Treasures of Bonar

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Treasures of Bonar is a collection of outstanding quotations from this gifted pastor, preacher, and hymn writer. As such, it is ideally useful to introduce Bonar to a new generation of readers. At the same time, it will be a source of encouragement for all who value Christian truth. His timeless insights are immediately manifested in observations about doctrine, the Gospel, sanctification, marks of a true Christian, suffering, and missions.

"Unlike many writers of the Evangelical school, Dr. Bonar is not content with baling out milk for babes, but gives us real thought and teaching…We say to all our friends, read and be refreshed." —*Charles Spurgeon*

Horatius Bonar(1808-1889), brother of Andrew Bonar, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Following his education at the University of Edinburgh, he maintained an active and powerful ministry for more than half a century. He pastored one of the main Presbyterian churches in Edinburgh, which became known for its solid Bible teaching and revival. Throughout his life, he avoided all sensationalism and was calm, patient, solemn, and a steady writer. He was foremost a winner of souls, although he was also a great preacher and hymn writer (writing 600 hymns, over 100 of which are still in use). Like his contemporary, Spurgeon, he had a special gift to put great truths into plain and understandable language. His tracts and books have become Christian classics, being in continual use since their writing.

Biography of Horatius Bonar

Spent for the Cause of Christ!

Even at the age of 70, Horatius Bonar could still be seen taking his portable pulpit out into the streets of Edinburgh in order to preach the Gospel to sinners and to tell them of their urgent need of faith in Jesus Christ as the only hope for their soul. Despite his fame and notoriety all across Great Britain, it was to sinners God had called him; and it was to sinners that Bonar would take the "words of life" as the Lord provided opportunity. The world and its opinions mattered not one whit to Bonar as he was driven by a heavenly desire to see sinners flee the snares and entrapments of this world for the freedom and beauty of the world to come. He was a man who toiled ceaselessly to warn men of impending judgment and one whom God used greatly in 19th century Scotland for the saving of souls.

Before his death on July 31, 1889, Rev. Horatius Bonar asked that no memoir of his life be written. Unfortunately for later generations, this request was honored by those who knew and revered him. Now little is known about the man apart from that which can be garnered from small biographical sketches and the personal recollections of friends. Despite authoring three biographies of eminent ministers in his own day, Bonar did not want the story of his life and ministry to in any way obscure the glory of Jesus Christ, the Person to whom he hoped his own life would point.

Horatius Bonar was born in Edinburgh on December 19, 1808. His parents were James Bonar, the Solicitor of Excise in Edinburgh, and Marjory Maitland, who together had eleven children. Three of these children were lost in infancy, and seven of the eight remaining were boys—three of whom entered into the ministry in their early years (John James, Horatius, and Andrew).

Horatius was ordained a minister in the Church of Scotland on November 30, 1837, and was later given charge over the North Parish Church in Kelso, a small town on the banks of the River Tweed, 43 miles southeast of Edinburgh. It was there he met Jane Lundie, daughter of the late Rev. Robert Lundie. They married in 1843 and had 9 children.

In that same year, Bonar left the Established Church, along with many other ministers, to form the Free Church of Scotland in what was known as the Great Disruption. In 1866, he accepted a call to pastor in Edinburgh at the newly erected Chalmers Memorial Church. He was one in a long line of ministers in the Bonar family. In the May 1908 edition of *The Scotsman* magazine, it was estimated that Bonar descendants (John Bonar 1671-1747) served a total of 364 years in the pulpits of Scottish churches.

Pulpit

From the pulpit, Bonar's message was simple and clear: he preached a crucified and risen Christ, in whose righteousness alone was the only hope of sinners. He was adept in the exposition of a free Gospel through the necessary sovereign workings of the Holy Spirit. His presentation always placed an emphasis on the urgent and immediate necessity of leaving one's sin and coming to Christ; and this as the only means of reconciliation between man and God. In a rare autobiographical piece, Bonar wrote of his theology:

"Righteousness without works to the sinner, simply on his acceptance of the Divine message

> concerning Jesus and His sufficiency—this has been the burden of our good news…It is one message, one Gospel, one cross, one sacrifice, from which nothing can be taken and to which nothing can be added. This is the…beginning and the ending of our ministry."

Dr. Bonar's preaching was thoroughly Biblical; and in many of his sermons, you would be hard-pressed to find any instances where he deviated from the text. He added nothing superfluous or superficial. He was not blessed with commanding powers of oration, but rather was characterized as a sober and erudite preacher. It was once asked of one of his congregants if he was an eloquent man to which was replied, "No, he was not eloquent, but his doctrine was full and clear." It was not his presence in the pulpit that captivated, for there was nothing in Bonar's exposition that aimed at merely affecting the emotions. It was in his powerful and effective presentation of the evil of sin and the approaching doom of the impenitent sinner, combined with an earnest commendation of Christ that moved his hearers.

He strove to preach a Biblical Gospel that proclaimed the glory of God in the fullness of Christ, not one ashamedly suited for the "itching ears" of his day. Commenting on the state of the church in his day, Bonar wrote, "It is not opinions that man needs, it is TRUTH. It is not theology, it is GOD. It is not 'religion,' it is CHRIST. It is the knowledge of the free love of God in the gift of His only-begotten Son"—and it was towards these purposes that his message was aimed.

Bonar's ministry was one that bore much fruit. W.R. Bowman, in his small biographical work, says that Bonar was the "spiritual father" of no less than twenty-seven men from the congregation at the Grange in Edinburgh, who became missionaries or ministers themselves, many of them well known.

Writings

Bonar had a modest estimate of his abilities, coupled with a seemingly boundless capacity for work. In Kelso, he authored a series of excellent Gospel presentations, known as the "Kelso Tracts," many of which are so clear and compelling they are still in use today.[1]

He edited and contributed to various magazines and periodicals, and he also wrote numerous books, tracts, and hymns. His pen was scarcely idle. Whether it was a word of comfort to the afflicted saint or sound encouragement for the mature believer, his books were written with the sole purpose of communicating the truths of Scripture to the hearts and minds of his readers. Lord Polwarth,[2] when asked to pay tribute to the writings of Bonar, remarked,

> "…when I think of Dr. Bonar…as a writer, it is like a pure, broad light shining from heaven, where all the promises of salvation to men on earth appear to pour down as the perfect divine revelation, with nothing of man's embellishment…it is all the divine message from beginning to end. Study the poetry, study the prose, you will feel the heart of God beating through it all."

While the subject matter often varied, it almost always led the reader back to the central message of Scripture: *the Person and work of Christ*. Jesus Christ was the sum and substance of every sermon Bonar preached and every hymn or book he wrote, with the hope that they would instruct and teach the people of God. Two of his most notable works were *God's Way of Peace* and its companion volume *God's Way of Holiness* . In these books, Bonar outlined the doctrines of justification and sanctification and showed the profound importance that each of these play in the life of the Christian.

To err in making this distinction, and failure to live under this distinction, Bonar maintained would

> "…weaken the sense of sin, blunt the edge of conscience, shift the foundation of a sinner's peace from Christ to self, render the blood of sprinkling unnecessary, hinder personal holiness, and supersede the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul."

Bonar believed that to conflate or confuse these foundational doctrines would certainly undermine the firmness of the ground on which we stand before God; namely, the perfect righteousness of Christ. It would supplant that sure ground of peace, that "perfect Christ," with the delusion of a "perfect self," or a righteousness grounded in sinful man. Ultimately, it would be the cause of fear, and doubt, and darkness—undoubtedly bringing peril to the soul.

Horatius Bonar edited *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* for twenty-five years, and summarized his eschatological views in a book entitled *Prophetical Landmarks*. The second advent of Christ was a doctrine that engaged much of Bonar's efforts, as he believed it had been "the hope of the Church through many a starless night when other hopes had gone out one by one…leaving her disconsolate and helpless." Bonar strongly held that the knowledge and hope of Christ's return could dispel the darkness and afford a peaceful comfort to the Christian.

Pastorate

Bonar's ministry extended well beyond the pulpit and the pen, as he was known to spend countless hours in the spiritual care of the children in his parish. He considered it one of the minister's foremost responsibilities to instruct and teach the little ones in the ways of the Gospel. A young girl recalls her experience in a Bible class conducted by her minister:

> "I sometimes wonder if anyone else ever possessed the faculty that he had of drawing towards him the affection of young people, which, when you were once brought under the charm of his friendship, could never afterwards be lost or lessened. How well I remember his class for us girls! We would not for all the world have missed that hour on Wednesday afternoon. I think I see the little room…where we gathered, a bright, happy band of schoolgirls, sitting around to listen to his earnest, loving, faithful teaching. I see Dr. Bonar seated at the end of the long table with the large Bible spread out before him, the Bible hymnbook in his hand, his dear handsome face beaming, and the pleasant smile that lighted it up, as some of us gave a fuller, clearer answer than he expected to the question asked. And then the last meeting before the holidays; what a solemn hour it was, as he reminded us that never again here below should we all meet together, and spoke of the meeting-place above. All kneeling down, to be each tenderly commended to the loving care of our heavenly Father, bathed in tears, we could hardly tear ourselves away, lingering long after the usual time."

Hymns

It was this affectionate love and concern for the spiritual welfare of these little ones that led him to the writing of hymns. The children he was ministering to had difficulty in understanding the metrical Psalms used in the Presbyterian Church, so he began to write hymns for them that could be sung in their Sabbath school. He set his hymns to simplistic tunes and the children loved them. Bonar

viewed his hymns as a means of both enriching the mind and stirring the affections in the worship of God. He understood the power of music and how that power could be harnessed to teach sound doctrine effectively. His hymns generally can be divided into two classes: those that convey the riches of Gospel truth[3] and those that speak of the return of Christ and the coming heavenly glory. Dr. Handley Moule (1841-1920), the Anglican Bishop of Durham, once remarked,

> "In Bonar's hymns, the massive theology of the Reformation, say rather of St. Paul and of St. John, breaks into deep and tender melody, a crystal river from the rock. The glory of the Son of God, His finished work, His never-finished working, the power of His promised Spirit upon the heart of man, to convict, to convert, to train, to sanctify; the awe of guilt and judgment, the wonder of the blood of the Lamb, the sublime freedom of justifying grace, the walk with God through duty and suffering, the victory over death, the unutterable brightness of the promise of the second coming—all live in his verse, that it may live in the worshipper's soul as he sings, making the majestic doctrines embrace us, as it were, with a power full of beauty unified with truth."

Horatius Bonar wrote well over 600 hymns, and one of the great ironies of his life was that they could not be used for public worship on the Sabbath in the Free Church. Theodore Cuyler[4] recalled,

> "The first time I ever saw Dr. Horatius Bonar was in May, 1872, when I was attending the Free Church General Assembly of Scotland as a delegate from the Presbyterian Church in the United States…I was glad to be introduced to him, for I was an enthusiastic admirer of his hymns… Although Horatius had won his world-wide fame as a composer of hymns, he was, at that time, stoutly opposed to the use of anything but the old Scotch version of the Psalms in church worship. During my address to the Assembly, I said, 'We Presbyterians in America sing the good old psalms of David.' At this point, Dr. Bonar led in a round of applause, and then I continued, 'We also sing the Gospel of Jesus Christ as versified by Watts, Wesley, Cowper, Toplady and your own Horatius Bonar.' There was a burst of laughter, and then I rather mischievously added, 'My own people have the privilege, not accorded to my brother's congregation, of singing his magnificent hymns.' By this time, the whole house came down in a perfect roar, and the confused blush on Bonar's face puzzled us—whether it was on account of the compliment or on account of his own inconsistency. However, before his death, he consented to have his own congregation sing his own hymns, although it is said that two pragmatical elders rose and strode indignantly down the aisle of the church."

