bring forth after its own kind, and this is still the law. Diseased parents transmit diseases to their children, just as they transmit various peculiarities. No law is more plainly written in nature than the law of heredity. It is written also in the Scriptures: "In Adam all die." "By one man's offense death reigned." The father of the race was its representative and federal head, and his life is perpetuated in it. Whatever taint was in his blood, whatever corruption ruled in his soul, rules in it. The doctrine of original sin is simply a theological statement of the law of heredity. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That which is born of sinful man is sinful man.

The fall of man was complete. He did not merely stumble. His act was not one whose effects he could throw off, and from which he could recover. The line between obedience and disobedience was clearly drawn. Total depravity is a harsh term, but it expresses perfectly the result of the fall. Let us be sure, however, that we understand it. It means not that man is as bad as he can be, but that he is all bad.

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His whole nature is sinful. A child inheriting the results of a father's sin may not show it in any offensive form, but if its blood is diseased, it is all diseased. The blood is the life, and corruption which touches it is total corruption. The sin of Adam poisoned the fountain-head of humanity. "All mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression." Man inherits an evil heart, and from this come all other evils. His nature is sinful, and his life is like it. "They go astray as soon as they be born." They are prone to sin as the sparks are to fly upward. "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not."

The history of man to this point is a sad history. "Sin reigns unto death." The whole race is in the bondage of corruption. No nation or tribe is free from the taint of the fall. The fact of universal sin is proof of the unity of the race, though it is not the only proof. It is easy for those who speculate as to the method of creation to go further and assume different creations, with different lines of descent for different races of men, but such assumptions have no basis of fact. The Scriptures plainly assert that God hath made of one blood all

nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and this is in accord with scientific investigation. The philological argument which identifies great numbers of words in the primitive languages of the new world and of islands with the words from the earliest languages of the Old World, is conclusive. So is that from similarity of customs. So are the physiological arguments based on the similarity of all races of men, the positive differences between the lowest races of men and the highest animals, and the fertility of mixed races of men. The race is one in origin and one in the fall. The seed of sin, moreover, has everywhere developed into actual transgression. The picture drawn in the first chapter of Romans is a true picture. There is no child born without the taint of original sin, and no man is free from actual transgression.

This, however, is not the end of man's history. The story of the fall does not end with spiritual death, but with the promise of redemption. The "seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The Bible views man not as a sinner only, but as the subject of salvation. There is a cure for sin, a specific for the taint of original corruption. One of our own race, though not



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"by ordinary generation," has opened a way of salvation, and we rejoice that as sin abounded, so grace abounds; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our study of the fall is a prelude to the story of redemption. This must be kept in mind. It is possible in the multitude of riddles which may be proposed as to the origin of evil, and the reason of our danger, to forget that our concern is with the way of escape. He who is in danger from fire does not stop to discuss the laws of combustion. How shall we escape? Knowing our danger, let us flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. Let us be admonished also that God's word is law. What he saith unto us, that we are to do. Every one has his test. It may be the eating of a forbidden fruit, the gratification of an appetite or passion or ambition, the surrender of something for which we see no reason, or possibly a succession of trials and temptations. No matter what the form or the place, the test is one of obedience. The great test is the acceptance of His mercy in Christ. There was no hope for our first parents except in obedience. There is no salvation except in the obedience of faith.

## HUMAN FREEDOM.

The words of Jesus, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," are true of every lost soul. "Whosoever will" may be saved.

The doctrine of man's freedom, of his power to choose, and of his responsibility, is the doctrine both of the Bible and of common sense. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." "Come unto me." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." He who thinks at all knows that he can choose the right or the wrong. The Westminster Confession of Faith, stating the doctrine of God's sovereignty, and that "he has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass," adds: "Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

Some stumble at this statement. They

say that if God has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass, there can be no human freedom; that the two are contradictions, and can not exist together. Others more logical and more Scriptural say: "We know that God is sovereign and man free. The Scriptures declare both doctrines. We can not believe in God divested of his sovereignty, and as for our freedom we are choosing and refusing all the time. One might as well tell us that we do not see or breathe as that we do not exercise the power of choice."

How then do we reconcile the two? We do not reconcile them; and are not called to. We simply admit that they involve a mystery too deep for us. Here again the Westminster Confession puts the truth wisely when it says that the "high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care." We are not to dogmatize beyond what is written, but in humble dependence upon God to meet the responsibilities which he has laid upon us.

It is the duty of the church to preach as the apostles preached, that "all men everywhere should repent," and turn to God and serve him. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached that the deeds of men

were "by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God," and when men asked, "What shall we do?" said, "Repent and be baptized." "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Salvation is of God, and yet men are to save themselves. In his second epistle he exhorted, "Make your calling and election sure." The Bible abounds in exhortations to seek the Lord, to forsake sin, to repent and believe. It declares God's love for men, and his will that none perish, but that all turn and live. The doctrine of election is not inconsistent with these doctrines, and the church fails of its duty if it does not strive to preach the Gospel to every creature. No man can plead the doctrine of God's sovereignty as a reason for his own neglect of the offers of salvation, or charge the loss of his soul to the fact that he is not one of the elect. The Gospel message to him is, "Believe and thou shalt be saved." Now is the day of salvation. No Christian can plead God's sovereignty as a reason for his neglect or want of zeal. Christ said: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should bring forth

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fruit. His election is not only to salvation, but to service. Believing in the sovereignty of God, his duty is obedience. Knowing that his salvation is all of grace, he strives to grow in grace, and to abound in the work of the Lord.

## REPROBATION.

The word "reprobation" means disapproval or abandonment, and in theology describes the state of those not chosen to eternal life. Another word, "preterition," describes these as "passed by," or "left out."

Many Christians can not believe that any are thus "passed by" or abandoned. A minister in a recently published sermon says: "The very thought of any soul being condemned from all eternity shocks me inexpressibly." So it does all good people, but this proves nothing against the doctrine. The burning of an excursion steamer and the death of a thousand women and children shocks a whole nation. So do many mysterious providences. The most startling and incomprehensible and terrifying things may be true. The doctrine of future punishment is a fearful doctrine, but the "terror of the Lord" does not make void the truth of the Lord. The death of good people may shock us even though we know that it is well with them; how much more

that of men who die in sin cursing God and tempting an eternity of woe.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is no less shocking than the doctrine of reprobation. Indeed, reprobation and future punishment are the same doctrine viewed from different standpoints. We are creatures of time. We see how "lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." God, who is yesterday, to-day and forever the same, sees this from all eternity. Condemnation in the mind of God, in the beginning, and at the last judgment, are one and the same, and they are because of sin. No man is passed by or condemned but for his sin.

We must not assume that God's decrees were because of his foreknowledge. The apostle says, "whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate," but this does not describe an order of events. Foreknowledge and predestination are like two spokes of a wheel—both move at the same time. God is not a man that he must study and weigh evidence and conclude and act on his conclusions. The decrees of God and his foreknowledge include man's acts and all other influences and secondary causes. His



purposes and judgments are not arbitrary. He knew from all eternity how men would stand at the day of judgment. He ordained from all eternity "what he himself would do" on the day of judgment. Everything that he does is from all eternity, and everything is infinitely wise. Our difficulty in the whole matter is our finite inability to comprehend the infinite. We know his purposes as they come to pass. We may see their reason in various causes bringing them about, or we may not. They may seem wise or unwise. It is not of man to judge his Creator. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." He is a God of love as well as justice, and of justice as well as love.

God's decree hinders no man's salvation. There is an unpardonable sin, but the fear that one has committed it should not keep him from Christ. The promises are, "Yea and amen," "Whosoever will, let him come," "He that believeth shall be saved." To refuse salvation because one thinks he may not be elected, or may have committed the unpardonable sin, is the most absurd folly. No man should ignore plain truth because other truth is

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mysterious. The doctrine of reprobation is mysterious, but the commands, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and "Preach the Gospel to every creature," are simple. Faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, is of more value than a volume of speculations as to election or possible reprobation.

## PROVIDENCE.

The sparrow is small among birds and of little value; yet not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's care. Christ by this thought illustrates the doctrine of God's providence. He who made the birds cares for them. He who made man provides for him. The Creator of the universe upholds and directs it.

The Bible is full of the same truth. It represents God as upholding all things by "the word of his power." "By him all things consist." He governs the natural universe. He binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and guides Arcturus and his sons. The earth revolves about the sun, not only because he started it in its circle ages ago, but because he makes it revolve. He "commandeth the sun." The rain falls not only in obedience to laws established at the beginning, but because "he sendeth his rain." He "saith to the snow, Be thou upon the earth, and by the breath of God frost is given." The fruits of the earth grow by his will and care. He "giveth the

increase." "He holdeth our soul in life"; "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." He is the preserver, supporter and governor of all things.

God's providence is as real as his work of creation. He is the maker and operator of the universe. A poetical writer speaks of material substance as the body, of which God is the soul; but this is misleading. God is in all things, and at the same time apart from and above all things. The universe is not his body, but his creation—the product of his wisdom and power. Man is not a mere manifestation of his being, but a different being, produced by him, endued with individuality and personal responsibility.

The universe is under law; but the changes which take place are not the arbitrary results of law. God is active in them. He upholds his law. Its operations are under his care and directions. It is the method by which he works. We do not know, and no finite mind can know fully, the secret of God's laws or of his omnipresence and infinite efficiency. We can not explain the relation of causes which we see effecting results, to other causes behind them, and to God, the great first

cause; but we know there is a relation. One looking upon machinery may trace the power which moves it through shafts and belts to the engine, or his search may end with a wire which goes into the ground. He knows, in one case as well as the other, that there is an engine—a motor of some kind, which explains its motion. So we know that every effect has its cause, and that behind all the machinery of worlds, and of society, and of individual experience, there is a great first cause.

We know this. We can not see all the connections, or understand what seem to be contrary motions. We can not explain the presence and power of sin, or the afflictions which vex good people, or the calamities which terrify multitudes; but we know that there are explanations, and that back of everything else is the intelligence, power and goodness of God. He is “wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,” and though his ways may be mysterious, he does all things well. Moreover, in his providence all things work together for good to his people. If we are wise, we will not waste time on riddles, but give our best thought to matters of fact and duty.

It is a fact that we are dependent upon

God's providence. In him we live and move and have our being. "It is not of man that walketh, to direct his steps." Our duty is to recognize this dependence, and accept what he gives, whether in blessing or promise, with thanksgiving and faith. We have neither power nor wisdom to provide for ourselves. We can not call the rain or the sunshine. We plant and cultivate, but the increase is of God. We can not hold our souls in life. We can avail ourselves of temporal and spiritual gifts only as God gives power to accept them. One thing, however, we can do; we can trust in him. When fortune is adverse, we think of adversity as a means of blessing. The doctrine of providence makes it possible to rejoice even in tribulation, knowing its fruits. God "remembereth our frame." "He knoweth us altogether," and he "doth not afflict for naught."

No certainty is so strong as that of faith. He who depends upon himself and his own resources must fear failure and loss, but he who depends upon one whose resources and love are infinite has no reason to fear.

God is holy, and every act of his providence is holy. He is everywhere present and everywhere efficient. There is no such thing as chance. What seem to us acci-

dents are parts of the divine machinery. Even when the lot, the symbol of chance, is cast into the lap, "the whole disposal of it is with the Lord." He is infinitely wise, and nothing he sends can be ill timed or unfortunate. He is all-powerful, and his providence can not be anything but full and effective. He promises that it will endure. "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." There may be failures here and there, and distresses, but the world is his, and he will care for it while it needs care. We are his children, and he is "mindful" of us.

God's providence is accordance to a plan and in consistent pursuance of his eternal purpose. "Known unto him are all his works, from the foundation of the world." Creation and providence are parts of one whole. As the Lord hath made, so he sustains all things for himself. All his works praise him. To this end they were created and are sustained. The Lord hath made all things for himself. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." This is man's chief end, his first duty and his highest good.



## SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

A popular dictionary defines "special providence" as "the special intervention in, or administration of, the laws of nature and life by God for special ends," and, as an illustration, quotes: "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow." Another defines it as "a particular act of divine interposition in favor of individuals for special ends."

The Scriptures teach that God "knoweth all the fowls of the mountain." His care of any one of them is special only as all providence is special, or as circumstances render it specially noticeable. So, in the history of men or churches or nations, there are deliverances from danger or supplies in time of need, which call for recognition and thanksgiving, and which may be referred to as special providence, but which have their place in the established order of the divine care and control. To us they are special; to God they may be the most ordinary exercises of his power. A certain man never ceased to be thankful, and

to regard it a special providence that a shower of rain drove him into a church where he was influenced to accept Christ, and where he met one who for fifty years walked life's pathway with him. He was justified in his conviction. Many like him have felt that God dealt with them in special mercy, causing things to work together for their spiritual and temporal good in marvelous ways. Viewed from the human side, life is full of special providences—special because they come at special times or meet special needs. From a higher standpoint every creature is seen to be always and in every place the object of divine solicitude and help.

There is close relation between the doctrines of providence and divine sovereignty. All that God does is according to his eternal purpose. "Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world." Every act, whether ordinary or special, has its place in the divine plan; every sunrise and every eclipse; every danger and every deliverance; every need and every supply. There are no accidents with him, no divine afterthoughts to correct mistakes. He is not the God of the valleys only or of the hills alone, powerful in one place and weak

in another, or strong and good at one time and not at another. He is from everlasting to everlasting the same. We take comfort in the truth that God is omnipotent; that he knoweth all our needs; that afflictions do not spring out of the ground, but are sent in mercy, and that there can be no lack to them that fear him. We may in confidence seek first his kingdom and righteousness, knowing that everything necessary to us will be provided.

There is a natural association between the doctrines of providence and prayer. To those who recognize God as the source of all blessing, nothing is more natural than to entreat his favor. Daily mercies demand daily petition and acknowledgment, while special needs demand special prayer, their supply special acknowledgment. The petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," is a recognition of God's daily care. The same petition offered in time of poverty and hunger may be answered in a special provision. The prayer for health offered every day recognizes God's ordinary providence, while the same petition in time of shipwreck or sickness may be answered in what to us is a special and wonderful deliverance.

Christians are justified in special prayer. They are to call upon God in trouble. They

are to make their requests known unto him. When Peter was in prison prayer was made by the church without ceasing for him. In times of public affliction, or of degeneracy, or when the Church longs for an especial outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there is reason for special united prayer. God is ready to send deliverance and bestow special blessings, but he "will be inquired of" to do this for us. The prayers of a righteous man avail much with him. The Apostle James illustrates this by reference to Elijah's prayer, first that there might be no rain, and afterwards that rain might come. God answered by withholding and afterwards by giving abundantly.

The miracles of which record is made in the Scriptures were special providences. The giving of water and manna in the wilderness, and the feeding of five thousand by our Savior, were for the supply of special needs. The deliverances of David from Saul and of Peter from prison were special manifestations of divine care. The raising of the sons of the Shunammite and of the widow of Nain were special exercises of divine power. The giving of the law on Mt. Sinai, and the giving of the Bible through holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, were special

providences in the highest sense. They were God's provision for the spiritual instruction and government of his people, while the incarnation, work, death and resurrection of Christ were the greatest of all special providences. Sin is poverty and helplessness. It is hunger and thirst; it is a leprosy and a fever, and its end is death. The bread and water of life, the balm for spiritual ills, the true riches, are things no man could secure for himself. God by the special gift of his Son has supplied them to all who accept his bounty. This great provision is the assurance of all else, special or ordinary, which his children require. If he spared not his own Son, but gave him, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? We must receive them with thanksgiving. What shall we render for the greatest of these benefits, the gift of his Son? We will take the cup of salvation; we will accept the gift; we will call upon his name; we will pay our vows; we will meet our obligations. This was David's thought when he meditated upon divine mercy, and it is a thought which naturally comes to all who realize the providence of God.