The church should be thankful to God for the great hymn-writers of the past. They have bequeathed to us a rich treasury of robust hymns that stand in stark contrast to much of the lighter fare served today. Even Bonar himself was cognizant of the possible dangers associated with the use of hymns in worship, and these same dangers are certainly something of which we too should be aware. Of this problem, Bonar wrote,

> "One is often inclined to ask how far some of these exulting hymns may be the utterance of excitement or sentimentalism…hymns are often the channels through which much unreality is given vent to in 'religious life.' Song, like music, is often deceitful, making people unwittingly believe themselves to be what they are not. The amount of superficial similarity,[5] which has, in

all ages, been introduced into and fostered in the Church by music, is incalculable. High-wrought feeling produced by it in conjunction with song has in many a case misled both the singer and the listener into a belief that their heart was beating truly and nobly towards Christ, when all the goodness was like the morning cloud and early dew."

Controversies

The Signal, a magazine of the Free Church, publicly rebuked Bonar for his role in introducing hymns into the worship of Presbyterian churches during the latter years of his ministry. This was not the only controversy in which Bonar found himself. Amongst the many seasons of blessing that his ministry experienced, there were also periodic seasons of conflict that burdened him greatly.

In 1843, he was one of the many supporters of Thomas Chalmers[6] during the Great Disruption in the Church of Scotland. The abuses of patronage in the calling of ministers caused many to break away and form the Free Church of Scotland. The cause of the separation was grounded in the demand of the laity for a voice in the process of appointing ministers, in opposition to many heritors[7] whose selections went unimpeded. 474 ministers left to form the Free Church of Scotland, in which Bonar was to remain for more than 40 years.

However, the most notable public disputation that involved him was his defense of the crusades of the American evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, in 1873. Two years after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 ended his ministry there, Moody went to England to preach and was invited to Scotland by Bonar. Moody had many critics among the Scottish clergy. They said he had no official consecration or training for the office of preaching, no endorsement by anyone of good report, and that the hymn singing of Ira Sankey was not appropriate in Scottish churches where exclusive psalmody was the norm. Bonar defended Moody against the onslaught of criticisms, especially those from Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall, and the two Scottish Presbyterians debated the orthodoxy of the American's preaching and his "hyper-evangelistic" methods in a series of public tracts.

Tribulations

Horatius Bonar was unable to avoid the trials and afflictions of life. He and Jane suffered profoundly when five of their children died before reaching adulthood, three in infancy. Upon the death of one of these, in a moment of deep sorrow, a broken Horatius wrote,

"Spare not the stroke; do with me as Thou wilt;
Let there be naught unfinished, broken or marred;
Complete Thy purpose that we may become Thy perfect image."

Years later, when his son-in-law, the Rev. G. Theophilus Dodds, was taken early in life, Bonar's daughter and her five children came back to live with him. At the time, he was able to write joyously to a friend, "God took five children from me some years ago, and He has given me another five to bring up for Him in my old age." These things could have only been said by one whose entire being was selflessly submitted to the will of God.

In his final years, Bonar's physical strength started to decline. Jane herself passed away in 1884 at the age of 63. Often he would approach the pulpit with little soundness of frame. But once there, the

animation and earnestness that marked much of his life would return, and he was able to preach the Gospel that he cherished, boldly and faithfully. His health continued to fail, and with it came his own laments that his usefulness for the Savior could not be what it once was. He had worn himself out for the cause of Christ and had lived as he encouraged others to live:

"Go, labour on; spend, and be spent,—
Thy joy to do the Father's will:
It is the way the Master went..."

Through the tribulations he endured, Bonar was sustained by the sovereign hand of God working *through* his life and *in* his ministry. Horatius Bonar lived to the glory of God and the service of others, with little concern for how his own life would be remembered. It is hoped that the selections that follow will help to paint a clearer picture of one who labored tirelessly for the Lord, while at the same time, showing us the beauty and glory of the One he served.

—Darrin R. Brooker

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God's Word

There can be no authority save that which is infallible and Divine, that is, God speaking to us directly in His Word. *mhr*

"O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?" (Jer 5:3). The word *truth* in Scripture refers to both doctrine and practice. It points to both the "error" and the "lie." It classes both together. It condemns both. False speaking, whether in reference to teaching or witness bearing, is declared to be abominable to God. His eyes are upon the truth. They watch over it, to guard it, and to maintain it. *lat*

God is now recalling humanity to the book that was written for it. By the very attacks made on it by enemies, as well as by the studies of its friends, He is bringing us back to this one volume, as the light shining in a dark place. That we may know the past, the present, and the future, He is bidding us betake ourselves to it. Let us read it, let us study it, let us love it, let us reverence it. It will guide, it will cheer, it will enlighten, it will make wise, it will purify.

It will lead us into all truth. It will deliver us from the fermenting errors of the day. It will save us from the intellectual dreams of a vain philosophy, from the vitiated[8] taste of a sensational literature, from the specious[9] novelties of spiritual mysticism, from the pretentious sentimentalisms of men who soar above all creeds and abhor the name of "law," from Broad Church-ism, and High Church-ism, and no Church-ism. It will lead us into light and love, into liberty and unity, imparting strength and gladness.

This Book is "the Word of God." It contains "the words of God," but it is "the Word of God," the thing that God hath spoken to man. Being the Word of God, that which it contains must be the words of God.

That He should speak in words of His own choosing is what we should above all things desire, for then we should know that His thoughts were really presented to us; that He should speak in words of man's choosing (if such a thing could be), is altogether undesirable and unlikely; for then we should not know whether the language and the thought were in the least coincident; nay, we should feel that we had gotten an incorrect and untrustworthy volume, that we had been cheated and betrayed, that instead of bread we had got a stone, and instead of an egg we had got a scorpion. *lat*

Reading God's Word

One feels, in our day, how little there is of simple reading of the divine Word, and simple understanding of it, unwarped by system, or undiluted by speculation. Not that Scripture is left unstudied, but it is little studied for the simple end of learning the mind of God, and of having the way

that leads to the kingdom traced out for our personal guidance. One searches it in order to prove that the life of Christ is a mere mythical deception, imposing unrealities upon us for realities and histories. Another searches it in order to show that there is in it no such thing as prophecy, or miracle, or sign, or wonder, or mighty deed, and that the common laws of nature will account for all. Another goes to it for the purpose of demonstrating that it contains no such dogma[10] as that of resurrection from the dead. Another gropes about in it for human flaws or fancied contradictions to prove that it is not wholly divine, and that the question of its entire inspiration is as yet unsettled and uncertain. Another goes to it for its beauty, its poetry, its lofty sentiments, just as he goes to Shakespeare, or Milton, extolling it beyond measure, yet never finding in it "the Christ of God" (Luk 9:20), the life of his soul, the peace that "passeth all understanding" (Phi 4:7).

One goes to it for *truth*, but loses sight of the TRUE ONE, thereby deceiving himself with the mere shadow or specter of knowledge and religion. Another goes to it for the True One—a person, not an abstraction—but, losing sight of the *truth*, he works out for himself a scheme of mysticism and dreaminess, which has in it, indeed, the appearance of warmth and vitality; but is still little better than religious sentimentalism. *lda*

One Truth

Truth is one, not many; truth is sure, not doubtful. There is but one true creed, one Gospel, one revelation. There is but one faith that saves and blesses. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:4-6).

Let us honor the truth as God has done, as His apostles did, as our Reformers did. Let us fearlessly wield it. Let us give it fair play and full swing everywhere. It is "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12). It is a fire, melting the iron. It is a hammer, breaking the rock in pieces.

Truth is not the feeble thing that men often think they can afford to disparage.[11] Truth is power; let it be treated and trusted as such. We need not discuss the question as to the frequent divorcement of head and heart, in the matter of knowledge. Let us beware of undervaluing either; but still more let us beware of that unscriptural, unphilosophical sentimentalism which affirms that the heart may be all right when the head is all wrong. *csr*

Truth and Error

My Dear Friend, you seem bewildered amid the opinions of the day, almost as much as you would be in the midst of a company where each spoke in a different tongue. The difficulty of judging what truth is seems increasing, instead of disappearing. You know not what to think, nor which way to turn, in order to discover who is right, or where certainty is to be found; so many novelties stagger and amaze you. There seem to be good men on both sides, and that perplexes you still more.

You long for peace amid the jar of these unruly elements, and for stability amid these shifting sands. Yet rest comes not. There is no end of change. One novelty begets another, and that, in its turn, becomes equally productive. One error requires another to maintain it, this second must have a third or fourth to lean upon. One false step leads to twenty, or perhaps a hundred more. Who knows where all this is to end?

The changes are numerous. Every month produces some new doctrine, or at least some modification of the old. Fickle minds lie in wait for something new. As the edge of one novelty wears down, another must be provided in its place to keep up the unhealthy excitement. Thus, fickleness becomes doubly fickle by being gratified; novelties multiply, and the sore evil spreads. Men do not tremble at the thought of falling into error. To change opinions upon some casual impulse or some shallow catch of an argument is thought but a light thing; as if the falling into error were no great matter, instead of being a fearful calamity; or as if the entrance upon truth were an indifferent occurrence, instead of being the occasion of deep and solemn joy. Many who but lately were high Calvinists are now Arminians of the lowest grade, passing through the different levels with the most singular facility and flippancy, as easily and airily as the musician runs up and down the scale with the finger or the voice…

Nothing is more needed in our inquiries after truth, than the watchful jealousy of a tender conscience. Yet how little is there of conscience at all in these last days! There is what is called "independence of mind" or thinking for one's self"; but that is not conscience. There is a spurning of creeds, and catechisms, and all olden theology, but that is not conscience. It is not waiting upon God for teaching. It is trusting our own heart and taking the guidance of our own eyes. It is not "ceasing from man," but the mere pretence of it. It is ceasing from one man in order to trust in another, from one age to trust in another, from one book to trust in another, from one heart to trust in another, and that other perhaps the most deceitful of all—our own. Hence, there is such running after novelty, such readiness to receive any plausible error, such instability of opinion and fickleness of spirit; such self-willedness and headstrong precipitancy[12] of judgment; such high-mindedness, pride, and censoriousness[13] of others; so little thought of our own foolishness and fallibility; so slender a sense of the awful responsibility we are under to God, for what we believe for ourselves and propagate among others, as His precious and eternal truth.