God's providence is no excuse for idleness or the neglect of any duty. "Trust in the Lord, and do good." Faith and effort belong together. God has joined them and man can not put them asunder. He gives the increase, but we must plow and plant and gather. He may send food by ravens, but one who waits for what he might earn will suffer.

As with temporal, so with spiritual provisions. They are conditioned upon man's diligence. He must take the cup of salvation; he must lay hold on the hope set before him; he must use the means of grace; he must search the Scriptures, be instant in prayer, and do with his might what his hand finds to do. Neglecting these, he can not expect the Spirit in some special and wonderful way to convert and sanctify him or to use him for the accomplishment of any great work.

God's providences are not to be rashly interpreted. Christ warned his disciples against the common disposition to regard afflictions as the punishment of sin. "Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Great calami-

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ties, affecting individuals or families or nations, may be special judgments. It is not for us to say. Of one thing, however, we are sure, such providences are manifestations of God's power and warnings to all who witness them. If we ourselves are afflicted, we may esteem them special admonitions. Whether afflicted or not, if conscious of sin, we are to heed them as calls to repentance.



## PROPHECY.

The Bible may be likened to a picture puzzle which can be put together into one complete picture, or separated into many parts. Each book is a separate part, but each so fits in its place that the whole is a perfect work. The fact that the parts fit is proof that they belong together. That they make a perfect whole is proof that they were intended to do so. The various shaped pieces of a picture do not more surely show design and unity than do the parts of the Bible. Lines which cross different pieces of a picture are not more marked than the lines which run through the different inspired books.

To illustrate this, take the prophecies which refer to Nineveh or Babylon, or Egypt, and place them side by side with subsequent history; or take the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, touching the land of Canaan, or to Moses touching the future of Israel; or, better still, take the prophecies of a Messiah and place them beside the story of their fulfillment

in the New Testament. The first book of the Old Testament declares the Messiah. Like declarations are in the Psalms and Prophets. Moses and David wrote of Christ. It was not only necessary that Christ should suffer and rise again, but "thus it was written." The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the closing chapters of Matthew are parts of one story. Bethlehem and Calvary and the grave of the rich man and Bethany belong to the Old as well as to the New Testament.

This unity of Scripture was the Savior's argument when he talked with the two by the way, and afterward when he met the eleven. "He expounded unto them in all the Scripture the things concerning himself." They read the Scriptures blindly until "He opened their understanding to understand them." Then the law, the prophets, the Psalms and the Master's life were seen as different volumes of one book; or rather as a mosaic, every piece of which had its place in the perfect work. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, and the other disciples in their preaching, declared the unity of Scripture as Christ declared it to them. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." They preached "Christ which before was preached."

Stephen and Philip and Paul also spake with the same understanding of the ancient Scriptures.

To read the Bible profitably, our eyes must be opened. We must see the connection of, and be able to fit together, the law, the psalms, the prophets, the gospels, the epistles and the apocalypse. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. David spake of the resurrection of Christ, that "his soul was not left in hell." To Christ "give all the prophets witness." The keynote of inspiration is in the words spoken to John by the voice which came out of the throne: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Passing such general prophecies as simply declare a Messiah, among them the promises to Adam and Eve, and to Abraham, we note first those which fix the time of appearing.

In Genesis xlix., in the blessing given by Jacob to his sons, it is written: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Shiloh means the Peacemaker, the Prince of Peace, the Messiah. The condition of political affairs at the time of Christ's birth met this prophecy. Jerusa-

lem was still the center of a kingdom. Herod was a Jew and of a Jewish line, and he was king. Though the Roman power had been extended over the land, Israel had not ceased to be a nation, nor Judah to be a tribe with a tribal scepter. The native scepter had not passed away. The promise was fulfilled. The scepter did not depart till Christ, the Shiloh, came. Before Christ's death, however, it did depart, for the land became a Roman province, and had a Roman Governor. Could any prophecy and its fulfillment dovetail more perfectly?

There were also prophecies as to the place and circumstances of Christ's birth. In Micah v. are these words: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Turn from this to Matthew ii. and read: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea."

Again it was written: "There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." This the Jews understood to refer to Christ. It was fulfilled when Christ was born of the seed of David.

Isaiah wrote: "Behold a virgin shall con-

ceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Seven hundred years after this the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream and said: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus." Immanuel and Jesus are one and the same. Immanuel means "God with us." Christ was with us not only in that he lived upon our earth, but in that he took our human nature. He was both God and man.

In Malachi iii. it was promised: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Isaiah also predicted: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Turning to Matthew iii., the fulfillment: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Here, however, we meet a difficulty which troubled the pious interpreters of prophecy. Bethlehem had been fixed as Christ's birth-place, and yet there were prophecies which led many to think he would be born in

Egypt. Hosea wrote: "I called my son out of Egypt." Turning again to Matthew, we read that after the visit of the wise men, "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." "And he was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

There was a prophecy also that "the child should be called a Nazarene," and some looked on Nazareth as the place of promise. This was fulfilled. When Joseph returned from Egypt "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene."

The prophecies regarding Christ's life and work are equally explicit. Isaiah described his work in these words: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

Matthew records the visit of John's disciples to Jesus, and says: "In that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and to



many that were blind he gave sight." Then Jesus, answering, said unto them: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard—how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." In connection with the same prophecy read also from almost any chapter of the Gospel how Christ healed the blind, deaf, dumb, lame and diseased.

The prophecies respecting Christ's death and their fulfillment are no less marked. Note the following from Isaiah liii. with the story of their fulfillment, from the New Testament, chiefly from the Gospel of Matthew:

"He is despised and rejected of men." "Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "And Jesus said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "If it be possible let this cup pass."

"We hid as it were our faces from him." "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled."

"He was despised." "And they did spit



in his face and buffeted him, saying Prophecy."

"He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." "And the chief priests accused him of many things, but he answered nothing" (Mark xv. 3).

"He was taken from prison and from judgment." "Pilate said, I find no fault with him." Yet he gave sentence of death.

"He was numbered with transgressors." "There were also two thieves crucified with him."

"And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." "There came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph and begged the body of Jesus . . . and laid it in his own new tomb."

We might make similar comparison of the Psalms and the Gospels. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption" (Psa. xvi. 10). This was a promise of the resurrection. Peter so applies it in the second chapter of Acts.

Psalm xxii. is particularly a prophecy of the crucifixion. It reads: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delight-

eth in him." Turn now to the New Testament: "Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him, with the elders, said, He saved others, himself he can not save. He trusted God, let him deliver him" (Matt. xxvii. 41).

Other verses might be quoted and their fulfillment found in the Gospels: "I am poured out like water." "All my bones are out of joint." "They pierced my hands and my feet." "They parted my garments and cast lots upon my vesture." These were all prophecies written centuries before Christ, but they read like a history of the crucifixion.

Prophecies in regard to Christ's exaltation are equally abundant: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." "He shall be exalted and be very high." As a response to such prophecies Paul wrote: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him."

The same truth is set forth in the Revelation. The angel who declares things which are to be, commences the accomplishment of all prophecy when he says: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

As the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, it should be the spirit of all

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Christian teaching as well as of Christian lives. What grander theme is there than that upon which the whole Bible is written? Paul desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. There are interpreters who count the years of Daniel, and identify the beasts of the Revelation. They find all manner of modern things in the Bible prophecies—the Pope, the Suez Canal, the United States, etc. They may be right or wrong, but this we know, they miss the central truth. The testimony of Jesus is the heart of the Bible. Jesus, born according to promise, crucified, dead and buried, raised from the dead and exalted, to be a Prince and Savior.

## SPIRITUAL VISION.

A writer calls the Bible "an unrivaled collection of classics," of which "pious, credulous souls make an oracle." He has not grown superstitious, but would be "second to none in asserting the great literary, historical and philosophical value of the Scriptures." He would give them a place among the greatest writings of all ages.

His words call to mind an old story. Hodge was an English peasant, who worked till 40 years old in the mill where his fathers had worked before him. Being proud of England's greatness, he was anxious to see the sea; and so, after much preparation, journeyed to Brighton. He was disappointed. The sea was no great matter. He told his neighbors how he reached Brighton at night, and went at once to the dock and found some stone steps, and went to the water and peered into it. "And thur wur neth'n uv it; t'wur just loike our millpond when yo go afore mornin' to turn on the water!"

Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," for

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"they are spiritually discerned." The Bible is an ocean to him whose eyes are opened, but to him that walketh in darkness it may seem a pond, valuable only as it furnishes a stream to his literary or historical mill.

Many Christians study the Bible by very dim light. Want of faith, or a sinful life, clouds their vision. God's Word is as the ocean in a fog, except that the fog is on their hearts, and not on the Word. We may all pray the prayer of the Psalmist: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

## MIRACLES.

When the Jews asked Jesus, "What sign showest thou, seeing thou doest these things?" they voiced the feeling of humanity in all ages that the man who claims to speak with divine authority must show his credentials. When Moses appeared before Pharaoh he showed signs or performed miracles. Joshua and Elijah and other prophets and leaders gave like proof that they were sent of God.

Christ claimed that miracles proved his Messiahship. "Believe me," he said, "for the very works' sake." And again: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." His judgment was that those who, after his miracles, did not believe in him, had sinned both against him and his Father.

The apostles rested Christ's Messiahship on his miracles. Peter said: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as

ye yourselves also know." He appealed to common knowledge and conviction. Early in Christ's ministry Nicodemus said: "No man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him." And the record is that many "believed on his name when they saw the miracles which he did."

Infidelity has viciously assailed the doctrine of miracles. It claims that a miracle is contrary to natural law, and therefore impossible. Christianity, on the other hand, holds that "with God all things are possible," and that as to natural law, we know very little of it. Advanced science only touches its surface. Every now and then a great discovery forces changes in our interpretation of it.

Christ's miracles were not seriously disputed during his lifetime. Some charged him with deceiving the people, but they could not deny his works. The raising of Lazarus was seen by too many people. The feeding of five thousand could not be denied. Even as Paul declared of the resurrection: "This thing was not done in a corner." Christ's enemies did not deny his miracles. "This man doeth many miracles." The worst they could say was: "He casteth



out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of devils." The explanation was an acknowledgment.

Some in our day think to serve Christianity and make it more plausible by eliminating the supernatural, or at least by finding natural explanations of miracles. They suppose that the Red Sea was simply driven back by "a strong east wind"; that manna was only a seed blown from trees or grass; that when Moses smote the rock he happened to strike a spring, and that many of Christ's works were the result of personal magnetism or other natural causes. This is not the Scripture method. Moreover, it ignores the object for which miracles were given. They were God's testimony to those who performed them.

That some miracles may be explained by natural laws does not make them less miraculous. The "strong east wind" sent by the Lord at the time his people were ready to cross the sea was his interposition in their behalf. Moreover, some miracles can not be so accounted for. If they are according to any natural law, it is hidden from us. The wise plan is to acknowledge the power of God and his testimony to his messengers. Let one satisfy

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himself that God is infinite in wisdom and power, and the matter of miracles involves no difficulty.

Christ did not always perform miracles when challenged to do so. On one occasion he refused, referring his challengers to the sign of Jonas the prophet, and on another he simply said: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," referring in each case to the great crowning miracle of his own resurrection from the dead—a miracle which stands as God's testimony to his deity and redemptive work.

The question is sometimes asked whether holy men may not still have power to work miracles for the benefit of the church or of particular people. The answer is in the words of John, who, speaking of signs and wonders which Jesus did, says: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." The purpose of miracles was to identify the prophets who testified of a Messiah to come, and Christ himself, and the apostles. This purpose has been accomplished. There is no reason why any one should doubt Christ's deity, atonement or power to save, and therefore further

miracles are unnecessary. When the rich man in torment asked that Lazarus might be sent to his brethren to warn them, Abraham replied: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." So if men will not be convinced by the proof already given, they can not be convinced by any proof.

No man can say, of course, that there will be no more miracles, for no man knows all the secrets of the Almighty; but so long as this dispensation lasts there is no reason to expect them.

## "THE LOGOS."

The opening words of the Gospel of John were a startling declaration to thinkers of the time. In them the gospel asserts itself, not as the story of uneducated, enthusiastic men, but as a well-grounded philosophy. The "Logos," or, as we translate it, "The Word," was a philosophical term. It meant the divine intelligence, or wisdom, or reason, or, perhaps better, the sum of all truth. This "Logos" John declared had been "made flesh" and dwelt with men. We can better realize the force of his words if we put ourselves in his place, studying the condition of things before "the Word was made flesh," the extent of man's knowledge, the character of his worship, and his hope for the future.

The world never was without a religion. Man knows without teaching that there is a God, and that he is entitled to worship. "The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Some have more of the religious instinct than others, but all have written in their nature enough knowledge of God and of his law

to render them responsible for sin. Naturally, therefore, they seek to find out about and to propitiate God. Read the proof of this in the history of heathen nations, in their incantations and sacrifices, efforts to win the favor of their deities. Read it also in the history of Philosophy, in strivings to find out the truth, in theories and systems, the expression of hope and disappointment. Man has always been feeling after God and after future happiness, if haply he might find them. Nature is an oracle to which he puts his questions. Is there a God? She answers Yes! Will he punish sin? Yes! Has he no mercy? Is there any hope? She is dumb. Man stands as the modern Egyptian stands before the Sphinx or the great pyramid. He may wonder and speculate, and hope and despair, but there is no answer. He knows that there is a secret locked in the stone, but he can not find it out. So he knows there is a divine intelligence, the secret of truth and life, but he can not lay hold of it. His philosophy is baffled, and his worship that of an unknown God.

At this crisis comes the gospel, with its declaration: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God has revealed himself. The divine intelligence has ex-

pressed itself in language, or as John has it, in a "Word," which may be seen and heard and understood, and in which are manifest the glory, the grace and truth of God. The first statement of the chapter could not fail to arrest the attention of all interested in the search for truth. "In the beginning was the Word." That is: This Logos, this truth, which all men seek, is from everlasting. Solomon had declared substantially the same thing in the eighth chapter of Proverbs, where Wisdom describes herself as "with God" before the creation, as "one brought up with him," and "daily his delight."

We might stop here to speak of the unchangeableness of truth. Philosophies change, but the one object of philosophy, the Logos, the truth, is always the same. Right and wrong are not mere accidents, the result of human regulation. They are eternal and unchangeable. They are the sanctions of God, and were in the beginning. The foundation of all truth and of all moral obligation is God's will. This was an advance upon the philosophy of John's time. Solomon had, indeed, given Wisdom a personality and associated it with God, but John, by a bold stroke, announced the deity of the "Word." He put

before men the Logos, or sum of truth, for which they had striven, as not only associated with God, but itself divine. "The Word was God."

Some writers find in this simply a poetic statement equal to the phrase, "Wisdom is divine." We prefer to read the words as the assertion that all truth and all wisdom and all right are to be traced back to, and are embodied in, a person, and that person is God.

All the attempts of the old philosophers to find out the truth, or the greatest good, were the search after God—a search which could only end in failure unless God revealed himself. John's declaration was that God has made such a revelation. The Word, the sum of all truth, had become flesh, and dwelt with men.

Words are the expression of thought. "The Word" was the expression of God's thoughts, of his character and purpose for the salvation of men. Christ, the Word made flesh, was the manifestation of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. At Christ's birth the scales dropped from the eyes of our humanity. Worship was no longer ignorant devotion, for the answer to man's yearning after



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truth was come. He bowed no longer to a sphinx, but to a God able and willing to hear and bless. As a recent writer has said, "Natural religion is the worship of an eternal silence, but Christianity is the worship of an eternal Word."



## ATONEMENT.

It is true of Christ in a profounder sense than of other men that he "was born to die." His death was the reason of his birth. He came of his own will to do a work which involved his death. As the time drew near he prayed, "Father, save me from this hour," and added, "For this cause came I unto this hour." During his trial, knowing what death he should die, he said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Then followed the acquittal, "I find no fault in him"; the demand that he be crucified; the scourging; the crown of thorns; the mocking and contempt; the cross; the nails and the spear; and then the cry, "It is finished; Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

Why did he die? He could have called twelve legions of angels, and even the one angel who rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher could have blinded and dismayed his persecutors. It was

necessary that he should die. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." "The wages of sin is death," and man had sinned. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Man could not save himself. If salvation was to be secured, God himself must secure it. "When there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, God pitied and his arm brought salvation." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christ so loved the world as to die for it. The punishment which men could not bear he bore for them. "He was crucified for our offenses." He himself bore our sins in his own body upon the tree. "We are justified by his blood." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Christ gave "himself a ransom for us all." "He became sin for us who knew no sin." "He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "He is the end of the law for righteousness for every one that believeth." The only ex-

planation of Christ's death which meets the language of Scripture and the necessities of men is that he died as the sinner's substitute. 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, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Calvary was the manifestation of divine love. It is an object lesson for all time. It moves the hearts of men and influences them for good; but all this avails nothing if there be no sacrifice for sin and no way of approach to God. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins." So if Christ did not die for our sins, "the just for the unjust," we are still in our sins. If he did not bear their penalty, we must bear it. The only hope of humanity is in the truth that he did bear it, and that whosoever believeth in him is free. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." As "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness," so every man who by faith accepts the righteousness of Christ is counted

righteous. The purpose of Christ's death was that men might be reconciled to God, and made fit for his presence. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Christ's part in the salvation of men has been done. He has made it possible for God to be just and yet justify sinners. This "justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone." This receiving by faith is our part, and it is just as necessary to salvation as that which Christ has done. He has secured terms of reconciliation; we must accept them. He has opened a way of salvation; we must walk in it.

Salvation is offered to all men. It is promised to those only who believe. The atonement is sufficient for the sins of the world. It is efficient only for those who lay hold on the hope set before them. Those who do not believe or who neglect divine mercy are in the way of death. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

The crucifixion of Christ is the central

fact of history. We count dates before and after his birth because his birth was the beginning of the chapter which ended with his death. From the Fall men looked forward, as we look back, to the fullness of time. God manifest in the flesh bearing the penalty of his own law is the mystery of the ages. Angels wonder at it. We rejoice in it. With the inspired apostle we "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement."

Joy moreover begets love. "We love him because he first loved us and because he is altogether lovely." "His love constraineth us." As he has died for us, we will die to sin and live to him. "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." As he came to seek and save the lost, we will above all else seek to make known and persuade men to accept his salvation.

## THE RISEN SAVIOR.

Faith in the resurrection is the test of a rising or falling church. Christ, when asked for a sign proving his authority, referred to his rising from the dead. During his ministry he taught his disciples the details of his betrayal, death and resurrection, saying of himself, "And the third day he shall rise again.'

Such prophetic announcements made their impression upon the disciples. The next day after the crucifixion even "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." The enemies of the Savior feared nothing so much as his resurrection; for, said they, in case he should rise, "the last error shall be worse than the first." By the order of the Roman Governor, who unconsciously served the truth, saying, "Make it as sure as ye can," a guard was set and the stone sealed.

These and other details of the great



miracle of all history—the resurrection of Christ—were given for a purpose: that we “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life through his name.” As to the prophecy of the great event of Christianity, there is no question, either by friend or enemy; and as to the fact of its fulfillment, provision was made for abundant testimony, which the pen of inspiration has put on record, that the Church of Christ in all ages might “know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus who was crucified both Lord and Christ.”

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter, as the spokesman of all the witnesses, declared, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” No better or stronger testimony could be asked by reasonable people. These witnesses followed Jesus in adversity, and were unquestionably intelligent, conscientious and competent.

There was no division among them. He was seen first of the women who came early to the tomb. They had known him in life, and, after some delay incident to the changes which had passed on him, knew him as their risen Lord. He was

known "in the breaking of bread" to the two disciples who met him on the way to Emmaus. The brethren to whom he appeared by the Sea of Tiberias knew him, and ate with him. When the disciples except Thomas saw him they knew him, and even Thomas was afterward satisfied, and said, "My Lord and my God." He appeared a number of times, once to "above five hundred brethren" at one time. This was Paul's argument, while those who had known him were still alive. No one questioned their testimony, and it stands for all time as proof of the resurrection.

The apostles handled this testimony repeatedly in logical and invincible argument. The substance of Paul's preaching was that "Christ must needs have risen again from the dead"; and he does not hesitate to declare the severe alternative—"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

This declaration goes to the very center of the Christian's hope. The precious assurance of the child of God is that he shall awake in the likeness of Christ; that in his flesh he shall look upon his Redeemer; that he shall see Jesus as he is. The resurrection of Christ and that of the Christian stand together. They are either

both false or both true. If Christ is not risen, there is no resurrection of the dead; but if Christ rose from the dead, then they that sleep in Jesus shall also rise. He has taken the sting from death, and robbed the grave of victory.

Naturally the return of Easter in the spring of the year, when buds swell and blossoms unfold, reminds Christians of this doctrine of their faith. The early Christians were in the habit of saluting each other on Easter morning with the exultant phrase, "The Lord is risen." The declaration of the disciples who hastened to the open tomb was "The Lord is risen indeed." In this declaration and the established doctrine, we have a broad and sure foundation for our hope of eternal life for the body and the soul.

## GRACE AND FAITH.

The value of a promise depends on the ability and trustworthiness of the maker. We accept the promise because we believe in the man. So with the promises of the Bible. We accept them because we believe in the God who makes them.

Faith in the Scripture sense is belief in Christ and acceptance of him as a Savior. It is the act "by which we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the Gospel." We are saved by faith, not because there is merit in the faith itself, but because "he is faithful who has promised," and because he is able to fulfill his promises.

Salvation is of God. Faith is a condition or test. Abraham believed God, and "it was counted to him for righteousness." He anticipated the gospel message: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Like all the company of the redeemed before and since Christ's day, he was "justified by faith."

Faith is the greatest power within man's

reach. By faith we remove mountains, stop the mouths of lions, and defeat the plans of the evil one. By faith we secure all that is best in this life and "in the world to come life everlasting."

There are some things, however, that faith can not do. It can not change falsehood into truth or evil into good. Confidence in a dishonest man or a bankrupt does not make his note good. There must be something in the man to justify the confidence. So there must be that in God which justifies faith. Christians should "be ready to give a reason for the hope" that is in them—a hope based not on themselves or on any merit in their faith, but on God and his gracious purpose. Salvation is "through faith," but it is "by grace." It is of man's choice, and yet not of his choice alone, for "it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

When the apostle says, "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," he puts into simple language the profound doctrines of God's sovereignty and man's freedom. Moreover, he so expresses and combines these apparently contradictory doctrines that no man can object to either of them. When

the soul says, "Lord, I believe; I accept thee and thy salvation," it meets the test God has imposed upon it as truly as Adam would have met the test if he had not taken the forbidden fruit. It complies with the conditions of salvation as truly as the chosen people would have complied if they had kept all the commandments. At the same time it knows that salvation is not of right or by its own power, but of God, who loved it and chose it, and inclined it, and gave it power to believe and lay hold of the hope set before it in the Gospel.

Christians have reason to rejoice that salvation is by grace. If it were solely by faith or by any act of their own, or by any mental state, they might be troubled; but if it is by grace, they are safe. Their faith might waver or fail, but God changes not, and his purposes never fail. "Where is boasting then?" "It is excluded" "by the law of faith." Humility follows faith as naturally as a flower comes from the seed. Where is neglect or sinful indulgence or indifference to the salvation of others? All are excluded by the same law of faith. Saved by grace, we are to grow in grace and to make known to others the riches of this grace.

## A PERSONAL SAVIOR.

The Gospel is the proclamation, not of a system of philosophy nor even of a moral code, but of a personal Savior. Many messiahs have spoken to humanity and many systems of religion and philosophy have offered relief from the ills of life and hope for the future; but the Gospel differs from all these. It is the announcement of a person. It is comprehended in a name. Philip, in dealing with the Ethiopian eunuch, "preached to him Jesus." Peter declared, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and Paul, looking to the future, announced that every knee in heaven and earth shall bow to Christ and every tongue confess him Lord.

The whole Gospel is comprehended in the name of Christ. We preach not only his words and what he did, but him. We call upon men to accept not only his precepts, but him. Other leaders have taught truth; He is the truth. Others have pointed out ways; He is the way and the life. Others have demanded obedience; He de-



mands love. Others have offered rewards; He gives himself. Others have lived and taught and left maxims and rules for their disciples; He is with his people always, a Savior, teacher, comforter, helper and friend.

The most important truths may sometimes be the starting points of error, and just here there is a possibility of such departure. We emphasize the personal element in the Gospel message. Let us not at the same time discredit the doctrines of him we honor. Let us draw no contrasts between Christ and creed. He who preaches Christ, preaches his doctrines, and he who denies his doctrines, denies him.

In preaching Christ one must preach his deity. He was from everlasting. "Before the world was he was," and "being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God." Men have been known to cry out against the doctrine of the Trinity, of Christ's oneness with the Father, while in the same breath pleading his claims as a great and wise teacher and helper of men; but this is not the Scriptural method. The message which is to save the world is the Gospel of a divine Savior—of "Immanuel," God with us. He who preaches Christ,

preaches both his deity and humanity. He is "God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever."

The incarnation is part of the doctrine of Christ. So is the vicarious atonement. He who fails to tell what Christ did on Calvary does not truly preach him. "He was wounded for our transgressions." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

So the preaching of Christ includes the doctrines he taught. It includes his resurrection, and his testimony as to the Scriptures, and as to himself and the Spirit and the Father. It includes also his commands as to faith, diligence, purity, helpfulness and holiness.

They who contrast the strong doctrines of God's Word with the simplicity of Christ really turn away from him. His Gospel is in one sense simple, but in another mysterious. "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The incarnation and atonement are things at which angels wonder. The Gospel is simple in so far as the duty it requires of us is concerned—the duty to love, trust, serve and imitate Christ; but in itself it is the mystery of mysteries.

## FEAR AND LOVE.

Natural religion begins in fear. Its worship is the effort to propitiate an angry deity. Creation teaches man that there is a God, and that he is powerful; and providence that he is just and will punish sin. Man dreads the judgments of God. He fears pestilence and loss of property, and other ills, and strives by sacrifices to divert them and gain favor. A tremolo of pervasive uncertainty and fear distinguishes all heathen theologies. Gods are worshiped not because they are worthy of worship, but because the worshipers are afraid of them. God's people of old felt the influence of this heathen error. They did not rise to a true conception of the revelation given through Moses and the prophets. They strove to keep the letter of the law, with no thought of its spirit. Christ showed them that love is better than formal obedience, and even than sacrifices; that "God is love," and that "love is the fulfillment of the law."

This was not a new doctrine, for it was taught in their Scriptures, and that they

had not seen it was because "blindness in part had happened to Israel." "I have loved you, saith the Lord, but ye say, wherein hast thou loved us?" In Christ, the "express image" of God's person, love was so magnified that no one who reads the New Testament can fail to see it.

It was love that prompted the plan of salvation. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It was love that prompted Christ to die. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The "love of the Spirit" is also asserted as an incentive to prayer. We come, therefore, not to a God of power and justice only, but to a God who with these attributes unites love; who is 'gracious and merciful, unwilling that any should perish.' The "fear of the Lord" is not dread, but reverence. We have, if children of God, nothing to dread from our Heavenly Father.

No two things could be in stronger contrast than the spirit of the Gospel and that of heathen religions. "Fear hath torment." He who worships simply to avert wrath, whose God is the impersonation of vengeance, has no peace. His fear is continual

torment. But the assurance of God's love is the soul's rest. It begets love in the soul, and so banishes fear, for "perfect love casteth out fear."

We distinguish, for convenience' sake, between faith, hope and love, though really the three are one, and the greatest, because it includes the others, is love. He from whom fear is cast out has faith and hope. "He that loveth is born of God."

God's love to us is the foundation and reason of our love to him. We love him because he first loved us, and gave himself for us. "The love of Christ constraineth us," not only because we are blessed by it, but because he is manifest in it as "chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely."

God's love begets love to our fellow men. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If Christ so loved us and all men as to die for us, we ought, indeed we must, be interested in making known this love and in the salvation of souls. Love finds its highest manifestation in the effort to save men. The word has been, and is, much abused, being made to cover all manner of likes and dislikes, as well as the expression of sensual desire. True love seeks the good of its object. Love to God

seeks his glory. Love to men seeks to bring them to Christ. "Knowing the terror of the Lord," the danger of those who will not serve him, it persuades them. It is purely unselfish. "Charity seeketh not her own." It is interested, not in a limited family or church circle, but in the world. As "God so loved the world," it would give the Gospel to every creature.

Nothing better exemplifies the mind of Christ than the spirit of missions. The love which takes men and women from home and comforts, to devote themselves to work among the heathen in India or Africa, or among the Freedmen, or in destitute parts of our own land, is divine. That unbelievers should wonder at it is not strange, for love is a hidden motive to those who have not felt it. Neither is it strange that the heathen in many places have suspected personal or political promptings. On the other hand, the presence of men actuated only by love is an object lesson. In their devotion and self-sacrifice Christ is "lifted up," and so, both by word and example, they draw men to him.

## SIN AGAINST SELF.

Human laws prevent injury or trespass by one person upon another. They do not recognize the necessity of restraining sane men from self-injury or from trespass upon their own rights. Yet in the light of Scripture, he who injures his neighbor injures himself. All sin is against God, but it is equally a wrong to the sinner. "Whoso sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul" is the utterance of that wisdom which, in inspiration, is called the fear of the Lord.

The law says, "Thou shalt not kill." The punishment of murder by man's law is death, but the murderer may escape it. He may fly, or there may be technicalities; but the wrong to his own soul can not be escaped. It is a present and continuous punishment. A man appeared at a police station and yielded himself a prisoner. Years before he had killed a man in another city. The remembrance of his deed and the face of his victim had never left him. His sin had proved a wrong to his soul. Death would have been a less grievous punishment. Anger is a violation of



the sixth commandment, and, though it may pass quickly away, leaves the soul worse for its indulgence.

Another command enforces honesty. The man who steals wrongs his soul more than the amount he takes from his fellow. The cases continually reported of those who are pushed by conscience to return money unjustly taken are illustrations of this. The wrong may not, in every case, be realized, for the conscience is often so seared that the sinner does not know his condition.

Another command enforces chastity. Our Savior interprets it to forbid impurity of thought, as well as of deed. It can not be broken without sin; every violation makes its mark on the soul. The sin is against God; it is also against self. The soul, under its influence, is wronged of its purity; it becomes polluted. The wrong can not be estimated. The sin may be repented of and the pollution removed, but a scar is left, uglier than any possible on the face of man. As in the case of other sins, the sinner may be unconscious that he wrongs himself. Sin may be sweet to him, so that he does not know his suffering. He does not see himself, or, if he does see, fails to note the changes which have passed and are passing upon him. If it were possible

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to compare his soul scarred with sin, with the same soul pure as in the days long past, he would be startled, and realize that in sinning against God he has wronged himself beyond repair.

Application of the same truth might be made to all of the commandments, no one of which can be broken without peril. It is specially true of the law in its entirety, as summed up by Christ. He who fails to love God with all his heart, wrongs his soul unspeakably, defrauding it of that which is more valuable than all other possessions—of eternal life. To repulse God's spirit and refuse salvation is a quickly punished crime. The soul is hardened; with each repulse it is more and more indisposed to receive the offered mercy.