Yet be not amazed. Jehovah changes not. Neither does His Word. It abideth forever, firm as the rocks of earth, undimmed as the azure of the heavens. Seek unto God for light and to His Word for wisdom. Take His Holy Spirit as your teacher. Heed not the jar of men's warring opinions. Let God be true and every man a liar. The Bible is the Bible still. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God (Jam 1:5). Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1Jo 2:20). *tae*

What is every false religion but the belief of a lie and the judgments with which God has visited its professors, the eating the fruit of a lie…Each soul's history resembles [this]. It is the history of the belief of lies—of a thousand lies. We begin to believe lies as soon as we can believe anything at all, and we act daily upon believed lies…

What is pleasure, lust, or revelry? It is the belief of a lie, the feeding on a lie. What is worldliness, the love of gaiety, the absorption of the heart in business?—the belief of a lie and the feeding on a lie. We persuade ourselves that this world is good, and pleasant, and excellent; and so we pursue it in preference to the world to come…

God, in His Gospel, meets the *lie,* and all the lies that have sprung up on earth. He sends us the *truth.* He sends us the True One…

What stress God lays on truth and on our believing it! What sin He declares to be in a lie and in our believing it! All untruth, all error, all false doctrine, as well as false statement, has in it the nature of a lie. Men in our day think man is not responsible for the truth and that there is no sin in the

reception of error. God protests against this and calls on men to receive truth, His truth, as expounded in His one revelation! Gloriously yet awfully shall all this be manifested, when He who is THE TRUTH shall come the second time to vindicate both truth and righteousness! *lat*

On Bible Study

Do not skim it or read it, but study it, every word of it. *Study* the whole Bible, Old Testament and New; not your favorite chapters merely, but the complete Word of God from beginning to end. Do not trouble yourself with commentators. They may be of use if kept in their place, but they are not your guides. Your guide is "the Interpreter," the one among a thousand (Job 33:23), who will lead you into all truth and keep you from all error.

Not that you are to read no book but the Bible. All that is *true* and *good* is worth the reading, *if you have time for it*. All, if properly used, will help you in your study of the Scriptures. A Christian does not shut his eyes to the natural scenes of beauty spread around him. He does not cease to admire the hills, or plains, or rivers, or forests of earth because he has learned to love the God that made them; nor does he turn away from books of science or true poetry because he has discovered one book truer, more precious, and more poetical than all the rest together.

In so far, then, as time allows or opportunity presents, let us "seek and search out by word concerning all things that are done under heaven." But let the Bible be to us the Book of books, the one book in all the world, whose every wisdom is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for what it really is: the revelation of the *thoughts* of God given us in the *words* of God. Were it only the book of *divine* thoughts and *human* words, it would profit little, for we never could be sure whether the words really represented the thoughts. Nay, we might be quite sure that man would fail in his words when attempting to embody divine thoughts; and that, therefore, if we have only man's words, that is, man's translation of the divine thoughts, we shall have one of the poorest and most incorrect of all books…But, knowing that we have *divine thoughts* embodied in *divine words*, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume, assured that we shall find in all its teachings the perfection of wisdom and in its language the *most accurate expression of that wisdom* that the finite speech of man can utter.

Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psa 19:7; 12:6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night. They never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. *ftl*

Doctrine

The object of the Christian ministry is to convert sinners and to edify the body of Christ. No faithful minister can possibly rest short of this. Applause, fame, popularity, honor, wealth—all these are vain. If souls are not won, if saints are not matured, our ministry itself is vain. The question, therefore, which each of us has to answer to his own conscience is, "Has it been the end of my ministry, has it been the desire of my heart to save the lost and guide the saved? Is this my aim in every sermon I preach, in every visit I pay?" *wws*

There is a danger among some to undervalue doctrine, to exact morality at the expense of theology, and to deny the importance of a sound creed. I do not doubt that a sound creed has often covered an unsound life, and that much creed and little faith, is true of multitudes…The solemnity with which [the Bible] affirms the oneness of truth and the awful severity with which it condemns every departure from the truth as a direct attack on God Himself shows us the danger of saying that a man's heart may be in its right place though his head contains error or no creed. *gwp*

It is often said that what the age needs and what the Church needs is religion, not theology. But the whole Bible takes for granted that there can be no true religion without a true theology. The Bible is God's testimony to Himself and to His Son—the Christ of God. There can be no acceptable religion or worship or service save that which is founded upon that testimony. The belief of that testimony is life everlasting; the belief of any other testimony is death eternal. Let us be true witnesses for the truth. Let us shun and hate error—trying those that propagate it and finding them 'liars', as the Ephesian church did. Let the Master's Word in reference to the errors of the early churches sound in our ears: "Which thing I hate" (Rev 2:15). A church may, no doubt, have a true testimony, and yet be a very unfaithful church. She may have the form of sound words and the form of godliness, and yet be cold like Sardis, or lukewarm like Laodicea. Yet, on the other hand, it is not possible that, with a false testimony, or a testimony to what is untrue, she can represent her Master and Head. A false testimony must make a false church. The belief of a lie will not save a man, nor will the belief of a lie win for a church the favor of the Lord. A true creed is of unspeakable moment, even though at times it has been associated with inconsistency and death. *lat5*

The Church

The revelation of "the Christ" embraces in it the revelation of the church in Him, as His temple, His body, His bride, His present witness on earth, and the watcher for His return in glory. This church, even on earth, is no mere association of men holding certain opinions—no mere corporation favored with certain privileges—but a body chosen and called out of a world of darkness. Its legislation is divine, not human. Its laws are not its own ideas of expediency and order, but the commandments of its Head. The essence of its constitution is not socialism, nor republicanism, nor despotism, nor anarchy, but an unearthly organization, founded on entire subjection to its heavenly Head; an organization working itself out in order, unity, growth, fruitfulness, love, and zeal. Its ministers are not philosophers, nor lecturers, nor theorists, nor humorists, nor orators, nor priests, but

messengers of God's free love, expositors of the Word, shepherds of the flock, and executors of government and discipline. Its members are not politicians, nor lovers of pleasure, nor worshippers of gold, nor men who are trying to make the best of both worlds, but men alive from the dead, through the power of the Holy Ghost, possessors of a heavenly peace, bearers of a cross, yet heirs of a kingdom; strangers upon the earth, yet citizens of the New Jerusalem, which cometh down from God out of heaven. *cte*

Holy Spirit

Oh that the Churches of Christ would awake at the sound of His voice! Oh, that they would turn unto Him Who hath torn and Who will heal them, Who hath smitten and Who will bind them up! Oh that they would recognize the Holy Spirit's hand and power from the beginning downwards to the present hour. Oh that they would cease to think of Him as some vague diffusive *influence* and acknowledge Him as the Living Spirit of God, by Whose personal indwelling and inworking in our souls, we are quickened, convinced, converted, comforted, sanctified, and made meet[14] for the kingdom! Who can say how much of our present barrenness and backsliding may be traced to our not *honoring* the Spirit with that honor that is due unto His name? Dr. Owen[15] truly remarks, "There is nothing excellent among men, whether it is absolutely extraordinary, or whether it consists in an eminent improvement of their abilities, but is ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit as the immediate operator and efficient cause of it. Of old He was ALL; now some would have Him to be nothing." How can there be prosperity in a church or progress in a soul where there is not the distinct acknowledging and honoring of the Holy Spirit in everything? *hcr*

Jesus Christ

Let thine eye be single (Luk 11:34); thine arm unhampered; thine heart uncramped; all thine actions and words simple and bold and free. Be the servant of no man; but listen only to the voice which says to thee, "Follow me" (Mat 16:24), "always abound in the work of the Lord" (1Co 15:58). There is no master worthy of being followed but He who bought us with His blood. *lat4*

The Gospel

"Righteousness without works to the sinner, simply on his acceptance of the Divine message concerning Jesus and His sufficiency—this has been the burden of our good news…It is one message, one Gospel, one cross, one sacrifice, from which nothing can be taken and to which nothing can be added. This is the…beginning and the ending of our ministry." *fsn*

If Christ be not the Substitute, He is nothing to the sinner. If He did not die as the Sin-bearer, He has died in vain. Let us not be deceived on this point, or misled by those who, when they announce Christ as the Deliverer, think they have preached the Gospel. If I throw a rope to a drowning man, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more than that? If I cast myself into the sea, and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more? Did He but risk His life? The very essence of Christ's deliverance is the substitution of Himself for us, His life for ours. He did not come to risk His life; he came to die! He did not redeem us by a little loss, a little sacrifice, a little labor, a little suffering. "He redeemed us to God by his blood," "the precious blood of Christ" (Rev 5:9; 1Pe 1:19). He gave all He had, even His life, for us. This is the kind of deliverance that awakens the happy song, "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev 1:5). *gwp*

As in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have this principle of substitution applied to the sanctuary, so in that to the Romans we find it applied to the courts of law. In the former, we see God making the sinner perfect as a worshipper. In the latter, righteous as a servant and a son. In the one it is priestly completeness; in the latter it is judicial righteousness. But in both, the principle on which God acts is the same. And as He acts on it in receiving us, so does He invite us to act in coming to Him.

It is this truth that the Gospel embodies. It is this truth that we preach, when, as ambassadors for Christ, we pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. God's free love to the sinner is the first part of our message; and God's righteous way of making that free love available for the sinner is the second. What God is and what Christ has done make up one Gospel. The belief of that Gospel is eternal life. "All that believe are justified from all things" (Act 13:39). *elr*

Christ for Us

"Christ for us," the obedient in the place of the disobedient, is the first part of our message (see 1Jo 3:16). His assumption of the legal claims, which otherwise would have been made good against us, is the security for our deliverance. That deliverance becomes an actual thing to us immediately upon our consenting to allow him to undertake our case.

"Christ in us" is the second part of our Gospel (see 1Jo 4:13). This second is of mighty moment, yet is not to be confounded with the first. That which is done *for* us is not the same as that which is done *in* us. By the former, we are constituted righteous; by the latter, we are made holy. The one is properly the Gospel, in the belief of which we are saved; the other, the carrying out of that Gospel in the soul.

Christ "for us" is our justification (2Co 5:21). "Christ in us, and we in Christ," is our holiness. The former is the external substitution; the latter, the internal energy or operation, taking its rise from

the former, yet not to be confounded with it or substituted for it.

Christ the Substitute, giving His life for ours upon the cross, is specially the object of faith. The message concerning this sacrificial work is the Gospel, the belief of which brings pardon to the guilty…

It is not simply because of this righteousness that Jehovah justifies; but He legally transfers it to us so that we can use it, plead it, and appear before God in it, just as if it were wholly our own. Romanists and Socinians[16]have set themselves strongly against the doctrine of "imputed righteousness." But there it stands, written clearly and legibly in the divine word. There it stands, an essential part of the great Bible truth concerning sacrifice and substitution and suretyship. It is as deeply written in the book of Leviticus as in the Epistle to the Romans. It spreads itself over all Scripture and rises gloriously into view in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, where the "obedience unto death" which makes up this righteousness was completed…

"Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (Isa 54:17); for He, of God, "is made unto us… righteousness" (1Co 1:30). The transference is complete and eternal. From the moment that we receive the divine testimony to the righteousness of the Son of God, all the guilt that was on us passes over to Him and all His righteousness passes over to us. God looks on us as possessed of that righteousness and treats us according to its value in His sight. Men may call this a mere "name" or "legal fiction," but it is such a "name" as secures for us the full favor of the righteous God, Who can only show favor to us in a righteous way. It is such a "fiction" as law recognizes and God acts upon in dealing with the unrighteous as if they were righteous—supremely and divinely righteous in virtue of their connection with Him Who, though He knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2Co 5:21)…

Jehovah is satisfied with Christ's obedience. He is well pleased with His righteousness. And when we, crediting His testimony to that obedience and that righteousness, consent to be treated by Him on the footing of its perfection, then is He satisfied and well-pleased with us. *elr*

Good News

The Gospel…is good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God—about what He is and what He did. He is the Word "made flesh" (Joh 1:14). It is He whom the Father sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin" (Rom 8:3). He was lifted up (Joh 12:32) and crucified—He died—He was buried—He rose again on the third day—He went up into heaven and sat down on the Father's right hand (Eph 1:20)—He ever liveth to make intercession for us (Rom 8:34). In these simple facts, which a child can understand, is contained the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

The remarkable thing about this good news is that it is wholly respecting Jesus—not a word about ourselves. It is of His goodness, not ours, that the Gospel speaks. It is of His love to us, that it brings us the news; and it is the riches of His grace that it spreads out before us. A description of Jesus, and the things concerning Him—His person, His life, His death, His resurrection—this is the Gospel; and whosoever believeth this Gospel is a saved soul (Joh 3:15-16). *cia*

True Faith

That there are marks by which a Christian is known to be a Christian is most certain. That there are characteristics that evidence the real state of the heart, both to ourselves and to others, is not a thing called in question by any. Where there is living religion in the soul, it will infallibly attest its existence and vitality by "marks and evidences."

If a man walk in sin, is it not plain that he is not a Christian? If a man follow the world and love its pleasures, is it not plain that he is not a saint? If a man be covetous, or unclean, or a blasphemer, or a talebearer, or a drunkard, can he be a Christian? If he be prayerless, praiseless, lifeless, is it not clear that he is also Christless?...Let no one take the great matter of religion easily or lightly, but let him regard it with all earnestness and solemnity. Let him see it with reference to his own personal welfare for eternity...

1. *A believing man will be a holy man*. Nor can anything said by the author against the improper use of evidences be understood as in the very slightest degree giving countenance to the opposite of this; as if it were possible that the freeness of the Gospel could give liberty to sin, or grace be the encourager of licentiousness.

2. *A believing man will be a praying man*. To say, "I believe," and make this supposed faith an excuse for unprayerfulness is to deny the very end and object for which we believe, viz.,[17] that we may come into the presence of God and have unceasing fellowship with Him.

3. *A believing man will be a zealous man*. Faith makes a man zealous. Faith shows itself by zeal. Not by zeal for a party or a system or an opinion; but by zeal for Christ—zeal for His church—zeal for the carrying on of His work on earth.

4. *A believing man will be a consistent man*. He will seek to abound in all good works, to bring forth all the fruits of the Spirit, to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where there are inconsistencies—evil tempers, covetousness, selfishness, levity,[18] flippancy,[19] carnality,[20] worldliness, pride, and such like—there is but too sufficient reason to conclude that the man has not yet believed. He *says* that he believes; but that is not believing. He *speaks* much about believing; but that is not believing. He *vaunts*[21] loudly of his assurance and scorns every one that will not use his language; but this is not believing. He *professes* great zeal for the freeness and simplicity of the Gospel; but that is not believing. He that has really believed will be too much in earnest, too much engrossed with the object before him, to be always telling others of his faith and his assurance, and his zeal for a free Gospel.

5. *A believing man will be a humble man*. He will think little and speak little about himself. True faith carries us above this pride, self-esteem, and vainglory. If he be a minister, he will shrink from proclaiming himself and his own feelings and his own doings; and if God has given him success, he will be the last to speak of it. Or if he be not a minister, he will still refrain from giving prominence to self in any of his proceedings. His great object will be to hide *self*; and not only to forget it himself, but to make others forget it too. The man that is still proud, boastful, vainglorious, self-confident has good reason to suppose that he has never yet believed.

6. *A believing man will be always jealous of himself*. He will walk continually with a most watchful eye upon himself, upon the state of his heart, the state of his life, his growth in grace, his conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus. Knowing that *self-jealousy* is quite consistent with simple

faith and entire peace with God, he is not afraid to cherish it. He is far more jealous of himself than others—far more given to sit in judgment on himself than on others; though holding fast the blessed truth of a saint's assurance, he is not afraid to search himself most thoroughly, saying, like Paul, "lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Gal 2:2). And though grasping most firmly, as amongst the surest and most fundamental doctrines of the Bible, the truths of God's eternal election and predestination unto life, as also the truth of the saint's perseverance unto the end, he does not hesitate to say with the same Apostle, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1Co 9:27).

Thus, then, we are to walk "as becometh saints" (Eph 5:3). Nothing in the Gospel can, save by man's perversion, in the very least encourage inconsistency or unholy walking. Christ is not the minister of sin. The grace of God cannot lead to licentiousness[22] or unrighteousness.

Nay, the more fully and simply we realize the glad tidings, the more we shall be constrained to a course in conformity with Him who hath called to us. We shall feel as if *committed* to a holy life. Just in proportion as we reject marks and evidences from the *grounds* of our peace, in that proportion we shall seek to *give evidence* that we have believed by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness.

Our light must shine. It must diffuse[23] itself around, making men to feel that we are children of the most High God. In word, in look, in life, in daily deportment, our character as men redeemed by blood and dwelt in by the Spirit, must be made apparent. All things that are lovely and of good report must be seen in us (Phi 4:8); so shall it be known whose we are and whom we serve. *ltc*

God's Sovereignty in Salvation

You are perplexed by the doctrine of God's sovereignty and election. I wonder that any man believing in a God should be perplexed by these. For if there be a God, a King, eternal, immortal, and invisible, He cannot but be sovereign—and He cannot but do according to His own will and choose according to His own purpose. You may dislike these doctrines, but you can only get quit[24] of them by denying altogether the existence of an infinitely wise, glorious, and powerful Being. God would not be God were He not thus absolutely sovereign in His present doings and His eternal pre-arrangements. *gwp*

The truth is just this, that God's will is the law of the universe—His glory the object and end both in creation and in redemption—His everlasting purpose the mighty and all-perfect mold in which all things are cast, and from which they take their shape and fashion from first to last. *ctp*

Time in God's Hands

"For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12). We walk here amid change, evil, and death. Each year begins and ends with some of these; and the broken ties of earth, far more than the fallen leaf, remind us that this is not our rest. With how many of us are the memories of the past year more linked with the sickbed and the churchyard—with earthly losses and broken hopes—with partings and disappointments and heaviness of spirit—than with gaiety, or brightness, or mirth.

But in all this do we not discern most vividly wisdom's devisings and love's doings? How much in earnest must God be with us, thus to multiply the dealings of His wondrous discipline, that discipline by which He is drawing men to Himself out of a present evil world (Joh 12:32) and leading upward from height to height, those whom He has already delivered and made heirs of His kingdom!

Our changing years affect not Him with Whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day: Who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. In a changing world, let us rejoice in this unchangeableness.

Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, we gird ourselves anew for another year's race and conflict, pressing forward in the power of that grace which we have tasted. If past years have been barren, let not this one be so. For the time is short, and our day of service will soon be done. Whatsoever our hand findeth to do, must be done with all our might (Ecc 9:10). *ctp*

The Will of God

Man's entire apostasy and death in sin, so that he cannot save himself; and God's entire supremacy, so that He saves whom He will, are doctrines exceedingly distasteful to human pride. But they are Scriptural.

Why was one thief saved and the other lost? "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Mat 11:26). God was not bound to save the one, and He had power enough to have saved the other;

and neither could save himself. What made the difference? The sovereign grace of God.

Why was Paul saved and Judas lost? Was it because the former deserved to be saved and the latter to be lost? No, neither deserved to be saved. Was it because the one was a fitting object for the grace of God and the other not? No, the one was no more a fitting object than the other.

Why was it that Judea was made a land of light and Egypt remained a region of darkness? Who made the difference? Man or God? Was God unjust in leaving Egypt in the shadow of death when He made light to arise on Israel? What had Israel done to deserve a privilege like this?

None have deserved salvation. No man is more fit for it than another. God was not bound to save any. God might have saved all. Yet He has only saved some. Is He, then, unjust in only saving some when He could have saved all? Objectors say, "Oh, those who are lost are lost because they rejected Christ." But did not all equally reject Him at first? What made the unbelief of some give way? Was it because they willed it or because God put forth His power in them? Surely the latter. Might He not, then, have put forth His power in all and prevented any from rejecting the Savior? Yet He did not. Why? Because so it seemed good in His sight.

Is it unjust of God to save only a few when all are equally doomed to die? If not, is there any injustice in His determining aforehand to save these few and leave the rest unsaved? They could not save themselves; and was it unjust in Him to resolve in His infinite wisdom to save them? Or was it unjust in Him not to resolve to save all? Had all perished there would have been no injustice with Him. How is it possible that there can be injustice in His resolving to save some?

There can be no grace when there is no sovereignty. Deny God's right to choose whom He will and you deny His right to save whom He will. Deny His right to save whom He will and you deny that salvation is of grace. If salvation is made to hinge upon any desert[25] or fitness in man, seen or foreseen, grace is at an end.

One of the controversies of the present day is respecting the WILL of God—as to whether His will or man's is the regulating power in the universe and the procuring cause of salvation to souls. The supremacy of God's will over individual persons and events is questioned. Things are made to turn upon man's will, not on God's…Much zeal is shown for the freedom of man's will; little jealousy seems to be left for the freedom of God's will. Men insist that it is unjust and tyrannical in God to control their wills, yet see nothing unjust, nothing proud, nothing Satanic in attempting to fetter and direct the will of God. Man, it seems, cannot have his own foolish will gratified, unless the all-wise God will consent to relinquish His! Such are some of the steps in the march of Atheism. Such are the preparations making in these last days by the wily usurper for dethroning the Eternal Jehovah.

Men may call these speculations. They may condemn them as unprofitable. To the law and to the testimony (Isa 8:20)! Of such speculations, the Bible is full. There man is a helpless worm; and salvation from first to last, "is of the Lord" (Jon 2:9). God's will, and not man's, is the law of the universe. If we are to maintain the Gospel—if we are to hold fast grace—if we are to preserve Jehovah's honor—we must grasp these truths with no feeble hand. For if there be no such a Being as a Supreme, pre-determining Jehovah, then the universe will soon be chaos: and if there be no such thing as free electing love, every minister of Christ may close his lips; and every sinner upon earth sit down in mute despair. *rog*

Election

Let us take an instance from the Bible [*about God's sovereignty in salvation*]. What does God's choosing of Abraham mean? He is a specimen of a sinner saved by grace, a sinner called out of the world by God. Well, how did this choosing take place? Did not God think of him long before he ever thought of God? Did not God choose him long before he ever thought of choosing God? Were there not thousands more in Chaldea that God might have chosen, and called, and saved, had he pleased? Yet he chose Abraham alone. And what does the Bible call this procedure on the part of God? It calls it election. "Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees" (Neh 9:7). Does anyone say, "O, but God chose Abraham because he foresaw that Abraham would choose him"? I answer, the case is precisely the reverse of this. He chose Abraham just because he saw that otherwise Abraham would not choose him. It was God's foreseeing that Abraham would not choose him that made election necessary. And so it is with every sinner. So it is with us. God chooses us, not because he foresees that we would choose him, or that we would believe, but for the very opposite reason. He chooses us just because he foresees that we would neither choose him nor believe of ourselves at all. Election proceeds not upon foreseen faith in us, but upon foreseen unbelief.