### "BORN OF GOD."

Salvation is more than the forgiveness of sins. It is more than repentance and conversion. It is a new life. Christ said: "Ye must be born again." The child of God is "born of God," or "born from above." He is not merely reformed, but regenerated. He is "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and the growth of each is according to its own nature. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and its growth is evil. Its tendencies are bad, and of itself it goes from bad to worse. The spiritual mind is in harmony with God, and its tendencies are good. It is not left to itself, but, led by the Spirit, grows in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

Some good people stumble at the doctrine of "total depravity." Perhaps the term is unfortunate. It does not mean that unregenerated men are as bad as it is possible for them to be, but that their nature is corrupted by sin, and indisposed to good and wholly inclined to evil. The re-born

soul, on the other hand, is inclined to good. Salvation is a matter of direction, or disposition. As seed produces after its own kind, one soul grows in sin and the other in holiness. The first may have estimable traits, but its tendency is downward. The other may be weak and may fall often, but its tendency is upward.

The final judgment to be pronounced upon men will be not only according to what they have done, but according to what they are. John's vision of the future represents Christ as saying: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still." As the tree leans so it grows, and in time will fall, and "in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it lie." As a man lives, so he grows; and as he grows, so he will be at death; and as he is at death, so he will be forever.

Standing alone, this would be the doctrine of despair; but it does not stand alone. Christ, who said, "Ye must be born again," has made it possible for all who will to be the children of God, and to grow in his likeness. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his

name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Faith is the secret of regeneration. He that believeth is born of God. He is begotten again in the divine image. As he grows in grace this image becomes more distinct, and one day it will be perfect. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

This is our hope. "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If we are to see Christ and be like him in glory, the wise plan is to cultivate his likeness here.

## SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification is a thing to be sought, but not boasted of. It is to be sought not as one seeks a lost piece of money, or even the pearl of great price, but as one follows an increasingly rich vein of precious metal, or a path which at every step becomes plainer and more derightful.

Sanctification is a process. It is growth in grace. All life, spiritual as well as natural, begins with birth. The word is used in a wide sense. There can be no growth until there is life. The soul must be "born from above," not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Sanctification is of God. It is not of man to convert, regenerate, sanctify or save himself. Sanctification, moreover, is of God's free grace. We are sanctified just as we are justified, "by grace through faith." Paul, in his farewell to the Ephesian elders, said: "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

This is testimony not only to the work

of the Spirit, but to the value of the Scriptures. The "word of his grace" is the means or instrument of salvation and growth. Christ, in promising the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, said, "He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you," and then he prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them through the truth. Thy word is truth." The Spirit works "when and where and how he pleases," but ordinarily he uses the Bible as the means of sanctification.

What, then, shall we do in order to be sanctified? Must we wait until the Spirit moves on us and in some mysterious way applies the Scriptures? Just as man must lay hold of the offers of salvation, so he must lay hold of the offers of sanctification. Just as he is justified by the obedience of faith, so he is to grow in grace by faithful use of the means of grace.

Above all, he who would be sanctified must use the Scriptures. He must read and meditate and feed upon the Word. There is nothing like it. Nothing can take its place. He must also seek divine guidance. Christ prayed for his people that they might be sanctified. They must pray for themselves; that they may understand the Word; that their hearts may be enlight-



ened; that the Spirit may make the Word plain to them, and that they may have wisdom and strength to "stand perfect in all the will of God."

Can we, then, live perfect lives? Did not even the apostle who prayed for such completeness admit that he did not attain to it, and was not perfect, but only pressed forward toward the mark? Yes, this is the teaching of Scripture. Sanctification is a work, not an act; it is a growth, not a birth; but it is a growth which goes on. He who has begun the good work will perfect it. "Christians are at their death made perfect in holiness." This is our hope. We are in a world of trial and temptation. The flesh is weak and the powers of evil are strong, but our hope is in God, who will "not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear." We are justified in expecting such help as will enable us to keep God's law, and where we fail, we are justified in expecting forgiveness and strength for another effort. Beyond all this we have the assurance that we shall one day be perfect in the likeness of Christ, when we shall see him as he is.

### "THE PEACE OF GOD."

Christians are exhorted to "let the peace of God rule" in their hearts, and are assured that this peace is of grace, and is a thing to which they are "called," or chosen, and for which they are to give thanks.

What is this peace? It is not rest from strife. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and Satan is still to be resisted. We are to stand fast, and strive, and put on the whole armor of God. It is not freedom from trial. Sickness and pain and bereavement are our lot. Friends may prove false and riches take wings and fly away. It is not release from labor. The earth still brings forth thorns and briers. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" is the divine law. It is not a condition of ecstasy, in which the soul revels and sings, oblivious to the strife and trials and requirements of life and the sin and need of humanity. It is not a second conversion or superior attainment in holiness, which justifies Pharisaical satisfaction or invidious comparisons with others.

It is first of all a matter of grace. Chris-

tians are chosen to it of God just as they are chosen to salvation. The Scriptures say "that as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This was the first step. Growth in grace, the peace of God, service for and likeness to Christ, perseverance, and heaven came afterwards. All were parts of the eternal life to which they were ordained. When Paul wrote, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," he added, "to which also ye are called."

Just as one chosen to salvation must "work out" his salvation, so he must apprehend and lay hold of the peace of God. Here, as at every stage of the Christian life, he is to make his "calling and election sure." "By grace ye are saved through faith," and so by grace ye have peace through faith. "According to your faith be it unto you" is a divine law. They of little faith have little peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

This peace makes God's people content, no matter what their state. They endure calamities and persecutions without complaint. Though there be "no flock in the fold and no herd in the stall," yet they rejoice in God. They are not delivered from trials, but have peace in them. They know

that whatever their condition, "all things work together for good to them that love God." "Certainly I will be with thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee." Christ said: "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The dove is an emblem of peace, but so also is another and very different bird. One who watches an eagle at the beginning of a storm notes the confidence with which he rises above turmoil and danger, and may hear, after the clouds have hidden him from view, his note of triumph. It is written of God's people: "They shall mount up on wings as eagles." Their peace is that of the upper air. It is the persuasion that nothing shall separate us from the love of God.

## PERSEVERANCE.

The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints includes the doctrine of the faithfulness of the Almighty. It is part of the doctrine of election. Those whom God has chosen and called and justified he will also glorify. Paul put the matter clearly when he wrote: "We are confident that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Of course the Christian has a part in his own perseverance, just as he has in repentance, faith and growth in grace; but the better he does his part, the more fully he realizes that salvation from beginning to end is of the Lord. He obeys the command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and accepts the word of caution and encouragement which follows: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

There is no comfort in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints for those who live in sin. The testimony of their lives is that they are not saints. God's purpose to save and uphold any one is

known only as he gives evidence that he is saved.

The doctrine of election, with all that it involves, is one of comfort to Christian people, but it has no comfort and furnishes no excuse to those who fail to make their calling and election sure. So the doctrine of perseverance, comforting to those who persevere in it, is nothing to those who do not. The suggestion that one who is in Christ, being sure of salvation, can go on in sin, is utterly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. Paul says: "Shall we continue in sin because grace abounds? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin continue any longer therein?" The doctrine is that, by God's grace, Christians will persevere, not that they will give up and live as heathen. Christ said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." It is the mark of saints that they "follow" Christ. They are "ordained" to this as well as to eternal life. God's grace is sufficient for them both in this life and that which is to come. They depend not on their own goodness, nor, when they fall, on their own repentance, but on God. Their prayer is:

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"Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." Their faith is: "Thou wilt not suffer my foot to be moved." "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Their determination is: "As for me, I will serve the Lord."



## CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

The word "liberty" is hard to define. Dictionaries make it synonymous with "independence" and "freedom"; but these are indefinite. There is no absolute independence for man. Our "War of Independence" only gave us freedom from foreign political control. We are still subject to limitations, and can do as we please only within a certain sphere. The same is true of every man individually; for while, in one sense, all "are born free and equal," in a higher sense men are not equal, and no man is independent of law.

Political economy recognizes the fact that, for the best good of men, liberty must be limited by law. Every man is born under law. He is entitled to life, but not to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, except within certain prescribed lines. He must pay taxes. He is not at liberty to kill or steal. He can not pursue happiness by eating his neighbor's fruit or taking his neighbor's wife. He is thus limited, not only by the statutes of the State, but by the higher law, of which these are an expression. God

has written his commandments, not only on tables of stone, but in man's nature. Conscience says that certain things are wrong, and he is not at liberty to do them.

It may be said in reply to this that law-abiding people are not oppressed by the statutes against crime. Criminals are restrained, but we have all the liberty we want. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil." This is true, and illustrates the fact that the highest liberty is inseparable from law; that it is not in independence of all restraint, but in approval of and submission to reasonable authority. A man's liberty is not compromised by laws which forbid what he does not wish to do. If all people appreciated and approved the laws of the land, the ideal free state would be attained. So, if all delighted in the law of God, all would be free, and the millennium would be here. There would be law, and men would be bound to obey it; but no one would feel himself limited by it.

Let us imagine ourselves in a world where there is no sin. There is, perhaps, a "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," or some other test of obedience, but no code of laws has been formulated. Right and truth are the same as in our own world. It would be sin to kill or steal or

commit adultery, but no man's liberty is lessened, because no man wishes to do any of these things. The law in which all delight is love. The Spirit of God rules all hearts, and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Such a world was ours before the fall; but there entered it another spirit, bringing the seeds of bondage. Sin is slavery. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Our first parents sold themselves. They came under the law of sin and death. A single sin is a cord. A sinful habit is a cord doubled and twisted, which, unlike other cords, does not wear out nor weaken with age, but grows stronger. It binds not only the sinner himself, but his children. We talked once to a man who, as the heir to five generations of drunkards, felt himself the hopeless slave of drink; but every man is heir to five times five, and more, generations of sinners, and is bound in chains, which from generation to generation have grown stronger. Can he break these chains? As well might a Russian serf have set himself against the empire. There is no hope, unless deliverance comes to him from without. Man is helplessly bound, "sold under sin," and there is no release save in the Gospel.

Christ preached "deliverance to the captives." He came to "set at liberty them that are bruised." He was the truth, and his message was "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Not only does he introduce men into the glorious "liberty of the sons of God," but by grace his image is restored. We partake of his Spirit. We are not only freed, but fitted for freedom. We receive the adoption of sons, "being led by the Spirit of God," and, with Paul, can say that "the law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death."

This is Christian liberty. It is not, as we have seen, independence of law. It is the position of one under laws in which he delights. The commandments are still binding, but they are not grievous. The authority and obligation remain the same, but the heart is changed. A new affection has expelled old desires. What the soul loved, it hates; and what it hated, it loves. Pleasures which before seemed indispensable have lost their charm, and duties once oppressive are a delight. The Christian does not say, "I can not do this, for it is sin"; but "I do not wish to do it, for I am delivered from sin."

We do not always speak so positively.

The flesh is weak, and, though in our best moments we know that we are free, there is always danger; for our old master, knowing our weak points, strives to bring us again into subjection. There is need of watchfulness. Old habits and easily-besetting sins must be especially guarded against. Both grace and personal effort are necessary if we would stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free," and not be again entangled with the yoke of our old bondage.

## WALKING WITH GOD.

Enoch walked with God, and the inspired writer testifies that he pleased God. The implication is that we are to have such fellowship with God as warrants the expression, "walking with" him. John wrote: "He that saith he abideth in him, ought also to walk even as he walked." Peter commands to "walk not after the flesh," and Isaiah, to walk "in the light of the Lord"; and in the Revelation it is promised that those who are worthy "shall walk with him in white."

Men may walk together without fellowship. They are marshaled in ranks as soldiers, or united in business partnerships. Enoch walked with God as one walks with a friend; as chosen companions seek each other, that they may, as they journey, enjoy each other's society.

To walk with God, one must feel his presence. This is not possible save by faith; no man hath seen God at any time, but, as revealed in Christ, he is seen with the eye of faith, and spoken with in the prayer of faith. As one sees and talks with a

friend, so the Christian sees and communes with God. He feels not only that he is near, but that his love and help are realities.

To walk with God, we must be at peace with him. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Men may agree to differ, and yet not separate; but if we would have fellowship with God, we must be at one with him. This fellowship and oneness are ours through Christ. We were naturally at enmity. Your sins have separated between me and you, saith the Lord; but God has, in Christ, reconciled us to himself, not imputing to us our sins.

We must not only be at peace, but must be like-minded with God. Two travelers with different tastes rarely enjoy travel together—one is drawn one way, and the other another. If we would enjoy our walk with God, we must love what he loves. We must, therefore, study his will, as revealed in his Word and in the life of his Son. Our controlling aim must be to grow in grace, and be "holy, as he is holy." We can not in this life attain to his perfection, but we may become more and more like him. It is said by some that husband and wife, living together, grow as the years pass into each other's likeness; their tastes, aims and hopes become more alike. Cer-



tainly the Christian walking with God becomes more like him. If evil associations corrupt good manners, association with the infinitely pure and holy God will elevate and purify the soul.

The duty and blessedness of walking with God may lead to a dangerous error. They did so lead men in the dark ages. Holy men thought that to be with God they must withdraw from all association with their fellows. They retired to cells and caves, and gave themselves to prayer and penance. Such a course, though pursued in sincerity, is radically inactive and selfish. There was once a Hindoo who gave himself to the adoration of the Infinite. In his house he built a chamber with but one window, and that in the roof. His eyes were ever turned upward. When he went abroad he rode in a palanquin closed at the sides and open at the top. As he passed along, his bearers saw poverty and distress, while he saw nothing but the sky. He could contemplate the Infinite without a thought of finite sorrow. This may have been good heathenism, but it is not Christianity.

Christ, while in the world, went about doing good. He sent out his disciples to heal the sick and cast out devils. They would have enjoyed walking with him and

sitting at his feet; but he sent them to minister, even as his Father sent him, and as he ministered. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"; to live in the world as not of it; to live by the faith of Christ, and do everything in his name and to his glory. He who thus lives finds God everywhere. He does business with his fellows, and his business is sanctified. God is present in his office and at his home, and those who see him know not only that he has been with Jesus and learned of him, but that he walks with him every day, and continues to learn.

## THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD.

Christ did not underestimate the power of Satan. He recognized him as a prince, having authority and the world as his dominion. This is what Satan claimed. When he appeared to Christ in the wilderness tempting him, he showed him the kingdoms of the world and said: "All these are delivered unto me." Christ, by not contradicting him, admitted his claim, asserting, however, at the same time his own independence and superior authority. "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

A like admission and claim are found in the words, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." I once read a description of Satan by a man who said he had seen him. He described him as an enormous creature, half man and half bat, with cloven feet and fingers like eagle claws, and his tail was a fiery dart, and smoke and flames came from his mouth, while all about him were fumes of sulphur,

and the air was full of strange and unearthly flashes and terrifying sounds.

The description reminded me of Apollyon in the "Pilgrim's Progress." It was a faithful picture of the Satan of superstition. Many people when they think of Satan think of such a creature. Another article, much better written, in the same paper, described the Satan of modern philosophy. It ridiculed the idea of "a personal devil." It regarded Satan as the spirit of evil, "an abstraction put into the concrete," an "unknown quantity representing the origin and highest degree of sin." As I read, Satan seemed to vanish, not according to the popular idea, in smoke and the odor of brimstone, but in a mist of sneers and learned phrases.