The truth is that election has no meaning if it be not the expression of God's will in reference to particular persons and things—saying to each, thus and thus shalt thou be, not because thou choosest to be so, but because I, the infinite Jehovah, see fit that thou shouldest be so. To one creature He says, thou shalt be an angel, to another thou shalt be a man. To one order of beings, thou shalt dwell in heaven; to another, thou shalt dwell on earth. To one man, thou shalt be born in Judea, where My name is named and My temple stands; to another, thou shalt be born in Egypt, or Babylon, where utter darkness reigns. To one He says, thou shalt be born in Britain, and hear the glad tidings; to another, thou shalt be born in Africa, where no Gospel has ever come. Thus, He expresses His will, and who can resist it? Who can find fault or say to Him, "What doest thou?" Men may object at being placed thus entirely at the disposal of God, but the Apostle's answer to such is, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom 9:20). Election, then, is the distinct forthputting of God's sovereign will, for the purpose of bringing a thing to pass, which, but for the explicit forthgoing of that will, would not have come to pass.

But does this not lead to the conclusion that sin is the direct result of God's decree? Does it not teach us that it is God and not man that produces sin? No. God does not foreordain sin. But he decrees to allow man to sin. God is holy and hates sin. He does not lead men into it; neither does he decree to lead men into it. But he decrees that, for infinitely wise ends, the creature should be permitted to fall and sin be perpetuated. *tae*

Sanctification of the Saints

We are so to walk as to please God, thoroughly and well. In order to this, our walk must be—

1. A *believing* walk. For without faith it is impossible to please God.

2. A *decided* walk. No compromise nor half-heartedness—we must be Christians out and out; no divided heart, nor service of two masters.

3. A *consistent* walk. Not in word or profession, but in deed; not one part of our life contradicting the other, but all in harmony, each contributing its separate testimony.

4. A *persevering* walk. Not a running well at times, and then a halting or fainting; but a constant pressing forward.

Only in these ways shall our walk be "unto all pleasing." Do you seek to please Him? Not merely to avoid displeasing; but is it your aim in all things to please God, and in pleasing Him, to cast a pleasant light upon all around? *lat4*

Whether we consult our own interests or those of others, we must advance in holiness. If we would have a deeper peace, we must be holier men. If we would shed brighter light upon a dark world…we must be holier men. If we would glorify God each day, we must be holier men. *ltc*

If you are Christians, be consistent. Be Christians out and out; Christians every hour, in every part. Beware of half-hearted discipleship, of compromise with evil, of conformity to the world, of trying to serve two masters—to walk in two ways, the narrow and the broad, at once. It will not do. Half-hearted Christianity will only dishonor God, while it makes you miserable. *lat3*

Learn self-denying Christianity—not the form or name, but the living thing. "Even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom 15:3). Let us in this respect be His true followers; bearing burdens for Him; doing work for Him; submitting to the sorest toil for Him; not grudging effort, or cost, or sacrifice, or pain; spending and being spent for Him; abjuring[26]the lazy, luxurious, self-pleasing, fashionable religion of the present day. A self-indulgent religion has nothing in common with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ or with that cross of ours, which He has commanded us to take up and carry after Him, renouncing ease and denying self. Our time, our gifts, our money, our strength are all to be laid upon the altar. We are to be living sacrifices (Rom 12:1). *lat5*

Prayer

Beware of declension[27] in prayer. Whenever you feel the closet becoming a dull place, you may be sure something is wrong. Backsliding has begun. Go straight to God that He may "heal it" (Hos 14:4). Do not trifle[28] with it nor resort to other expedients to relieve the dullness, such as shortening the time, or getting some lively religious books to take off the weariness. Go at once to the Great Quickener with the cry, "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name" (Psa 80:18). Beware of going through prayer in a careless or perfunctory[29] way, like a hireling doing his work in order to get done with it. Pray in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20). "Pray without ceasing" (1Th 5:17). Pray with honest fervor and simple faith, as men who really want what they ask for and expect to get it all. Few

things tend more to deaden the soul, to harden the heart, to drive out spirituality, than cold, formal prayer. It will eat "as doth a canker[30]" (2Ti 2:17). Dread it and shun it. Do not mock God by asking what you do not want, or by pretending to desire what you do not care for. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1Pe 4:7). *ftl*

Beware!

Look forwards! Look upwards! Stand apart from a present evil world. Remember that in the last days perilous times shall come (2Ti 3:1). It remains for us that we let our light shine and keep our garments undefiled (Job 3:4; Rev 3:4). Labor on, O man of faith! labor on; the toil and the battle will soon be done, and thou shalt rest from thy labors, and thy works shall follow thee.

Beware of the leaven of the last days—the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees—the leaven of mingled infidelity and superstition—the leaven of atheism and pantheism[31] (Mat 16:6).

"Liberality" is the watchword; but is it the liberality of the Bible or of God? Is it the liberality of Him who says in reference to false teaching, "WHICH THING I HATE?" (Rev 2:15). Beware of letting go the truth of God, of either denying, or disgracing, or depreciating it. "Hold that fast which thou hast" (Rev 3:11). The Master is absent, and responsibility in the Master's absence is double responsibility. He trusts to us to maintain His truth and to honor His name, until He return. Let His Churches be faithful to their trust, honoring Him as Prophet, Priest, and King. He may be returning soon. If, on His return, He finds us unfaithful to Himself and to His truth, what shall be our recompense? Behold, He cometh! Like a trumpet-voice, let that cry go through the Churches; let it echo through earth. His long absence will soon be ended. Let us be ready: let us watch and be sober (1Th 5:6). *lat5*

Dwell Alone!

Christian, dwell alone! Seek not the society of the world. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (Jam 4:4). If you have any sympathies with that world—if it contains attractions for you—if God and the things of God are not enough for you—there is something wrong. "Love not the world" (1Jo 2:15)! Seek not its society. Seek the things above (Col 3:2). Beware of the fascinations of company, the spells which gaiety throws over the young. Stand your ground. Be not whirled away into the tossing current of gay society on any pretext[32] whatever.

Church of the Living God, be separate—dwell alone! That is your security, your strength, your influence. Let the world see that…you do not need it. It needs you—but you do not need it. And you will serve it best by dwelling alone. Not by coldness, sourness, distance; but by love, geniality, gentleness, patience, by all acts of benevolence and words of peace. These are things that are only to be found by "dwelling alone." *lat5*

"Harden Not Your Hearts"

There are many dangers to which Christian men are liable; but the Apostle singles out one to which they were specially exposed—hardness of heart, impenitence, obduracy.[33] It is to Christian men that he addresses the warning. This hardening implies such things as these:

1. *A losing our first love*—When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold (Rev 2:4; Mat 24:12). The affections get dull and blunted.

2. *Losing the edge of our conscience*—The conscience ceases to be sensitive and tender. It does not shrink from sin as it used to do.

3. *Callousness as to truth*—We get so familiarized with truth that it ceases to affect us. It loses its power over us.

4. *Insensibility to sin*—Our own evils are not felt as they used to be; sin itself is not so hated and shunned as formerly.

Thus, our whole man gets hardened; our feelings become dull; and spiritual things no longer tell upon us. Great is our danger of becoming hardened; greater still our danger after we have become hardened. Oh, beware of sliding back and sliding down! Beware of coldness and indifference! Keep your whole man ever on edge; let not hardness creep in.

This process of hardening is accomplished through the deceitfulness of sin, or rather of "this sin," that is, the sin of unbelief spoken of in the previous verse (Heb 4:6-7). All sin hardens. The sight of it hardens; connivance[34] at it hardens; indulgence in it hardens. But especially is this true of unbelief. There is nothing so hardening as unbelief; and one great reason for this is, that there is nothing so deceitful. It does not look a great sin; nay, sometimes not like sin at all, but like modesty and humility. It pretends to be jealous for God, to be conscious of personal unworthiness, to be unfit to venture on a hope of acceptance. Thus, it deceives…It actually hides itself, palliates[35] its own enormities,[36] veils its hatefulness under the name of humility. In all these ways, it contrives to destroy faith, to cherish itself, and so to harden the heart.

Let us then specially beware of unbelief and its deceitfulness. Let us be on our guard against the hardening process, which it effects. Let us dread the evil heart of unbelief that leads us away from God. That which leads us away from God must harden; that which denies the love of God must harden; that which separates the Word and promise of God must harden. Have faith in God, if you would preserve a soft and sensitive heart. *lat4*

Be Discriminating

Be *discriminating!* Do not call error truth for the sake of charity. Do not praise earnest men merely because they are earnest. To be earnest in truth is one thing; to be earnest in error is another. The first is blessed, not so much because of the earnestness, but because of the truth. The second is hateful to God and ought to be shunned by you. Remember how the Lord Jesus from heaven spoke concerning error: "*which thing I hate*" (Rev 2:6-15; 1Ti 6:4-5). True *spiritual discernment* is much lost sight of as a real Christian grace, discernment between the evil and the good, the false and the true. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1Jo 4:1). This "discernment," which belongs to everyone who is taught of God, is the very opposite of that which is called in our day by the boastful name of "liberality." Spiritual discernment and "liberal thought" have little in common with each other. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom 12:9). The liberality that puts "bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa 5:20) is a very different thing from the charity[37] that "thinketh no evil" (1Co 13:5). Truth is a mighty thing in the eyes of God, whatever it may be in those of men. All error is, more or less, whether directly or indirectly, a misrepresentation of God's character and

a subversion of His revelation (Rev 22:18-19). *ftl*

Fear of Man

Do not be hangers on of the great, or rich, or influential, either in church or state. Do not be subservient to the leaders of party, or the representatives of public opinion, or the politicians of the day. Quit you like men[38] (1Co 16:13). Be independent. Act on your own judgment, and follow out your own honest conclusions. Be not carried away with the excitement of controversy or the enthusiasm of partisanship.[39] Do not be obsequious,[40] trimming,[41] or facing both ways. Be upright before God and man. One is your Master, even Christ; follow Him. To follow others is to bring ourselves into bondage, to make ourselves servants of men. Be calm; be steadfast and unmovable with your eye upon the great day of sifting, when the Judge shall reckon with you as to your fidelity to Himself. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal 5:1). Be not carried away either with the fear of the many. Be not overawed by the fear of man, which bringeth a snare or influenced by the love of his approbation,[42] which is no less ensnaring. To your own Master you stand or fall. *lat3*

Speak the Truth about Evil

There is some danger of falling into a soft and effeminate Christianity, under the plea of a lofty and ethereal[43] theology. Christianity was born for endurance…It walks with firm step and erect frame. It is kindly, but firm; it is gentle, but honest; it is calm, but not facile;[44] obliging, but not imbecile;[45] decided, but not churlish.[46] It does not fear to speak the stern word of condemnation against error, nor to raise its voice against surrounding evils, under the pretext that it is not of this world. It does not shrink from giving honest reproof lest it come under the charge of displaying an unchristian spirit. It calls sin "sin," on whomsoever it is found and would rather risk the accusation of being actuated by a bad spirit than not discharge an explicit duty. Let us not misjudge strong words used in honest controversy. Out of the heat, a viper may come forth; but we shake it off and feel no harm. The religion of both Old and New Testaments is marked by fervent outspoken testimonies against evil. To speak smooth things in such a case may be sentimentalism, but it is not Christianity. It is a betrayal of the cause of truth and righteousness. If anyone should be frank, manly, honest, cheerful (I do not say blunt or rude, for a Christian must be courteous and polite), it is he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious and is looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God. I know that charity covereth a multitude of sins; but it does not call evil good because a good man has done it. It does not excuse inconsistencies because the inconsistent brother has a high name and a fervent spirit. Crookedness and worldliness are still crookedness and worldliness, though exhibited in one who seems to have reached no common height of attainment. *gwh*

On Reading

Avoid works that jest with what is right or wrong, lest you unconsciously adopt a false test of truth and duty, namely, ridicule, and so become afraid to do right for right's sake alone, dreading the world's sneer and undervaluing a good conscience and the approving smile of God. Let your reading

be always select; and whatever you read, begin with seeking God's blessing on it. But see that your relish for the Bible be above every other enjoyment, and the moment you begin to feel greater relish for any other book, lay it down until you have sought deliverance from such a snare and obtained from the Holy Spirit an intenser relish, a keener appetite for the Word of God (Jer 15:16; Psa 19:7-10). *ftl*

Take Heed

Not only are we to take heed, but the Apostle says, "Ye DO WELL that ye take heed" (2Pe 1:19). Men often say, "Ye do ill." God says, "Ye do well." Which shall we believe? God hath spoken; shall we not listen? Christ hath said, "Take heed"; shall we close our eyes? Much of our holiness depends on this. Our steadfastness in an unstable age depends on this. Our preservation from stumbling depends on this. Our proper insight into the real condition of the world and the Church depends on this, for we cannot rightly read the signs of the times without this. We cannot appreciate the truth needful for our day without this (our "generation truth" as our forefathers called it). We cannot discern error and apostasy and declension without this. We cannot interpret aright the events of our time, social, political, ecclesiastical,[47] or national, without this. We are sure to call good evil, and evil good, without this; and we are sure to go wrong in our plans of Christian work, whether at home or abroad without this. It enables us to see afar off. It makes us keen-sighted as to all that is around us, enabling us to look under the surface of events and discern their real meaning and bearing and results. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa 119:105).

This light in the dark place is absolutely necessary in this the hour and power of darkness. We cannot do without it. Woe be to those who walk on without its light! *ldp2*

Quiet Time

Be much alone with God. Do not put Him off with a quarter of an hour morning and evening. Take time to get thoroughly acquainted. Talk everything over with Him. Pour out every thought, feeling, wish, plan, and doubt to Him. He wants converse with His creatures. Shall His creatures not want converse with Him? He wants, not merely to be on "good terms" with you, if one may use man's phrase, but to be intimate. Shall you decline the intimacy and be satisfied with mere acquaintance? What! Intimate with the world, with friends, with neighbors, but not with God? That would look ill indeed. Folly, to prefer the clay to the potter, the marble to the sculptor, this little earth and its lesser creatures to the mighty Maker of the universe, the great "All and in all!" *ftl*

On Deception

The illumination coming from the Sun of righteousness is one thing; and that proceeding from Satan, as an angel of light, is quite another. Satan's object is to confound these two kinds of light, so that men may be misled, as by the gleam of a false beacon, which ensnares even a skilful pilot, and hurries the secure vessel suddenly upon the rock. One of our greatest dangers in these days arises from this effort of the evil one. If he had set up his light in a wholly opposite quarter and given it a color like himself—the lurid glare of hell—men would not have been deceived. But he has imitated

so nearly the hue of the true light and placed it so near the heavenly lighthouse that thousands mistake the beacon and find themselves unexpectedly a wreck. *fse46*

Redeem the Time

Redeem the time: much of your progress depends on this. Be men of "method and punctuality"; waste no moments; have always something to do, and do it use up the little spaces of life, the little intervals between engagements. I knew a friend who, one winter, read through some five or six octavo[48]volumes by making use of the brief interval between family worship and breakfast. Pack up your life well; your trunk will contain twice as much if well packed; attend, then, to the packing of each day and hour. You may save years by this. How many have "slipped" and "fallen" through idleness! How many begin a score of things and end nothing, dawdle[49]away their morning or their evening hours, sleep longer than is needful, trifle through their duties, hurrying about from work to work, or from book to book, or from meeting to meeting, instead of being calm, methodical, energetic! Thus, life is loitered away; and each sun sets upon twelve wasted hours and an uneasy, dissatisfied conscience. Be punctual and regular in all duties and engagements. Keep no man waiting. Be honest as to time, both with yourselves and others, lest you get into a state of chronic flurry[50]and excitement; so destructive of peace and progress; so grieving to the Spirit, whose very nature is calmness and rest.

These may seem small things, but they are the roots of great. Resist beginnings. "Seize time by the forelock." *Live* while you live. Watch your steps; count your minutes; live as men who are pressing on to a kingdom, and who fear, not only open apostasy, but the smallest measure of coming short, the slightest stain upon the garment of a saint, the faintest slur upon the name of a disciple. *ftl*

Suffering

All that will live godly in Christ will suffer persecution. The road to the kingdom is rugged and perilous. *lat3*

He makes us to glory in tribulation: for this is the road by which all the former saints went to the kingdom; the way by which all are going now; the way by which the Master went during His sojourn here. *cog*

Our way winds, the road is rough, the world is dark, enemies are many, and snares are subtlety laid for our feet. We need a guide, and that guide must be Divine. Jehovah is to us now what He was to Israel when He led them through the wilderness with His pillar-cloud. *wop*

The road is rugged, and the sun is hot. How can we be but weary? Here is grace for the weariness—grace which lifts us up and invigorates us; grace which keeps us from fainting by the way; grace which supplies us with manna from heaven, and with water from the smitten rock. We receive of this grace, and are revived. Our weariness of heart and limb departs. We need no other refreshment. This is enough. Whatever the way be—rough, gloomy, unpleasant—we press forward, knowing that the same grace that has already carried thousands through will do the same for us. *ctr8*

The road to the Kingdom is not so pleasant, and comfortable, and easy, and flowery, as many dream. It is not a bright sunny avenue of palms. It is not paved with triumph, though it is to end in victory. The termination is glory, honor, and immortality; but on the way, there is the thorn in the flesh, the sackcloth, and the cross. Recompense yonder; but labor here! Rest yonder; but weariness here! Joy and security yonder; but here endurance and watchfulness—the race, the battle, the burden, the stumbling block, and ofttimes the heavy heart. *fse20*

Perseverance

Small may be our strength in these last days. The tide of error, and sin, and worldliness may be running very strong. It may not be easy to confess Christ, or to hold fast His truth. But His grace is sufficient for us; and woe be to us if we give way to the errors of the age, or conform to its vanities, or seek to please its multitudes, either under the dread of public opinion, or the fear of not being reputed "men of progress," or the shrinking from more direct persecution and hatred! Faithfulness to Christ, and to His truth, is everything, especially in days when "iniquity shall abound," and "the love of many shall wax cold" (Mat 24:12).

Fear not! The reward is glorious; the honor is beyond all earthly honors. The contempt and enmity are but for a day; the dignity and the blessedness are forever and ever.

What though men call you narrow-minded for cleaving to old truth— now obsolete, as they say; for "worship of a book," or *bibliolatry*, as they call it; for the stern refusal to lower our testimony to our glorified Lord and coming King? Let us be content to bear reproach for Him and His Word (Heb 13:13). The glory to be given us at His appearing will more than compensate for all (1Pe 1:7).

Quit you like men (1Co 16:13).—Be men! *In courage*; not cowards, turning our back on the foe, or giving way in danger, or reproach, or evil days. *In solidity*; not shifting or shadowy, but immoveable as the rock. *In strength*; as the man is, so is his strength. Be strong! *In wisdom*. Foolishness is with childhood, wisdom with manhood. Speak and act with wisdom, as men. *In ripeness*. The faculties of men are ripe, both for thinking and working. They speak ripe words, think ripe thoughts, plan and execute ripe things. In understanding be men! In all things—what you do, and what you refrain from doing, be men. Act the manly part—let nothing effeminate, luxurious, sickly, childish, puny, little, narrow be seen about you. Christianity makes men, not babes. Adorn the doctrine of Christ by your manliness. In the Church, in the world, in business, in conversation, in prosperity, and adversity, quit you like men! Let no man despise thee; and let no man despise the Gospel because of thee. *ctb*

Hymns

Think truly, and thy thoughts Shall the world's famine feed.
Speak truly, and each word of thine Shall be a fruitful seed.
Live truly, and thy life shall be A great and noble creed. –hfh

Give we the glory and praise to the Lamb;
Take we the robe and the harp and the palm;
Sing we the song of the Lamb that was slain,
Dying in weakness but rising to reign. –1866, #219, thb

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise, And all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found In Him my Star, My Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk, Till trav'ling days are done. –1846, #221, thb

I was a wand'ring sheep, I would not be controlled;
But now I love my Shepherd's voice, I love, I love the fold.
I was a wayward child, I once preferred to roam;
But now I love my Father's voice, I love, I love His home. –1843, #396, thb

I praise the God of grace; I trust His truth and might;
He calls me His, I call Him mine, My God, my joy, my light.
'Tis He who saveth me, And freely pardon gives;
I love because He loveth me, I live because He lives. –1861, #403, thb

I long to be like Jesus, Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus, The Father's holy Child;
I long to be with Jesus Amid the heav'nly throng,
To sing with saints His praises, To learn the angels' song. –1848, #430, thb

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God, In ev'ry part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim Thy being and thy ways.
Not for the lip of praise alone, Nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up Of praise in ev'ry part. –1866, #495, thb

O Master, point Thou out the way, Nor suffer Thou our steps to stray;
Then in the path that leads today We follow Thee. –1866, #503, thb

When the worldling, sick at heart, Lifts his soul above;
When the prodigal looks back To his Father's love;
When the proud man, in his pride, Stoops to seek Thy face;
When the burdened brings his guilt To Thy Throne of grace:
Hear then in love, O Lord, the cry
In heav'n, Thy dwelling place on high. –1866, #532, thb

Thy way, not mine, O Lord, However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand, Choose out the path for me;
Smooth let it be or rough, It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads Right onward to Thy rest.

The kingdom that I seek Is Thine; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine, Else I must surely stray.
I dare not choose my lot; I would not if I might;
Choose Thou for me, my God, So shall I walk aright.

Take Thou my cup, and it With joy or sorrow fill
As best to Thee may seem; Choose Thou my good and ill.
Not mine, not mine the choice In things or great or small;
Be thou my Guide, my Strength, My Wisdom, and my All. –1857, #573, thb

False Religion

Man has always treated sin as a misfortune, not a crime; as disease, not guilt; as a case for the physician, not for the judge. Herein lies the essential faultiness of all mere human religions or theologies. They fail to acknowledge the *judicial* aspect of the question, as that on which the real answer must hinge; and to recognize the guilt or criminality of the evildoer as that which must first be dealt with before any real answer, or approximation to an answer, can be given. *elr*

It seems strange, after all, that man should be…easily misled, and that, among thousands who profess to seek for truth, so few should reach it. But man's bias is on the side of error, just as it is on the side of sin; for all error is sin. Darkness is loved rather than light, and the bondage of the evil one preferred to the liberty of God. Hence, it is so easy to seduce men from the path of truth. God and truth are so closely linked together that they cannot have the latter without the former. A false religion without God they may have, but a true religion without Him they cannot have. And thus, they who have no relish for Divine companionship here and an eternity in the presence of God hereafter will be certain to turn away from a religion whose essence is communion with God; nay, will only the more deeply hate it because it is heavenly and Divine. *mhr*

There is nothing almost of which man is so tenacious,[51] as his right of thinking for himself (as he calls it) in matters of religion. In so far as this means merely that his fellow men have no right to think for him or to prescribe a religion for him, he is right. But in so far as he is claiming for himself a right of forming opinions independent of God, he is wrong—awfully wrong. Man has no right to think for himself apart from God or independent of the revelation of God. God's declarations are to be received in unquestioning simplicity. What we are to believe, what we are to do, how we are to worship are not matters of opinion or speculation: they are truths—truths not reasoned out or demonstrated by man, but dictated by God and coming to us, therefore, with a certainty which man cannot add to or improve, and which no strength of mathematical demonstration can surpass.