One conception is perhaps as accurate as the other, but neither is at all like the Satan of the Bible. We know nothing in regard to Satan's outward appearance. He came to Eve in the form of a serpent, and in other places is described as a roaring lion and "the dragon." The words may be used figuratively, or Satan may have assumed the forms. He certainly did take agreeable forms, as, for instance, during the temptation of Christ. He appeared sometimes as an angel of light.

As to his character and history we are more fully informed. He was originally holy and happy, an angel of high rank among the hosts of heaven. Through sin he fell from his estate, drawing after him multitudes of other angels, over whom he retains power, and whose leader he is in warfare on all that is good. As to his character, if there is anything in a name, his names condemn him. He is the "adversary," "the enemy," "the accuser," "the destroyer," "the devil," "the deceiver," "liar," "tormentor," etc. These show also his work. He goes about to deceive and torment and destroy. Other names indicate his dignity and rulership over other spirits and men. He is the "prince of devils," the "prince of the powers of the air," the "prince of this world," and even the "god of this world."

As the prince of this world, "he rules not by divine right nor through any inheritance, but by conquest." The Garden of Eden was a battlefield in which his cunning accomplished more than the generalship of all the ages. Adam and Eve were the representatives of a race, and, in their subjection, the world came under his power, and, as a strong nation possesses and rules a conquered province, he has appointed his officers and imposes his taxes upon it.

His officers are legion. Some are, like himself, fallen angels. Others are men who have yielded themselves unreservedly to him. These do his will and he pays them their wages; to some money, to others pleasure, to others fame or position or power. He is a liberal master, but hard and deceitful. He can afford to be liberal, for the coin of his realm is not what it seems. It does not satisfy nor meet the necessities of those who labor for it. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." There are pleasures and honors which seem good to men, but the "ends thereof are the ways of death." Whatever he may promise to pay or seem to pay, the wages of sin are always death.

His subjects are heavily taxed. Every subject must pay in money and health and peace of mind for the curse of his government. His most willing subjects pay most. These give conscience and purity, and even their very souls. Where they are slow in paying, he sends his agents, demons or evil spirits. These do not enforce collection, but persuade through appetite, passion, pride and ambition. Sometimes he sends other men, who tempt through good fellowship or evil suggestion. Often he uses the evil nature, selecting points which by habit or

heredity are weakest. At his touch covetousness, intemperance and licentiousness ripen into theft and adultery and murder.

Satan's authority over the world is not undisputed. The hour of his victory in Eden was clouded by the shadow of future defeat. The curse pronounced upon his agent, the serpent, was pronounced upon him. The seed of the woman should bruise his head. This was the prophecy of another conflict, the pledge of a deliverer, a child of Adam, who should suffer, but in the end should redeem men.

In its darkest hours the world has never entirely lost sight of this promise. It was the hope of our first parents, and of Abel and Enoch, and Noah and Abraham. It inspired David to sing and Isaiah to prophesy. It was the battle-cry of a holy war; a rebellion against sin begun in faith, and to be carried on until Messiah should come and Satan be cast out.

With the ministry of Christ the expected conflict began. After his baptism was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. We can imagine "silence" in heaven like that described in the Book of Revelation. The angels wonder and wait. The fate of earth is in the balance, and when, after three assaults and



three defeats, Satan leaves the field, heaven rejoices and angels minister to the victorious Christ.

The battle of the wilderness, however, was only the beginning of the end. Satan left, only to return at other times and places. He who had come "to destroy the works" of the devil must be himself destroyed. For three years his path was beset, and everything which cunning or power could do to defeat his work was done, but demons and evil men, enemies and false friends, open persecution and secret hate failed to turn him from his purpose. He had meat to eat and grace to sustain which men knew not of. Neither ambition nor fear nor bodily distress influenced him.

The time came at last for a final assault. Jesus knew it and prepared his disciples. "The prince of this world cometh." He did not disguise his trouble of soul. "Now is my soul troubled." But he comforted them with assurances of triumph. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." He was sure of accomplishing his work. The serpent would bruise his heel, but his foot would be upon its head. Satan would cause him to suffer, but his triumph was certain, for Satan had nothing in him.

There is a law of affinities in the spiritual world. Just as some physical substances attract and others repel each other, so holiness attracts holiness and repels sin. As a cement fastens itself upon some substances, and will not fasten upon others, so Satan has a hold upon hearts in which there is sin, but had no hold upon Christ. There was nothing in Christ upon which he could fasten. There was no sin upon which he could hook a chain. There was not even a flaw in his righteousness through which he could thrust a dart. Christ knew this, and so declared in advance the result. Neither in Gethsemane nor on Calvary did Satan find "anything in him."

Christ's victory was a victory not only over death, but over "him that hath the power of death, even the devil." It was a victory both for himself and for his people. Before he came Satan had something in every child of our race. Sin was a barbed hook, fastened; and gave him a hold which no human power could loosen. Christ has redeemed all who trust in him. He has brought in a righteousness in which they are secure. Satan may come, but by faith they can say, "He hath nothing in me." As the years pass and the gospel gains power, the rebellion against Satan grows in extent.

Even now it is filling the whole earth, and the time, we hope, is not far distant when Christ's words shall be fulfilled: "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

## “EXACT SCIENCE.”

Science is knowledge, and exact science is accurate knowledge. An exact scientist is one who demands proof of a proposition before he accepts and teaches it as true. He who theorizes or speculates can not be so classified. A mere theory, the conclusions of which rest on supposed facts, is not exact, and, indeed, is not science, except by courtesy. For any advocate of an unproved hypothesis to talk of exact science is to transfer the phrase to the domain of cant.

Every Christian should be an exact scientist. Not only should he be able to give a reason for his hope, but he should demand demonstration before accepting new theories. As Paul expresses it, he should “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good.” The gospel, in which he believes, has been proved. The Spirit, witnessing with his spirit, tells him that it is true. The life of Christ, which from the beginning to the end was a fulfillment of prophecy, proves it true. The resurrection of the dead, certified to by witnesses, proves it

true. More than this, the fruit of Christianity establishes it as the true religion. Wherever it goes, civilization and safety follow. Its principles are the foundations of prosperity. It turns the wilderness into fruitful fields, and heathen cannibals into good men and women. Were infidelity to do this, it would have some claim to attention. Christianity cares for the sick and the poor; it builds hospitals and orphan asylums, and promotes morality and unselfishness and obedience to law. If skepticism did these things, they would be somewhat in its favor. Christianity does them. For eighteen centuries it has clothed the naked, and fed the hungry, and lifted up those that were bowed down. If it had no other proof, this would be enough to commend it above all the contrary theories, wise or otherwise, which have ever been devised.

When skeptical philosophy, therefore, mocks at our Bible, with its story of creation and its plan of salvation, let us ask for something better, or at least as good. Some advice which I once received from an old Indian guide, as we were entering a vast swamp, is not inappropriate by way of illustration. Said he: "When you're going through a cedar swamp, never take up one

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foot till you've found a solid place for the other." When science so-called asks us to leave Christianity for the ground it offers, we may ask it to prove that it is really science; that its facts are real facts and not guesses, and that the gaps in its hypotheses will not let us through into mire deeper than that of a cedar swamp.

## "SCIENCE FALSELY SO CALLED."

A radical writer regards this phrase as "objectionable," "belonging to the dictionary of cant," and "one which no reputable writer would use." It may be answered that Paul the apostle, a reputable writer in the judgment of most men, used the words, and that other writers, esteemed for learning and piety, have also used them. That they have become cant may be admitted. Good expressions of truth are apt to be used thoughtlessly and too frequently. Science could hardly do without its cant phrases, and the fact that men use them carelessly does not lessen their truth. Many quotations from the Bible are used hypocritically, and become cant, but this does not condemn them. The invitation, "Come to Jesus," and the prayer, "Revive thy work," are cant when uttered carelessly.

Whether the phrase "Science falsely so called" is "objectionable" depends upon the way it is used. Paul was no narrow-minded ecclesiastic. He saw no controversy between religion and science. He was thoroughly educated in the wisdom of his time,



and used the words as any true scientist of to-day might use them. There is a science properly so called which deals in facts and proceeds according to established laws; and there is a "science so called" which theorizes, and if suitable facts are not at hand, anticipates, or imagines, or does without them. The two are sometimes so closely associated that careful study is required to distinguish them.

Here, for instance, is a book twenty years old. It deals with certain fossil bones of animals in an intelligent way. The writer, however, proceeds to answer the question, "Who was the first man?" by a prediction that his bones will some time be found in the earlier rocks. He has found no trace of them, nor has any one else, yet he gives a pen-picture of a man-like animal as the father of our race. His hypothesis, which has since been generally repudiated, is an illustration of "science falsely so called."

When one investigates nature and makes discoveries, and classifies objects, he is a true scientist; but when he draws a picture of a gorilla and calls it the first man, admitting that no link connecting man with such a creature is known, he is simply guessing, and his guesses are as valuable, and no more so, than those of an unedu-

cated man. His picture is as liable to be accurate as that which a child would draw.

When one finds a new substance or a new force and teaches men to use it, he is a benefactor; but when he begins to reconstruct the universe and to resolve all things into electricity, and to displace the Creator, he is a dreamer, and his work is of no practical use. To call it science is a misnomer. It is "science falsely so called."

## THE CHURCH.

The church is a divine institution. God has established it, and given it a ministry, with other officers, and committed to it his oracles. As Moses made all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount, so the apostles, in establishing the New Testament church, followed the pattern shown them by the Spirit given at Pentecost.

God might have chosen a ministry of angels, and his message might have been declared with trumpets from the tops of mountains. That he chose men and established the church is evidence that this was the wiser plan. Moreover, when we consider his purpose and the need of mankind, the wisdom of the plan is apparent. The kingdom of heaven is set up on earth. Christianity is an organized force. Every convert is a recruit. Every disciple is chosen and ordained to bring forth fruit. In union there is not only strength, but confidence, steadiness of purpose, a view of the whole field, and the possibility of meeting the command to preach the Gospel to every creature.

No one who desires to do his part in winning the world to Christ can ignore the church. It is the Lord's host. It carries his banner. Its members have his mark and bear his name. They may be enrolled in different companies, under different leaders, and may differ in minor matters, but all acknowledge him as the Captain of salvation and their Leader and Lord.

It is the divine plan that every convert shall acknowledge Christ and be known as his. There are no special commissions for free lances or for sub-rosa service. He that is not with Christ is against him.

The church in any community is a center of organized Christianity. Every member adds to its power. The churches in a larger territory, operating together with missionary organizations, schools, etc., bless the whole land and the dark places of the earth. No Christian should stand apart and so fail to do his share in the church's work.

Christians not only owe service to the church, but need the help of the church. No man liveth unto himself or by himself. If "evil communications corrupt good manners," good communications promote them. It is easier to be a Christian among Christians than among unbelievers. It is easier to maintain a high standard when men

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know that one strives and sympathizes with him. There is encouragement to the soldier in the fact that at his right and left are other soldiers, and beyond them still others, and that over all is a commander who sees and directs every movement.

It was an advantage to the Jew that to his nation were committed the oracles of God. So it is an inestimable advantage to the Christian to belong to the church which has the oracles and ordinances. These are means of grace which God has appointed, and without which the highest spiritual success is impossible.

## CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

There were some in Malachi's day who said: "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?" So now some ask: What good does it do to attend church? They may not put the question in this form, but vacant seats speak louder than words.

Well, suppose we do not see that it does any good. Shall we disobey God's command because we see no good in it? The Bible says: "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." Shall a child refuse to obey the plain command of its parents because it sees no good in the command?

It does a great deal of good to attend church. First, one hears the Gospel. Of course we can read this at home or at other places, but God makes the preaching of the Gospel the means of saving men. All who wish to be saved should attend church. So should all, whether believers in Christ or not, who feel that they are not so good as they would like to be. To grow in grace we should attend the means of grace, and one of these is the regular

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preaching of the Word; others are the ordinances and other services of the church.

Church-going is a part of the Christ-likeness which all should cultivate. He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom.

Church-going does good not only to the church-goer, but to others. It does good to the family. It makes men more faithful to duty. It makes husbands and wives kinder to each other. It makes children more obedient to parents. It makes children, as well as grown people, purer in their language and more honest in all things. It is good for the community. It makes better citizens and safer business men.

Church-going sets a good example. It commends religion to the world. It is a constantly repeated confession of faith. It is an effective way of letting one's light shine, and so of glorifying God and leading others to glorify him. It brings one into line with the forces of righteousness, and so encourages and strengthens those who labor to elevate humanity. It increases interest in the kingdom of God and in the means used to extend it, and invites opportunities to take part in the great work.

Church-going is a strength to those who are in doubt, a relief to those in trouble,



a comfort to those whose friends have been taken away. It is a reminder of our relation to Christ, and of heaven, our future home. All this it is because of the Gospel preached from Sabbath to Sabbath.

## CHRISTIAN UNITY.

All good people desire Christian unity. The Psalmist spoke of it as "good and pleasant." Paul urged it. The Savior prayed for it.

Christian unity is good not only in itself, but for its influence on the world. It is testimony to the truth of Christianity. The natural heart is selfish, envious, and inclined to strife. Every man seeks his own. A gospel manifest in love, peace and helpfulness proves its divine origin. Where men look not every man on his own things and the things of his own denomination, but every man also on the things of others, the world sees that Christ, whose example and commands they follow, was indeed sent of God. Hence Christ's prayer, "that they all may be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

All truth may be misunderstood and misapplied, and no truth is so liable to misapplication as that which appeals to the heart rather than to the intellect. That Christ desired and prayed for the unity of his people is such a truth. It is so large

and so in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel that one may dwell on and delight in it to the neglect of other equally important truths.

Christ did not pray that all people might be one, but that those who "believe" in him, who are "given" to him, who "know God and Jesus Christ" whom he has sent, who are not of the world as he was not of the world, might be one, even as he and the Father are one. Christian unity is the unity of true believers. A recent writer advocates the union of a denomination which believes in the deity of Christ with one which denies his deity. Christ did not pray that his disciples should be one with those who deny the unity of the Father and the Son.

Christian unity does not mean the union of all Christians in one ecclesiastical organization, under one government. Such union existed when Roman Catholicism dominated the world, and those who denied its authority were subject to persecution. Christ did not pray that his disciples should be one as the Church was one during the Dark Ages. He did not pray for such oneness as exists in Russia, where the State Church dominates the consciences of a hundred million of people.

Christ certainly did not condemn in advance those who in after years should protest against ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny. He did not pray that the oneness of Rome should be maintained against the efforts of Luther and Huss and Knox. He did not pray for the failure of any denomination which, in loyalty to him and to the truth as it apprehends it, maintains its separate organization.

Christian unity is not an organization, but a spirit. It is love of the brethren and of the cause and of the Master. It is common interest in the triumph of the kingdom of heaven on earth. A devoted missionary prayed God to bless "every one who will help to heal the open sore of the world." He who has the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of unity, prays God to bless every church, no matter what its name or distinctive doctrines, which truly seeks to advance the cause of Christ. He delights not in contentions, but in agreement. He may hold fast the articles of his creed which separate him from others, but he rejoices that all evangelical creeds are in harmony touching so much truth.

Christian unity is a matter of loyalty to Christ. Organic union of Christian churches may be a matter of expedience or convic-

tions, or even of disposition, or of language or location. Organic union is desirable where denominations can see eye to eye, and can work more effectively together than apart. Christian unity manifest in mutual esteem, a common love for the lost and co-operation in the work, is testimony to the Messiahship of our Lord.

Organic union may come in time. The different churches are more and more inclined to emphasize points of agreement. Presbyterian Churches are nearer together than they were; so are the different Baptist and Methodist Churches. But unity need not wait on union. Christians can love one another and work together, while agreeing to differ as to points of doctrine, government and worship. Indeed, unity is the way to union. Attempts to force union often end in strife, and pleas for union may be only philippics against denominationalism; but when love has its way, differences and difficulties disappear.

## THE SACRAMENTS.

Sacraments are object lessons. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." The spirit makes not only the reading and preaching of the Word, but also its illustration by sacraments, the means of salvation and sanctification.

A sacrament is first of all "instituted by Christ." It is a "holy ordinance," designed to teach a spiritual truth. It does this by the use of some "sensible sign" or ceremony, in which Christ and his benefits are shown forth and our interest in them declared. It further establishes a line between those who are in the visible Church and those who are not.

The sacraments of the Old Testament Church, divinely instituted, were Circumcision and the Passover. Those of the New Testament Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Roman Church holds that marriage, penance, extreme unction, confirmation and holy orders are also sac-

raments; but these are not "sensible signs," showing forth spiritual truth. They may be important in themselves, but do not represent, seal and apply the benefits of the new covenant. Moreover, they are not divinely instituted to this end, and do not in any way show the differences between those who are and are not in the Church.

In baptism the visible sign or ceremonial is the "washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and the thing signified is "our engrafting into Christ," our "partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's." The sacrament has no saving power. It is a sign and seal of an engagement already made and a relation already established. One is not a Christian because he is baptized, but is baptized because he has received Christ, and rests upon him for salvation. The infant children of believers are baptized, not to bring them into the church, but because they are born in the church. They are baptized upon the faith of their parents, who pledge to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and it is to be confidently expected that when they arrive at years of discretion they will themselves as-



sume the vows which their parents assume for them.

Every baptism has a lesson for those who witness it. Christians are reminded of their own vows of separation from the world and union with Christ. Those without are solemnly admonished as to duty. Where a child is baptized, all Christian parents are reminded that they, too, have taken vows; and all baptized children, that they are of the household of faith, and have privileges and are under solemn obligations.

In the Lord's Supper the visible sign is the "giving and receiving of bread and wine according to Christ's appointment." The thing represented is Christ's death for us upon the cross. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death until he come." Speaking of the Passover, Moses instructed the Jews that when their children should ask as to its meaning, they should say: "This is done because of what the Lord did in the day that the Lord brought me out of the land of Egypt." The Passover was a memorial of what God had done. The unleavened bread, the bitter herbs and the lamb, all reminded them of their deliverance. There was a lesson also as to the future. The

lamb represented not only the lamb whose blood was sprinkled upon the doors, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. They looked back to Egypt and forward to Calvary.

The Lord's Supper is an object lesson to the church and the world. The bread and wine represent the broken body and shed blood of Christ. When our children or others ask, "What mean ye by this service?" we say, "This is what the Lord did for us on Calvary." As the Jews represented salvation by the Passover, so we represent it by the Lord's Supper. We were lost in sin. A darkness denser and more hopeless than that of Egypt had settled upon us. There was no eye to pity and no arm to save, when God's eye pitied and his arm brought salvation.

Like the Passover, the Lord's Supper is a prophecy as well as a memorial. It is to be observed "until he come." It looks forward to the time when Christ, who suffered and died and rose from the dead, shall come again without sin unto salvation. It is a reminder of two great facts: the atonement for sin, and the final triumph of the Redeemer. He who poured out his soul unto death is to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. He who humbled

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himself and became obedient unto death is to be highly exalted, and his name is to be above every name, and the whole earth is to bow to him.

The Lord's Supper is a profitable ordinance. Worthy receivers feed upon Christ. They are, not after a corporal or carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all its benefits to their spiritual nourishment and growth in **grace.**

## SELF-EXAMINATION.

The chief end of self-examination is not to determine whether one is a sinner. Every one of sound mind knows that he is a sinner. It is not to find out whether he has particular evil habits or is neglectful of duty. These are important, but not the chief thing. Paul says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." The first thing to determine is, whether one is a Christian—whether he is "in the faith," or "in Christ." Again he says: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup, lest coming unworthily he eat and drink judgment to himself."

A service preparatory to communion with self-examination is not that one may render himself worthy, for no one can do this, but that he may come "worthily." If he come in faith, he comes worthily. True, he is a sinner, and has been neglectful, and has easily besetting sins. All that Christ requires of those who come to his table is that they are his; that they stand in right relation to him. That relation is one of

humility, penitence and faith. It is also one of new obedience, for no man can properly examine himself as to his relation to Christ without resolving to serve him more faithfully.

The question to be settled by self-examination, either when coming to the communion table or at any time, is the question upon which our future will depend at the day of judgment.

Self-examination may be a sore trial and altogether unsatisfactory. If one simply tries to find out his sins, he will be overwhelmed. If his thoughts rest on his relation to Christ, his song will be: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." His prayer will be: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

He whose heart is right will take heed to his ways. He who trusts in Christ will repent of and forsake his sin. Though he fall seven times, yet will he rise again. He who is "in the faith" will seek to live the life of faith, but his mind will not continually rest upon his sin. He will not continue in sin or ignore it, or think light of it. "How shall we, who are dead to sin,

continue any longer therein?" How shall one whose life "is hid with Christ in God" live a Christless, godless life? Self-examination, like the observation by the captain of a ship at sea, is to determine the course. How shall a captain who has settled his course sail in the opposite direction? How shall one who is in Christ, and is going to heaven, turn aside or yield to sin? He who delights in sin may well question whether he is truly "in the faith." They who journey to Zion have their "faces thitherward." He whose face is the other way is ordinarily going to some other place.

## IDOLATRY.

It is a sin to worship an idol. It makes no difference whether the idol is of gold or of lead, or is a person, or property, or position. The first principle of the divine government is that God alone is entitled to worship. He must be first in the affections and service of men. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Our Savior's interpretation of this is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."

The requirements of the first commandment are positive as well as negative. It is so with all the commandments. "Thou shalt not" always involves "Thou shalt." The prohibition of other gods requires the worship of the true God. He is entitled to faith and service and praise. The day which he has set apart is to be a day of rest and worship. His sanctuary is to be regarded. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise." "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name." Unbelief, irreverence, indifference, selfishness and sensuous in-



dulgence are forms of idolatry. It is idolatrous to worship and serve "the creature more than the Creator," whether the creature be another person or one's own self. When the apostle says of some that their "god is their belly," he describes in none too vigorous language those who make sensual indulgence their chief end, giving to appetite and passion the place which belongs to God.

Our Savior said: "Take heed and beware of covetousness." And again we read of "covetousness which is idolatry." He who makes it his chief end to be rich or to attain a high position, or to serve any selfish purpose, gives to something else the first place in his affections. He may not think of it as a god or realize that his devotion is worship, but he violates the spirit of the command: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

There is little temptation in our day to make graven images or to bow before and worship them; but sensuality, and ambition, and personal ease, and inordinate earthly affection have their devotees. It is easy to magnify and give them the supreme place in the heart. Whereas God's command is: "Give me thy heart," "Delight thyself in

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the Lord," "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The chief end of man is to glorify him, and he who fails, giving his first affection to any other object, is an idolater.

## PROFANITY.

Sin is always unreasonable and inexcusable, but no sin is more unreasonable or inexcusable than profanity. At the same time, it is prevalent, and causes grievous evil. "Because of swearing," said Jeremiah, "the land mourneth." Profanity was a cause and a symptom of the desperate wickedness of the Jews before the captivity. We may echo the words: our land mourns because of swearing. Vices, like virtues, go in clusters, and profanity is one of the most wicked and harmful of the black kinship. It was associated in Jeremiah's day with "lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery." The association was natural. Men who violate one command of God's law are apt to hold the other nine lightly. They are equally sure to disregard human laws.

Swearing is a habit to which impulsive people are specially prone. Their surprise or pleasure or anger expresses itself in exclamations. The use of particular words becomes habitual. The divine name, which should be sacred, and the call for curses

upon those who offend, are uttered almost unconsciously. Some excuse themselves on this ground. They would rejoice to be free from the habit, but can not overcome it. This is the plea of some who, though profane with their fellow men, can pass time in the society of ladies without even a slang exclamation. They control their words when the need of control is felt. A realization that swearing is sinful would be a step toward overcoming it.

Profanity is offensive to good people. They may keep silent, but they are shocked and hurt by profane words. Hence the same courtesy which causes the swearer to refrain his lips when talking with ladies should make him careful when any, whether acquaintances or not, are within hearing. Particularly should he be careful in the presence of children. A Christian mother would rather herself hear profane words than to have her children hear them. She may make no remonstrance, but is nevertheless insulted and injured by the man who forces her children to hear his bad language.

More important than this is the truth that the habit is offensive to God. To take his name in vain is an insult to him. In his sight the swearer is guilty. The third

commandment has an emphasis in addition to the usual "Thou shalt not." God adds: "I will not hold him guiltless" who violates this command. We may affirm this of all the commandments, but here God declares it.

God's name is taken in vain when men speak carelessly and irreverently of him or his attributes, when they worship him hypocritically, and when they swear falsely, as well as when they use profane language. There are laws against perjury, blasphemy and profanity, but they are seldom enforced. Violators have little fear of punishment by men, and so esteem the law lightly. This may be the reason for the added assertion that the Lord will not hold them guiltless.

Much of the slang prevalent in our day is really profane. Christ said: "Swear not at all," "neither by heaven" "nor by Jerusalem," "nor by thy head." James said: "Neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." In writing, italics are used for emphasis, but italics freely used lose their force; so the constant use of profane or slangy words destroys their force and leaves only their offense.

Malicious and slanderous words have

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been called "first cousins in sin to profane ones." They cause pain. They are the beginnings of strife. They destroy friendships. They are sparks liable to set on fire the family and the church. Paul says: "Let all bitterness and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

The best cure for profanity is a profound realization of the truth, "Thou, God, seest me," and hearest me. A certain court chaplain once rebuked a nobleman for profanity, and when told that he could not help it, replied: "You never swear in the presence of the king. I remind you of the King of kings." "For there is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

## THE SABBATH.

God is entitled to and claims a share of man's time, and it is man's interest to recognize the claim. The Sabbath was made for man. God rested after the creation, and sanctified the Sabbath day, not because he needed rest, but because man, whom he had created, would need it. He hallowed the day because man would need a day set apart to religious worship.

The Fourth Commandment was not a new law given to the Jews. It was a reminder of the universal law given at creation. They were to "remember" the Sabbath day. Six days they were to work as the Lord worked, and the seventh to rest as the Lord rested.

Man needs one day in seven for rest. His body needs it, and so does his mind. Just as he needs the rest of the night, so he needs the Sabbath. The night does not entirely repair the waste of the day. It requires an additional rest one day in seven to restore full vigor. Experience has demonstrated that men who rest on

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the Sabbath not only do better work, but last longer, and in the end do more than those who work seven days in the week.

Man needs also a day of worship. True, he may worship at any time, but absorbed in the ordinary affairs of life it is easy to slight or entirely neglect religious service. The Sabbath is the divinely appointed time to lay aside ordinary affairs and engage in the worship of God. Man needs this not only as an opportunity to pay the service which he owes to God, but for his own mental and spiritual improvement. He needs at stated intervals to rise above the things which fill his mind during the week. These are important, but they are of the earth. They deal with what is "seen and temporal." He needs time to meditate upon the "unseen and eternal."

The Family needs the Sabbath. It is man's lot to labor, and labor separates and absorbs and wearies the laborers. A day of rest is a day of home association and acquaintance and affection.

The Community needs the Sabbath. All that it is to the individual and the family it is to the State. Labor is honorable; but labor with no day of rest furnishing op-

portunity for intellectual and spiritual cultivation, is demoralizing. A nation without a Sabbath is on the down grade.

The Church needs the Sabbath. It has a message for men; but how will they hear if they are absorbed in earthly things? The problem of reaching the masses is difficult enough always, but is increasingly difficult where the Sabbath is disregarded. It is simplified where the Sabbath is properly observed.

The Sabbath is not only the Church's opportunity to reach men with the Gospel, and its time of worship, but is a reminder of the great central truth of its faith, the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It was on the first day of the week that our Lord came forth out of the tomb. Before this the seventh day had been the Sabbath, but from this time on the disciples observed the first day as "the Lord's day" and Christ justified the change by his appearance to them during their meetings on that day. The day was the set time for preaching, for the "breaking of bread," or the Lord's Supper, and for collections for the relief of poor saints, and has so continued in the Christian Church to this time.

The Fourth Commandment is still the law of God's kingdom. The change of day makes no difference in the requirement to keep the Sabbath as a time of rest and worship. All should do this, not only because the Sabbath is of such value to man and its observance so profitable, but because God commands it. He is the Lord, and has a right to command.

Here, however, difficulty arises. Good people are sometimes a law unto themselves. They see no harm in certain amusements or work on the Sabbath day, and assert their independence of rules which others observe. They argue that too great strictness is an evil, and makes the day burdensome and not restful. There may be a measure of truth in this, but the tendency of the time is not to over-strictness, but to laxity. Moreover, the question, while personal, is also one of public policy and the general good. The Sabbath question has developed a conflict, and it is important that good men throw their influence upon the right side. One may feel that he is justified in doing certain things; but if they line him up with the enemies of the Sabbath, he is equally justified in not doing them. It is always the right

of a Christian to give up his rights. He may be more strict than the law requires, if such strictness is for the general good. He can hardly be too strict for his own good. Spending the entire day in rest, and in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is taken up in works of necessity and mercy, he will himself be blessed in body, mind and soul, and his influence will be on the side of truth and righteousness.

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

The principle of the Fifth Commandment is the foundation of all human government. In primitive times the family was the State, with the father as head or chief. Afterwards families grew, or were combined with other families, into tribes, and tribes into nations. Government is a divine institution. "The powers that be," or the rulers, are ordained of God, and are to be obeyed and honored.

The family, though only a part of the State, is still a government; and the parents are its divinely appointed rulers. To honor them is to recognize the necessary conditions of life and submit to lawful authority.

It is natural for children to depend upon their parents. In early years they must do this, and the habit clings to them after they are grown. It is natural also to love them, and to manifest this love in acts of tenderness and helpfulness.

The Bible requires more than this. It emphasizes the duty of children to obey

and honor their parents, and assigns two reasons, viz.: because it is right and because it is for the child's good. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Obedience to law promotes health and prosperity. Youth is surrounded by temptations. Appetites and passions need restraint. Indulgence means weakness and early decay. Obedience of children to those who are over them in the Lord means health and strength and long life.

The duty of children to honor and obey their parents involves the duty of parents to show themselves worthy of honor and obedience. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Harshness, arbitrariness and neglect are a violation of the Fifth Commandment. Provision for the body and mind is not the full measure of parental duty. Children are entitled to be taught the way of salvation and to a godly example. He who expects honor from his children must himself honor his Father in heaven.

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Every age has its peculiarities and perils, and one of our perils is irreverence, or obliviousness to law and authority. Children mature early, and cast off parental restraint. The trend in the family and school is toward mild suasion in preference to strict requirement and discipline. The danger in this is that children will grow up with the impression that there is no law and no punishment, and that while they are to be reasoned with and advised, they themselves are the final authority in all matters. This impression is the starting point of lawlessness. Disregard of parental authority leads to disregard of the law of the land and of the divine law.

The State has a right to require of parents that they train their children to respect and obey the civil authorities. God does require that they train them to fear and honor him.



### "SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN."

Ask the children in a Christian family to recite a Bible verse, and in most cases they will recite: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." This is "the children's verse." It expresses Christ's love for children, and his readiness to receive and bless them.

This verse, however, was not spoken to children, but to the disciples who were to be ministers and teachers and rulers of the Church. It is therefore a minister's verse, and an elder's verse. It is a direction to the Church as to its duty to children: "Of such is the kingdom." They have their place and rights. They are not to be forbidden or discouraged or shut out.