This thinking for one's self independently of God and His revelation is not merely an evil, but a sin. Nay, it is a sin of more than common darkness—it is so audacious,[52] so contemptuous towards God. It places man on a level with God or at least sets Divine truth and human opinion on the same footing. It strips the former of all innate authority, while it gives to the latter an authority to which it has no claim!…There can be no authority save that which is infallible and Divine, that is, God speaking to us directly in His Word. *mhr*

Pragmatism[53]

The work done in…apostolic days by the preaching of the Gospel was very decided. The religion that it produced was of no diluted nor ambiguous kind. The Christians then were men about whom there could be no mistake—uncompromising, unworldly, out-spoken men, who were not ashamed of their faith, or of their Lord, or of His badge, the cross. They came out and were separate, and touched not the unclean thing. It was in this way that "the masses" of Corinth, and Ephesus, and other Gentile cities were "evangelized" and "elevated," not by concerts, and clubs, and amusements either for eye

or ear. Morality, culture, and refinement were not despised, but the regeneration of individual men by the power of the Holy Ghost came first as the root of all blessing to the community. "Temples of the Holy Ghost," not "whited sepulchers," were what the primitive preachers sought to erect. Lights of the world, not lamps without oil, were what they sought to produce everywhere in the dark cities and villages of heathendom. Nothing less than this is our work now. Nothing below this must be the church's standard in every age. Out and out Christianity, unmistakable religion—not varnished worldliness or baptized paganism. "Ye must be born again" (Joh 3:7). "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17). "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1Co 6:11). These are the keynotes of the church's testimony. Let us not lower this for a moment. *lats*

Religion in a soul or a church must be sick and ready to die, when it requires the use of stimulants to restore it, the stimulants of music, and dresses, and postures, and ceremonies; or the stimulants of speculation and mysticism, and the "enticing words of man's wisdom." Rather, we may say, that it is dead; and these are galvanic appliances[54] to make a dead man look, and stare, and roll his eyes like a living one. *lor*

Man's Religion

"Man's religion" does not deal honestly, either with God or with himself. He is obliged to give a much better representation of himself than the case warrants. He is obliged to profess to be what he thinks he ought to be, and what he supposes God wishes him to be. He practices deceit upon his own conscience; and he tries to practice the same deceit upon God. The whole of man's religion may be said to be founded upon this dishonest dealing. In his transactions with God, there is a want of straightforwardness and simplicity. He is disingenuous[55]and crooked. He is always endeavoring to make out as good a case as he can for himself before God. God's religion lays no such snare for the conscience. It sets out with declaring the utter evil and ungodliness of man (Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9). Thus, all temptation to deceitfulness is completely swept away. There is no room for it. *mhr*

Modern Religion

You ask me what I think of the religion of the present day—its character as well as its progress. I answer, I can hardly tell.

Our present state is not a healthy or a natural one. It is doubtful and unsatisfactory. There is much to rejoice in, but much to grieve over. There is bustle, activity, zeal, and liberality; yet all these may exist, and still spiritual life may be low. There may be much blossom and little fruit; and even that little not of the rich, mellow kind that, in other days, drew our Beloved into His garden "to eat his pleasant fruits" (Song 4:16).

Religion among us lacks the intense vitality of other days. It intermits,[56] fluctuates,[57] and then, not seldom, evaporates. It lacks depth and strength. It lacks natural warmth, and too often seems to make up for the want of it by friction and excitement. Hence, it is often wan[58] and pale, relieved by hectic glows which soon depart. It has not the healthy complexion of more primitive times. And in evidence of this, we find it continually turning in upon itself, feeling its own pulse, watching its various symptoms, a sure sign of disease, for health is unconscious of itself.

It bears about it many marks of man's handiwork. The finger of Jehovah is not visibly impressed upon it, so that one looking at it would be constrained to say, "This is the doing of the Lord." There is much that is hollow and superficial. It is too hasty, too easy, too light and frivolous. It is wanting in the freshness, the calmness, the simplicity of primitive times. We desire something more solid and more solemn; peaceful but not stagnant; earnest but not feverish; energetic but not unstable. On the one hand, we have some zealous for orthodoxy—tenacious of old forms and phrases, and making an idol of their ancestral creed. On the other, we have men reckless and head-strong in their innovations; rushing from doctrine to doctrine, in the feverish love of change; rash in judgment, and shallow in intellect, despising creeds, confessions, catechisms, and old divinity of every kind; setting themselves up as those who alone preach or know the Gospel, the people with whom alone wisdom can be supposed to exist, and with whom it is almost certain to die.

Those to whom it may apply may take offence at what I have written. They may deem me uncharitable and harsh. But I have written strongly because I felt that the evil was great, and that smooth words would have but concealed its magnitude. The words may seem sharp and severe, but no hostile feelings towards any individuals whatever mingle with my exposition of their doctrines.

Perhaps we may be accused of an ignorant attachment to antiquated creeds, and of blind veneration for the straitened[59] theology of other days. Now, though wishing to draw direct from the Fountainhead and to call no man master, yet we do confess a liking to those doctrines which, in life and in death, were grasped so strongly by our fathers—those much-praying, much-believing, deep-thinking, hard-toiling, sore-suffering men, whose eyes grew early dim, and whose hair grew early gray. We are not ashamed to confess a satisfaction in sitting at the feet of such men, and listening to their solemn teaching, in preference to seeking instruction from men whose shallowness and self-confidence make us feel, that instead of teaching others, they have need that one teach them again what be the first principles of the oracles of God (Heb 5:12). *tae*

The religious atmosphere of the present time is much changed from what it was in my younger days, and I may be allowed to note the difference. The theological crisis through which we are passing is a peculiar one, such as the men of fifty years ago would have thought very unlikely; and I wish to mark some of its more important characteristics.

These are becoming more and more distinct in outline and in character every year. A quarter of a century ago, it was not quite evident what they meant or whither they were tending. Now there is less of reserve, and the repulsion between Revelation and much of modern thought is expressing itself in many ways and through many channels. Man is now thinking out a Bible for himself; framing a religion in harmony with the development of liberal thought; constructing a worship on the principles of taste and culture; shaping a god to suit the expanding aspirations of the age. The process of evolution on all these points is so satisfactory and so well advanced that disguise is no longer needful. Faith and certainty in things outside our senses are, in the meantime at least, not to be taken into account.

Whether the human mind was really made for such uncertainty is a question that each one must settle for himself; and whether there may not be a way of escape from uncertainties into a region of absolute truth, in things of religion as well as in those of science, is certainly worth the consideration of the age.

Amid all this dazzling confusion, it is well to keep in mind that the way leading to life is narrow;

the way leading to death is broad. The danger arising from want of spiritual discrimination between light and darkness is more serious than many think. For one authentic light, there are a thousand spurious[60] ones. The false Christs are many, the true Christ is but one; and whilst glorying in the vitality of truth we must stand in awe of the marvelous fecundity[61] of error. Discrimination is not censoriousness.

Still, all the strength that won the battles of the olden time is at our disposal still, undiminished and unwithdrawn. That strength is supernatural and Divine. The power of Pentecost is not yet exhausted. *omh*

Antichrists

Antichristian delusion had begun in the Apostle's days. Men were arising to deny Christ, to set up another Christ of their own—a Christ of the intellect, a Christ of the sense, a Christ of the imagination. Long ere the first century closed there were many antichrists—pretended Christs—substitutes for the Son of God. Every age has produced its antichrists, all of them earnests of, and preparations for, the greater antichrist of the very last days, when perilous times shall come.

In and by all these antichrists, Satan is working, not only to exalt himself, but to dishonor Christ—working even by means of men who laugh at the existence of an evil spirit. He is working by means of error—pure error; also by error in connection with truth, and truth in connection with error; exalting the natural at the expense of the supernatural; raising science above Scripture; denying human evil, upholding human goodness; setting creaturehood in opposition to Godhead, intellect against revelation, self-improvement against regeneration by the Holy Ghost, worldly refinement against the example of Christ. Everything in the shape of human "progress" is welcomed without considering what it is or whence it comes. But the progress of the natural man is, after all, an illusion. So long as humanity remains unregenerate, there can be no progress that God can recognize. The one true progress is that begun and consummated by the Holy Ghost—a progress quite distinct from all that man calls by that name. *lat4*

The Church and the World

The "Church" is rapidly becoming a province of "the world." Christians (so-called) form the greater part of every ballroom company; ministers and elders endorse the gaiety by their presence; Christian parents reckon dancing a necessary part of education; and even religious boarding schools have their regular dancing parties! Thus, the young are trained by their teachers and encouraged by their parents to be "lovers of pleasure." Balls, operas, oratorios,[62] theaters, and such like, are no longer forbidden things to the followers of the Lamb! Refined worldliness is the present snare of the Church of God. Christian parents! For which of the two worlds are you training your children: for this world or that which is to come? Be assured that the same training will not do for both. Teachers and guardians of the young, beware of giving those entrusted to you a taste for the world's gaieties. "Love not the world" (1Jo 2:15). Teach not your pupils or wards[63] to love it. Keep them "unspotted from the world" (Jam 1:27). *cts*

Worldliness

Go on in your worldliness; fling yourselves headlong into the torrent of earth's vanities; but know that the end of these things is death (Rom 6:21)! But if you are risen, then there is an end of all debate. The point is settled. You cannot take part with the world in its follies, and gaieties, and sins! What, risen with Christ (Col 2:12), and yet a worldling! Impossible. Risen with Christ, yet singing its idle songs, hurrying through its mazy dance,[64] partaking in its mirth and revelry! Impossible. If you be risen with Christ, there is no alternative; you must seek the things above (Mat 6:33). *fse25*

The world is still sleeping its "sleep of death." It has been a slumber of many generations—sometimes deeper, sometimes lighter—yet still a slumber like that of the tomb, as if destined to continue till the last trumpet sound; and then there shall be no more sleep.

Yet God has not left it to sleep on unwarned. He has spoken in a voice that might reach the dullest ears and quicken the coldest heart. Ten thousand times has He thus spoken and still He speaks. But the world refuses to hear. Its myriads slumber on, as if this sleep of death were the very blessedness of its being. *rps*

[The worldly man] is fond of the world, fond of money, fond of preferment; one that would not let his religion stand in the way of his advancement, who could pocket all scruples if he could pocket a little gold along with them. [He is] hollow of heart, but with a fair outside; just an Erasmus;[65] no Luther,[66] no Calvin,[67] no Knox,[68] no confessor, no martyr. His worldly interests are the main thing to him. He would rather not risk offending God, but yet he would not like to lose Balak's rewards and honors. He would rather not take up his cross, nor deny himself, nor forsake all for his God. Religion with him is not just a thing to be suffered for,—at least if he can help it.