It is a parent's text. Parents must not keep their children from Christ. Neither by command nor by example, nor by anything which disturbs their childish faith, nor for any reason, must they hinder the child from accepting the salvation offered in the Gospel.

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"Forbid them not" is really an invitation. It means: "Bid them to come." They are not only not to be discouraged, but to be encouraged. They are to be taken to church, and taught that Christ is the Savior, and that he desires their love and service. It is their right to be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to have a good example set for them by their parents and all who are over them in the Lord.

### "THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF."

Religion is a matter not only of worship, but of life. It involves relations to God and man, and has rewards for the present as well as the future. Christ summed up the whole law in two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

Love is a comprehensive word. Love to God includes such recognition of his divine character and devotion as makes him the chief object of worship and service. Love to man includes such interest in his welfare, such regard for his rights, and such helpfulness in his distress as puts him upon a par with ourselves in all our dealings. "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you" is a re-assertion of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Love seeks the good of its object. It takes no pleasure in smiting or giving pain. The natural heart is selfish and hasty and revengeful and brutal. Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. History is a long succession of conflicts

in which anger and ambition have triumphed through violence.

The law as given amid the thunders of Sinai was, "Thou shalt not kill." This was the announcement of the sacredness of human life. Excepting for crime, and by the constituted authorities, no man can shed another's blood. To kill or maim or mutilate a fellow being is a sin against God. So it is to kill or maim one's self. The law, "Thou shalt not kill," with the interpretation, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," forbids violence either to others or to ourselves. Suicide is as sinful as any other form of murder.

The sin of murder is not all in the act. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." The spirit of the sixth commandment is the spirit of forgiveness. He who has not this spirit finds no favor with God. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." Unrighteous anger unfits one for

religious service. Such anger, whether manifest in violence or not, is sin both against man and God.

Adultery is as injurious to our fellowmen and as heinous in the sight of God as murder. The family relation is sacred. To violate it is a sin not only against the particular family, but against society. To set aside the divine law of marriage, either through lawless love or wicked laws, is demoralizing and hateful to God. Polygamy, unscriptural divorce and prostitution are evidences of poison in the blood, and pledges of evil, unless the national conscience is aroused. Adultery is not in the overt act alone. Our Savior taught: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart." As anger is a violation of the sixth commandment, so lust is a violation of the seventh. Both are sins against God, and violations of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This subject is one of peculiar delicacy, and many pastors, teachers and parents pass it with general remarks as to purity. In some cases this is best, but in others it is not. People are more familiar with evil than they once

were. Suggestions of impurity which would not have been tolerated a generation ago are now common. Signboards display pictures advertising impure plays. Novels treating of illicit love and marital infidelity are widely circulated. These are talked of even by young people, who are thus familiarized with sin. Moreover these things stimulate passion and blunt the moral sense, and render one weak in time of temptation. Every Christian, considering the commandments, should pray with each one, and certainly with the seventh, "Lord, be merciful unto us and incline our hearts to keep thy law." Moreover he should pray: "Deliver us from temptation," and should be watchful against defiling suggestions in any form. "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes." I will not look upon impurity or talk about or meditate on it, or read it or hear it. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Love for one's neighbor requires him not only to be pure, but to promote purity.

Stealing is the most natural manifestation of selfishness, and selfishness is the opposite of the love required by God's law. The desire to gain property and hold it safely is at the foundation of social prosperity. He who steals strikes at this foundation. He injures not only the one from whom he

steals, but the community as well. So does he who obtains money by false pretense or fraud, or avoids the payment of honest debts. As one wishes to keep and enjoy what belongs to him, so if he love his neighbor as himself he will wish the same for his neighbor, and the thought of dishonesty will be hateful to him. So will the thought of false testimony against a neighbor. The command forbids not only false swearing in court, but all untruth, scandal, exaggeration and evil suggestion. It requires kindness in judging and speaking of others. "Charity thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity. Its ears are not open to evil reports. It discourages hurtful gossip, and delights in things that are lovely and of good report. The spirit of love is the spirit of truth, honesty, purity and kindness. It is the spirit of fair dealing, of respect for person, property, reputation and feelings. It seeketh not its own at the expense of another. It is generous. It even yields its rights for the good of others. It is this spirit which the Apostle Paul commended when he said: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."



## COVETOUSNESS.

When the inspired apostle writes that "the love of money is the root of all evil," or "a root of all kinds of evil," he does not condemn money nor the effort to earn it, nor even the desire to accumulate a competence. His subject is not money, but "the love of money."

"Love" is a strong word. It describes the ruling passion. It is not admiration, nor fancy, nor liking, but complete devotion. Christ said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," illustrating his words by the parable of the rich fool, whose passion was to hoard up his property, and whom he condemned not because he was rich, but because his treasure was "for himself," and not "toward God," and because wealth with him was "the God," and because he counted wealth the supreme thing. It, above all, was to be sought and kept, and from it he expected his greatest gratification.

The root of evil is the passion for money which makes it the chief end of life. Such

love is a violation not only of the Tenth Commandment, but of the First, for the two are essentially one. There is great force in the statement of the apostle when he speaks of "covetousness which is idolatry." He who gives to wealth, or anything else, the place which belongs to God is an idolater.

Covetousness is a sin not only against God and man, but against self. It exalts an inferior motive. It prompts one to seek first of all that which in the end will not satisfy him. The Scriptures and human experience testify: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase." It disturbs the mental balance. It dwarfs the ideal of enjoyment, and of the family, and of social life, and of business, and even of money itself. It crowds out better motives and good impressions. As some plants exhaust the soil and others prevent useful growth, so it impoverishes the soul and prevents the growth of Christian graces.

It is a root of evil not only in the individual soul, but in the community. It is the starting point of sharp practice, extortion and fraud. It leads to gambling and

speculation. When these bring great fortunes they are an evil object lesson. Men are not satisfied with daily bread or a competence, or even with moderate wealth. Their ideal is the vast fortune some one else has attained.

The only way to rid the soul of this root of evil is by planting something better. The secret of deliverance is in the expulsive power of a new affection. Covetousness is selfishness. Love to God and man will banish it. "Set your affections on things above." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He is the perfect example of unselfishness. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." The one thing which every man should covet is the loving, unselfish, helpful mind of Christ. Deliverance from selfishness, covetousness and every evil motive is in love to God, and recognition of his character and will. "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."

## NATIONAL SAFETY.

Few Americans are willing to admit that there can be defect in our system of government or serious danger to its perpetuity. We glory in our Constitution and history, and enter with zest into the celebration of our national holiday. Let us not, however, be blinded by smoke nor deafened by noise. A nation's safety is neither in its Constitution nor in its history, nor in the enthusiasm with which its people celebrate its anniversary. National permanence and greatness depend on national morality; using the word in a wide sense, for obedience to God's law. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

The question for us is one of loyalty to the righteous principles upon which our government was founded. We live in an age of great things. The country has grown in population, territory, wealth and influence among nations. But prosperity has dangers. Power breeds self-satisfaction. Luxury is demoralizing. Great fortunes, hastily accumulated, are an evil object lesson. Worldly

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success is magnified, and by many made the chief end of life.

The spirit of the age is a spirit of covetousness. Men are in haste to be rich. It is a spirit of irreverence. Children mature early and throw off parental restraint. So they throw off the restraints of religion. It is a spirit of carelessness in regard to right and wrong, and in regard to truth. This is manifest in profanity and Sabbath violation, and in public and private corruption.

It is no discredit to a man that he is not in harmony with the spirit of the age. The Church never has been in harmony with it. Moses was not in harmony with the spirit of his day; neither was Christ with that of his. The Apostle Paul and Martin Luther and John Calvin each opposed the spirit of his day. It is no discredit that one is "behind the times." The spirit of the age is only another expression for the "spirit of the world," which is evil, and to which the Church is opposed. Every Christian should set himself against it.

Mere passive morality is not enough. We owe it to our country not only to be good, but to promote what is good. Every Christian should be an active power in

society and the State. We are inclined to divide up our duties and to label each division, and so to distinguish between public and personal matters. We speak of political duties often in a narrow way, as if paying taxes, voting the best ticket, and helping make good tickets at primary meetings were the whole of citizenship. They are a small part of it. There is one duty which underlies and comprehends all others. This is at once personal and public, for it concerns men in all the relations of life. It is our duty to God. It is the recognition of his authority and right and of our obligation to do his will. If this be neglected, our best patriotism amounts to nothing. If it be attended to, we can not go far astray in anything. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." The man who serves God will best serve his country.

The Christian man should carry his Christianity into politics. His code of morals should be the same always and everywhere. What is wrong in private or social life is wrong in political life. We are slow to recognize this. Maxims and customs allow things which our conscience should condemn. If the eighth command-

ment forbids the taking of a neighbor's property, it forbids no less the underestimation of property for taxation, as well as all public corruption. If the ninth commandment forbids social slander, it also forbids the slander of a political opponent. Many good people, who in other respects keep the law of God, esteem it a light thing to bear false witness in a heated political campaign. The duty of Christian people is to keep God's law in every jot and tittle. By this they advance, so far as their influence goes, their country's highest interest.

Infidelity and immorality are the enemies of good government. The nation in which they gain the upper hand is a doomed nation. Money will not save it. An army and navy will not save it. Neither will education nor culture nor commerce, nor enthusiasm manifested in fireworks and patriotic speeches. The end may not come in one generation. Strong forms of government may last after the nation has become corrupt. The throne may be maintained for a time by violence and cruelty. God allowed Solomon to finish his reign, but wrested the kingdom from his son.



With a nation like ours, punishment is apt to follow close upon sin. Our Constitution is a good instrument for the government of good people. It is probably the best that has been devised in modern times for the government of a nation that fears God; but for a people given over to iniquity it is not only weak, but dangerous. Our hope is not in the Constitution, but in God, whom as a nation we serve.

This is a God-fearing and a God-serving land. It has dangerous classes, and these sometimes seem to gain ascendancy. It has a proportion of infidels and blasphemers, but the mass of the people believe in God and are disposed to keep his laws. People in large cities are apt to be pessimistic. Such cities are centers of both good and evil. They underestimate the good and overestimate the bad. There are evidences that the good is steadily advancing; that temperance and obedience to law and the worship of God are stronger to-day than they were ever before. Many long for "the good old times," but statistics show that the best times are now, and our faith is that there are better still to follow.

America has a high mission. In God's

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providence she is to work the salvation of other lands. "God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved." Faith, however, must not neglect works. Our first duty is obedience to every law of God, and our second a strong and persistent effort to bring others to this same obedience. The highest patriotism is in the effort to lead souls to Christ.

## PHILANTHROPY.

The Church is the greatest of all philanthropic societies. Whoever labors to help and elevate men, does, though he may not so intend, the work of the Church. A writer, contrasting philanthropy and religion, says: "It is better to help the distressed than to pray." But there is no argument in such contrast, for praying people are helpful people. Christianity is philanthropy. From the time of its Founder, who "came not to be ministered to, but to minister," who healed the sick and comforted the distressed, it has been humanity's helper. Its work is seen in hospitals, and orphan asylums, and kindergartens, and large contributions to relieve sufferers from flood and famine.

It is true that people outside the churches give to these causes, but this does not make them less the work of Christianity. They are found only in lands where the atmosphere is Christian. The principles of the gospel are a part of our civilization. Men may deny its power, and

yet share at least in a part of its blessings. There are those who repudiate God's Word and yet delight in the helpful results of its teaching. "Away," they cry, "with this rubbish of ages! we will clear our fields, cut down these vines; we want only the grapes of humanity and helpfulness; their clusters are beautiful, but the vines, these dogmas and sermons and prayers, are unsightly." We heed rather the word of our Savior: "I am the vine; ye are the branches." "These things I command you, that ye love one another." There would be no grapes without the vine, and no real philanthropy without the Bible. Heathenism does not build hospitals, nor interest itself in any way in the relief of distress or in the elevation of men.

Some Christian people, seeing the distress and ignorance of multitudes, think the Church should, above all, give temporal relief. They count that more important than the preaching of salvation in the life to come. It is certainly the Church's duty to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the sick. These ought it to do, but not to leave its chief work undone. Whenever it ceases to care for the

souls of men, it will soon cease to care for their bodies.

Christianity does not stop with mere physical help, nor with education, though these are a part of its mission. It deals with character, as well as health; with the soul, as well as the body. Its aim is to build up the whole man. It finds him sick and destitute, and gives physical aid; it finds him ignorant, and educates him; it sees his debased spiritual state, and offers salvation. This is the highest philanthropy. What can be higher than to take men, deformed by a sinful nature, warped by passion and dwarfed by prejudice, and to make them new men and women in Christ? The physician who treats a deformed child, and gives it a perfect form, does a noble work. So does the teacher who from a dull child develops an educated man or woman. But how much above even these is the work of the Church, which aims to restore men to the likeness of God, and so to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

## PRAYER.

As soon as a child is born it wants air; so as soon as a soul is born it prays. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air."

It is the mark of good men in all ages that they pray. Enoch led a life of prayer. He "walked with God." Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David and Daniel were pre-eminently men of prayer. The token of Paul's conversion was, "Behold, he prayeth." And the testimony of his writing is that he both prayed and exhorted others to pray. Christ spent whole nights in prayer, and taught his disciples to pray, and to be importunate in prayer.

What is prayer? It is, first of all, the expression of desire. Mere words or set forms are not prayer, however they may be emphasized or repeated. Christ spoke of some who "think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." One may recite over and over the very prayer which Christ gave his disciples, counting the times by his beads, without really pray-

ing. Such repetition may be prayer, or it may be as idle and useless as the grinding out of petitions by a heathen prayer mill. Desire, deep and earnest, is the very essence of prayer. God "will fulfill the desire of them that fear him." He will "hear the desire of the humble."

Prayer is the offering of such desire "unto God." Prayer to idols, or to saints or angels, is misdirected and vain. There is no promise in the Scriptures that Mary, the mother of Jesus, will answer prayer, or do anything to help us. Christ did not pray to her. He began his form of prayer with "Our Father which art in heaven," and himself prayed to the Father. Prayer made for the ears of men, that he who prays may be seen of them and be esteemed eloquent and gifted, is not true prayer. Christ condemned the Pharisees for the hypocrisy of such public prayer. We do not know the hearts of men. The most eloquent may be as earnest as the humblest, but we can all guard ourselves against insincerity and cultivate the true spirit of prayer, both in our public and private devotions.

The spirit of prayer is the spirit of submission to God's will. Christ prayed, "Not



as I will, but as thou wilt. God is infinitely wise. He knows what is for our good. He is ready to give good gifts, but he is the judge. To ask evil things, or to ask in impatience, or to demand our own way rather than his, is not true prayer. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us."

True prayer is always the prayer of faith. If ye shall ask anything, believing, it shall be done. Faith is not merely the belief that the particular petition will be granted. It is confidence in God that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and that he will hear and answer, giving or withholding according to his wisdom and our need.

Prayer is to be in the name of Christ. He has opened a way of approach to God. By him we have access to the Father; without him the heavens are shut up, and God is afar off. His promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

The spirit of prayer is humble and thankful. He who approaches God is conscious of and must confess his sin. Job

said, "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." No matter how good one is, God's holiness reminds him of his sin. Hence it is that prayer, both public and private, so generally begins with confession. Hence, too, confession is followed by thanksgiving. With those who worship God in spirit and in truth, the sense of sin and of pardon are inseparable. "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." "There is forgiveness with thee, and thou mayest be feared." No one can pray aright who does not realize that God so loved the world as to give his Son to die for sinners; and no one can realize this without thanksgiving.

True prayer recognizes God as the source of all good. He is the creator, preserver and benefactor of men—the giver of every good gift. With Christ, he freely gives his people all things, but bids them seek these things in prayer, with thanksgiving and confidence. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

He bids them be importunate. There is a difference between importunity and

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"much speaking." Importunate prayer is the expression of real desire. It may be repeated over and over again. What Christ said about much speaking condemns no one who speaks from the heart. He who truly prays, whether in a few words or many, will be accepted and blessed.

## HINDRANCES TO PRAYER.

If "prayer is the Christian's vital breath," it is certainly important to pray, and to pray freely and naturally. Of course, if one does not breathe, he can not live. If he does not pray, he has no spiritual life. If his breathing is hindered, either by defects in his organs or by lack of air, his vitality is reduced. There is sound philosophy in the exhortation of Peter to so live "that your prayers be not hindered."

A little thing may obstruct one's breath, and so a little sin may hinder prayer. One who, for five years, had only a name to live, confessed that his spiritual declension began when he took an unfair advantage in trade, and that the first effect was an indisposition to pray. Every attempt brought up his sin, and he gave up trying. His revival began when he visited his old home, and in the old room where he had twenty years before given himself to Christ, he fell on his knees and confessed his sin, and promised God to make repara-

tion. Then his spiritual breath came naturally, and he became strong again.

There was a man of quick temper who, if irritated in the morning, omitted family prayers. He could not pray while angry, and confessed with shame that he "got angry oftener and oftener." He had grace enough to know his danger, and to determine that he "would keep in a good humor until after worship." Of course the worship helped him to keep in a good humor all day.

Peter exhorts husbands and wives to love and cherish each other, and as a reason adds, "that your prayers be not hindered." Household strife is a hindrance to prayer. The husband and wife are not only separated in heart from each other, but both are separated from God. Love, peace and the consciousness of duty performed prepare husband and wife to worship with a pure heart, while anger and neglect are of a different spirit and unfit the soul for any religious service. The same is true in other relations of life, though no strife is so evil as that between husband and wife, because no relation is so tender. Strife between a brother and sister, or

between a parent and child, hinders their prayers; so, where friends forget friendship, cherish anger and speak evil of each other, their prayers are hindered. Our Savior said: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." If you remember that any one has been wronged by you, or that you have a quarrel with any or have injured any, be reconciled, that your prayers be not hindered. For "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses." He who forgives not, but cherishes ill-will, is in no condition to pray for pardon or for anything else.

Selfishness hinders prayer, and may be manifest in the prayer itself.

Personal blessings occupy the mind to the exclusion of other interests. Prayer should lead us away from self and personal interest to pray for others. A despondent Christian once called on Dr. Alexander. He could find no comfort in religion. He was a man of prayer, but,

as his answer showed, he prayed selfishly. "Go," said Dr. Alexander, "and pray God to glorify himself." The spirit of religion is unselfish. "The Lord turned again the captivity of Job when Job prayed for his friends;" so he blesses those who pray for others.

Selfish prayers may be answered. There are those to whom the Lord gives their request, but sends "leanness of soul." The highest type of prayer is that of Christ: "Father, glorify thyself." The prayers of David ended with the petition, "Blessed be the Lord," and "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." The chief end of man is not temporal blessings, or even spiritual joy, but the glory of God. The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with petitions for God's kingdom. Personal blessings occupy a small place.

Pride hinders prayer. "I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of an humble and contrite heart." Pride in the form of prayer, or the amount, may destroy its power.

All sin hinders prayer. No one can really pray when conscious of unrepented sin. A necessary preparation for the prayer-meeting is repentance for past sin



and determination by God's grace to obey his law in the future. No sin is more heinous or more effectually hinders prayer than unbelief. At one place Christ "could do no mighty works because of their unbelief."

A wise physician once said of a young lady that all his remedies did her no good, because her style of dress made proper action of the lungs impossible. She died by degrees, because she only half breathed. Let Christians put away everything that hinders their spiritual breath, and their spiritual strength will be so renewed that they will mount upon wings as eagles, and run without weariness, and walk without fainting.

## THE FINAL TRIUMPH.

Christianity is a triumphing cause. Its influence widens and grows stronger with the years, and the time is coming when it will cover the whole earth. We know this, because God has promised it. The knowledge of God is to "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The world may not believe this. It does not understand the purpose of Christianity and the mission of the Church, nor appreciate spiritual instrumentalities. It sees the power of muscle and numbers and machinery, but not of spiritual forces. These must be spiritually discerned. Many Christians may not believe, or at least not realize it. They see the power of evil, and are dismayed. They are like the servant of Elisha, when he saw the prophet surrounded by the armies of Syria, and cried out: "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" "Fear not, for they that be with us are

more than they that be with them." Often we need some one to pray for us as Elisha prayed: "Lord, open his eyes that he may see." When the Lord opened the young man's eyes, he saw that "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." We should pray for ourselves and look for ourselves. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." We have a great antagonist, but we have also a great God to help us and fight our battles for us. "Our help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth."

The whole Bible is an assurance of the triumph of Christ's kingdom. He is not to "fail nor be discouraged." He is to "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." His kingdom is to be established, and of it there is to be no end. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

Back of these promises is the power of God. We depend not on the wisdom or eloquence of those who preach, though their work is important, nor on the piety and faithfulness of those who sustain the Church, though their work also is important; but on God, who made the world

and gave his Son to die for it, who loves the Church and has pledged it his abiding presence, and is in the midst of it and will give it the victory. He has promised Christ the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

The Church believes this; but the trouble with too many is that they fail to realize what they believe. The difficulties are always before them, and apparent defeats discourage them. They see Zion's desolations and forget the coming exaltation. Like the disciples at Calvary, they think of the tomb rather than of the promised resurrection. Their thoughts dwell on the work to be done, and not on the power by which they can do it.

Suppose one has a bar of iron and is to cut it in two; he has no tool suited to the work and says it can not be done. But men who do such work have machines which cut iron as easily as a knife cuts paper or a needle goes through cloth. We need to consider our strength as well as our work, to realize what we believe, that God is the Lord, that he is infinite, that he loves the Church, and that his word is pledged for its triumph. Elisha was jus-

tified when he said: "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." Hezekiah was justified when he said: "There be more with us than with them, for with them is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us." Every Christian is justified in saying with the Apostle Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If God has promised the triumph of his Church, who can prevent it? Why should we be dismayed by difficulties? God is our strength, our present help. "Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed."

As a matter of fact, difficulties usually vanish when we come to them. We are like the women on the way to the sepulcher. They said: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" It was too much for their strength and a burden on their souls; but when they came, lo, the stone was rolled away. He who trusts in God sees difficulties disappear even before he reaches them. When the Church believes itself invincible, it is invincible.

Why then is the victory delayed? We do not know. Why did the Lord keep his people forty years in the wilderness? No

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doubt it was to train them for the mission to which he had called them. Why he deals as he does with the Church we can not tell, but we know that he is wise, and that in time his purpose will be made plain, and that Christ shall be acknowledged as the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is not ours to question nor to doubt, but to trust and rejoice, and by faithfulness and zeal to emphasize the prayer: "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

## HEAVEN.

Heaven is not a dream nor a vague longing, but a spiritual inheritance as sure as the promises of God. It includes eternal life and a home, and the divine presence and the companionship of holy beings, with congenial occupation and a share in the eternal glory.

We know first that there is eternal life. Christ said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And again: "I give unto them eternal life." This does not mean simply continued existence, for such existence is the portion both of believers and of those who do not believe. The Scriptures contrast life and punishment, and both are eternal. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." All who are in their graves are to come forth. "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Eternal life is an existence of conscious peace, of

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assured forgiveness of sin, and of perfect, unending blessedness.

Heaven is a place. There is a heavenly home. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." We do not know where it is, or how it is built, but we know it will meet all our needs. Christ said: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Paul wrote, We seek "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And John described the new Jerusalem as inexpressibly beautiful and glorious.

Heaven is the divine presence. "In thy presence is fullness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The purest joy of the Christian in this life is in communion with Christ; so the greatest joy of heaven will be the perfect fellowship of the soul with him, and this fellowship he has promised his people. To the thief on the cross he said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." To all the disciples he said: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye shall be also."

Heaven is fitness for the divine presence. Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." John wrote: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." Paul writes that Christians are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of his Son," and that our bodies "are to be fashioned like unto his glorious body." We need not solve the mystery of the resurrection. These things belong to the domain of faith. He who trusts in Christ and cultivates his spirit shall one day dwell with him and be like him.

Heaven is fellowship with the redeemed and with all holy beings. The writer of Hebrews says: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." We rejoice greatly in the companionship of earth; but who can conceive the bliss of eternal fellowship with God the Father,

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Son and Spirit, and with the apostles and prophets and martyrs, and the great and good of all ages. The best earthly society has its drawbacks; but there are no drawbacks, no misfits or uncongeniality in the society of heaven.

Heaven is a place of rest and satisfaction and worship. There are no tears nor sorrow nor death nor pain. God himself dwells with his people, and is their God. There is no need of the sun or moon to lighten it, for the glory of God and the Lamb is its light. There is no temple, for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." John in his vision tells how the redeemed sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and how the angels and elders and beasts and every living creature worship God, saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

Heaven is a place of recognition. We shall not be like strangers at a great reception, standing apart, unknown and unacquainted. John, in Patmos, knew Christ, though it was sixty years since his ascension. At the transfiguration, which was a vision of heaven, Peter knew Moses

and Elias, whom he had never seen, for he called them by name. So we may know not our Savior and our friends only, but some we never saw on earth. He who loves the law of God may recognize Moses. He who has taken delight in the Psalms may recognize the Psalmist. Here we know in part, but there we shall know even as also we are known. Here we are subject to the limitations of earth, but no man can tell what capabilities and knowledge and means of communication we will have in heaven. We shall know those we have known and loved on earth. The Bible does not say this in words, but it gives us reason to believe it. When David saw that his child was dead, he said: "He shall not return to me, but I shall go to him." So concerning our dead in Christ, we sorrow not as those who have no hope. We shall follow them not to a vast realm of dreamy bliss, or to walk alone the streets of the indescribable city, but to a place of joyful reunion and fellowship.

Foretastes of such meeting and recognition are sometimes granted to God's people. Stephen, when dying, saw and knew the "Son of man." There are many records of death scenes illumined from the heav-

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enly world. Christians have claimed to see faces of those gone before, and to hear familiar but long silent voices. Some explain these by saying that the brain is disturbed by disease; but no explanation meets all cases. It is easier to believe that God sometimes lifts the veil between the seen and the unseen, giving glimpses of future happiness.

There is more in the operation of the mind than can be told in human philosophy. Why should dreams which compass years and multitudes of actors pass through the mind in a few moments? Why should minds clouded by age and disease suddenly brighten in the article of death? Is it not because the soul, anticipating freedom from the material, asserts itself and the powers it will exercise in the life to come?

We may not at once recognize the friends of earth. We do not always recognize them now. The son, after long absence, returns to his home so changed that parents scarcely know him, and he is slow to realize that age has whitened their heads and bowed their backs. So it may be when we meet above. Our friends will be changed, and we will be changed, not

through age and weakness, but for the better. There will be the dew of youth, the beauty of holiness, and the image of Christ. The blind will see, the lame walk, the crooked be straight, and the withered fresh, and all will be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness. The corruptible will have put on incorruption, and the mortal, immortality.

The beginning of our heavenly life may be a series of surprises. Can these bright spirits be the suffering, the tempted, the sinful, the careworn and weary of earth? Can this be the child whose waywardness made us doubt his faith, or the selfish or passionate or wavering Christian who grieved his brethren and his Lord? We, too, being changed, their surprise will equal ours.

Friends will know each other better than on earth. There will be no deception nor misunderstanding; no deformities, either of body or soul. The suspicious and controversies of life will be forgotten in the light of perfect knowledge, and the selfish desires of life in satisfied love.

This is our hope. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Let us be admonished also, having such a hope, to

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purify ourselves, to be holy as Christ is holy, that we may be prepared for his presence and for the society of heaven.

There is another and a sad side to the subject. As there is a place of eternal happiness, so there is a place of eternal woe. As the redeemed see and know God, so the condemned know that they are shut out from his presence. As the redeemed recognize each other in glory, so the condemned know each other in condemnation. As the companionship of heaven adds to its joy, so the companionship of hell adds to its woe. As heaven is to be sought, so hell is to be shunned.

The law of heaven is love. No one is fit for heaven who does not long to have others share his bliss. The fact that any are on the way to everlasting woe must move us to earnest effort for their salvation. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we would persuade men to accept salvation as offered in the Gospel.

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### “WHAT SHALL WE DO?”

As every doctrine of God's Word has its practical application, so has the whole body of doctrine. “Truth is in order to goodness.” The apostles, after extended doctrinal statements, exhorted to faith and good works. “These things have I written unto you that ye might believe.” “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast.”

Those who hear or read theological discussions need and expect such exhortation. “What shall we do?” was the answer at Pentecost to a sermon in which the Gospel was fully set forth. Peter announced the resurrection of Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy and the hope of men, the proof that God had made Jesus “both Lord and Christ.” When the people “heard this,” they “said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The doctrine of the resurrection is the keystone of theology. All other doctrines lead up to and support and are supported by it. The apostles and Christ himself made

it the climax of argument and the opportunity for exhortation.

To the Christian this doctrine is one of exceeding comfort. As Christ rose, so they that sleep in Jesus shall rise. In this hope we bury our dead, and in this hope we ourselves approach the grave. The whole Gospel is a message of comfort. It is good news. It means hope and satisfaction. It is an assurance of heaven and of eternal communion with God. Because it is so comforting and delightful we may lose sight of other matters equally important.

The first effect of Peter's sermon was not to comfort, but to convict. They cried out: "What shall we do?" The Gospel, so full of joy and peace, is a message of warning and of convicting power. The resurrection was the proof not only of Christ's Messiahship and power to save, but of every claim that he made for himself and of every doctrine he declared. He asserted his own deity and atonement, and the condemnation of those who reject him. He would come again as a Judge, and separate the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.

The people knew that his resurrection

established the truth of every word. They were naturally alarmed. In view of these things, what was to become of them? What must they do to be saved? The answer was an exhortation to accept the salvation offered in the Gospel—to repent and believe in and follow Christ.

This is the answer for all time, and the first practical application of all theology. The Gospel is as true and as important as it was at Pentecost. The sin and need of men are as great, and the deity and atonement of Christ as true and important. Sin is just as dreadful and punishment just as sure as it ever was. The only way of salvation then is the only way of salvation now.

The study of theology, however interesting as an intellectual exercise, fails of its end unless it convicts and stimulates to duty. The hope set forth in the Gospel is no hope at all to those who do not meet its conditions. To those who reject it, or through familiarity with it are indifferent, there remains only "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

The acceptance of Christ is not the end of man's responsibility. Having begun

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the life of faith, he must keep the faith. Having chosen the Christian way, he must walk in it. Having accepted Christ, he must cultivate his spirit. He must be pure and true and just and loving and diligent. The love of Christ constrains him to die unto sin, and live not unto self, but unto Christ. The Apostle Paul, at the close of an argument on the resurrection, says: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Christian duty is not mere passive morality. We are to do as well as be good. The apostle enjoins not only steadfastness and immovability, but diligence. Christ says: "I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." The Christian is to be a co-worker with Christ. His mission is to seek and save the lost. He has escaped, but others are in danger. He knows the way of salvation, but others may not know it. Loving his neighbors as himself, he must seek his salvation.

Theology, to be orthodox, must be not only evangelical, but evangelistic. The doctrine of missions is a part of the Gospel. Every Christian is a herald of salvation. His field is wherever he can work.

It may be in the home or place of business, or in the Sabbath-school or pulpit, or it may be among the heathen in a far-off land. The field is the world. Christ's ascension command stands as the supreme duty of the Church: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And with it stands his final promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."



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