So is it with multitudes amongst us. They want as much religion as will save them from hell; not an atom more. The world is their real God; gold is their idol; it is in mammon's temple that they worship. Love God with all their heart!—they do not so much as understand the meaning of such a thing. Sacrifice riches, place, honor, friends to Christ!—they scoff at the thing as madness.

Oh, be on the side of God, out and out. Do not trifle with religion. Do not mock God and Christ. Love not the world. Be religious in your inmost soul. Do not mistake sentimentalism for religion, or a good character for the new birth. You may go very far and yet not be a Christian. You may follow Christ in some things; but if not in all, what is your following worth? This world *or* the world to come; that is the alternative, not this world *and* the world to come. Christ all or nothing. The soul more precious than worlds, or utterly worthless. No middle ground; no half-discipleship; no compromise. No! The friendship of the world is *enmity* with God. Come out and be separate. The new birth or no religion at all! *lat*

Will You Cling to the Earth?

Surely this is a question for the age—a question for the Church of God—a question for every child of the kingdom. It is a question, too, for those who are still wholly of the earth: "Will ye cling to the earth; and what will that earth to which you cling do for you?" It is a question for those who think

it possible to be both lovers of God and lovers of pleasure: “Will ye try to reconcile what is irreconcilable? Is not God enough without the world—is not Christ enough without its pleasures?” It is a question for the anxious and the earnest: “Will ye not decide—will ye waver, will ye halt, will ye try something less than an entire surrender of the whole man to God?” It is a question for the Christian: “Will you be less than your name implies—less than a child of heaven, less than an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ?”(Rom 8:17). It is by faith you stand. It was the belief of God’s free love, as manifested in the cross of His Son, that made you what you are; and if that faith has any meaning, it means that you are no longer of the world, that your treasure is above, that your inheritance is not here, and that you are waiting, in patient love and hope, amid weariness and buffeting and trouble, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. *fse45*

False Profession

Worldly people seem to be well aware that it is only in this life that they will be able to get vent to their worldliness. They quite count upon death putting an end to it all; and this is one of the main reasons for their dread of death, and their dislike even of the thoughts of it.

The character as well as the life of these men is undecided and feeble. They are not decided in their worldliness, and they are not decided in their religion. If they were compelled to choose between their two masters, the probability is that they would prefer the world; for their heart is not in their religion, and religion is not in their heart. Religion is irksome[69] to them; it is a yoke, not a pleasant service. Their consciences would not allow them to throw it off; but it occupies a very small part of their thoughts and affections. They are, in fact, worldly men varnished over with religion; that is all. They are made up of two parts, a dead and a living; the living part is the world, the dead is religion.

These are the ambiguous disciples of our age, who belong to Christ but in name. These are the stony-ground or thorny-ground hearers (Luk 8:14); men who have a place at our communion tables, who figure at religious committees, who make speeches on religious platforms, yet are, after all, wells without water, trees without root, stars without either heat or light (Jude 12-13).

The religion of such is but a half-and-half religion; without depth, or decision, or vigor, or self-sacrifice. It is but a picture or a statue, not a living man.

The conversion of such has been but a half-and-half conversion. It has not gone down to the lowest depths of the man’s nature. I do not say it is a pretence or a hypocrisy; but still, I say it is an unreality. It has been a movement, a shaking, a change, but it has not been a being “begotten of God,” a being born from above (1Jo 5:18).

Such a man’s whole religious life is one grand misconception; and every step he takes in it is a blunder, and a stumble, and a snare. Let such a man know that, in his present half-worldly, half-religious condition, he has no real religion at all. It is a fiction, a delusion. It will stand no test of Law or Gospel, of conscience or of discipline, of time or of eternity. It will go to pieces with the first touch. It is all hollow and must be begun again, from the very first stone of the foundation.

O worldly formalist, if thou wouldst make sure thy hope and obtain a discipleship that will stand all tests, begin this day at the beginning. Count all the past but loss. Fling away thy vain hopes and self-righteous confidences. Give up thy fond idea of securing both earth and heaven. Go straight to

Calvary; there be thou crucified to the world, and the world to thee, by the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14). Go at once to Him who died and rose again, and drink into His love. One draught, nay, one drop of that love will forever quench your love of sin and be the death of that worldliness which threatens to be your eternal ruin. *fsec*

Love Not The World—Why?

1. Because the gain of it is the loss of the soul—Matthew 16:25.

2. Because its friendship is enmity to God—James 4:4.

3. Because it did not know Christ—John 1:10; 17:25.

4. Because it hates Christ—John 7:7; 15:18.

5. Because the Holy Spirit has forbidden us—1 John 2:15.

6. Because Christ did not pray for it—John 17:9.

7. Because Christ's people do not belong to it—John 17:16.

8. Because it will not receive the Spirit—John 14:27.

9. Because its Prince is Satan—John 13:31; 16:11.

10. Because Christ's kingdom is not of it—John 18:36.

11. Because its wisdom is foolishness—1 Corinthians 1:20.

12. Because its wisdom is ignorance—1 Corinthians 1:21.

13. Because Christ does not belong to it—John 8:23.

14. Because it is condemned—1 Corinthians 11:32.

15. Because the fashion of it passeth away—1 Corinthians 7:31 .

16. Because it slew Christ—James 5:6; Matthew 21:39.

17. Because it is crucified to us—Galatians 6:14.

18. Because we are crucified to it—Galatians 6:14.

19. Because it is the seat of wickedness—2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:19.

20. Because its God is the evil one—2 Corinthians 4:4.

Love not the world! It cannot be your home,
Thy fatherland must be the world to come;
There lay up treasures for eternity;
And where thy treasure is thy heart shall be. *ctr7*

Evangelism

It is a great thing to be a Christian. The very name is a noble one, beyond all the noble names of earth. The thing itself is inconceivably blessed and glorious. Much, then, is expected of you. Do not disgrace the old family name. Do nothing unworthy of Him who represents you in heaven, and whom you represent on earth. He is faithful to you; be you so to Him. Let men know what a Lord and Master you serve. Be His witnesses; be His mirrors; be His living epistles. Let Him speak through you to the world. Let your life tell your fellow men what He is, and what He is to you. Speak well of Him to men, as He speaks well of you to God. He has honored you by giving you His name; He has blessed you by conferring on you sonship, and royalty, and an eternal heritage: see that you do justice to His love, and magnify His greatness. *ftl*

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cog Taken from *The Christ of God*, 1874.

csr Taken from the Preface to *Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation*, 1866.

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elr Taken from *The Everlasting Righteousness*, 1873. Paperback available from CL.

fsec Taken from "Christ and the World," *Family Sermons*, 1863. Tract available from CL.

fse20 Taken from "The Surety's Cross," *Family Sermons*, Sermon XX, 1863.

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fsn Taken from a fragment of a speech prepared by Horatius Bonar; never delivered.

ftl Taken from *Follow the Lamb*, 1861. Booklet available from Chapel Library.

gwh Taken from *God's Way of Holiness*, 1864. Paperback available from Chapel Library.

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mhr Taken from *Man: His Religion and His World*, 1851.

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tae Taken from *Truth and Error (about Faith)*, 1845. Booklet available from CL.

thb Taken from *Trinity Hymnal - Baptist Edition*, © 1995, Great Commission Publications; 3640 Windsor Park Dr Ste 100; Suwanee, GA 30174.

wop Taken from *The Word of Promise*, 1864.

wpw Taken from *Words of Peace and Welcome*, 1851.

wws Taken from *Words to Winners of Souls*, 1877. Booklet available from Chapel Library.

[1] For example, *Instead of Me*, *The World Passeth Away*, *The Long Time*, *I Can't Let Go*, and *What If It All Be True*

[2]**Lord Polwarth** – a title for a nobleman or city official in Edinburgh at the time.

[3] Several Bonar hymns are included in the booklet *Christ-centered Hymns*

[4]**Theodore L. Cuyler** (1822-1909) – graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary (1846); respected Pastor of Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York.

[5]**superficial similarity** – between man-centered worship and true Christ-centered worship.

[6]**Thomas Chalmers** (1780-1847): Presbyterian theologian and preacher. He was educated at St. Andrews, licensed to preach in 1799, and pastored at Kilmany in Fife, and Tron Church, and St. John's in Glasgow. His publications include the *Institutes of Theology*.

[7]**heritors** – those who owned the land under the churches; they inherited the land. These appointed the ministers in the Church of Scotland.

[8]**vitiated** – morally corrupted.

[9]**specious** – superficially attractive but actually of no real value.

[10]**dogma** – doctrine, tenet, belief.

[11]**disparage** – undervalue.

[12]**precipitancy** – thought marked by impulsiveness or hastiness.

[13]**censoriousness** – character of being highly critical.

[14]**meet** – fit.

[15]**John Owen** (1616-1683) – chaplain in the army of Oliver Cromwell and vice-chancellor of Oxford University; most of his life a minister in Congregational churches. His written works are among the best resources for theology in the English language.

[16]**Socinians** – followers of Faustus Socinius (1539-1604), whose doctrine denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the Trinity, explaining sin and salvation rationalistically.

[17]**viz**. – *Latin* videlicet = that is to say.

[18]**levity** – inappropriate lack of seriousness.

[19]**flippancy** – disrespectful levity in the consideration of serious subjects.

[20]**carnality** – physical, especially sexual appetites; sensuality.

[21]**vaunts** – brags.

[22]**licentiousness** – lack of moral discipline; disregard of morality.

[23]**diffuse** – pour out and spread abroad.

[24]**get quit** – be finished.

[25]**desert** – merit; worthiness of reward.

[26]**abjuring** – swearing to abandon forever; renouncing.

[27]**declension** – declining; falling off.

[28]**trifle** – play; toy.

[29]**perfunctory** – done merely for the sake of duty; without interest or zeal.

[30]**canker** – gangrene; cancer.

[31]**pantheism** – the religious belief that God and the universe are identical, which implies the denial of the personality of God and His being above and independent of creation; the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God.

[32]**pretext** – a misleading or untrue reason given for doing something in an attempt to cover up the real reason.

[33]**obduracy** – stubbornness; persistence in evil.

[34]**connivance** – overlooking or ignoring, sometimes implying secret sympathy or approval.

[35]**palliates** – lessens; eases.

[36]**enormities** – extreme, monstrous wickednesses.

[37]**charity** – Christian love.

[38]**quit…men** – behave like men; be courageous.

[39]**partisanship** – zealous or blind support of one's party or opinion.

[40]**obsequious** – exhibiting servile compliance; fawning.

[41]**trimming** – following a neutral or middle course between two opposed parties, especially to be in favor with both.

[42]**approbation** – approval.

[43]**ethereal** – like the upper regions of space; light, airy, delicate, insubstantial.

[44]**facile** – yielding; easily moved by others.

[45]**imbecile** – weak in character through lack of mental power.

[46]**churlish** – intentionally rude; ungracious.

[47]**ecclesiastical** – concerning the church.
[48]**octavo** – a sheet with 16 pages folded and cut to form 8 sheets (with a page on front and back), allowing printers to bind larger book sizes.
[49]**dawdle** – waste.
[50]**chronicflurry** – habitual hurry, commotion.
[51]**tenacious** – stubbornly unyielding.
[52]**audacious** – defiant.
[53]**pragmatism** – a way of thinking or dealing with problems that is concerned with practical results, not with principles, theory, or dogma. The truth of something is evaluated in terms of success, not correspondence with facts.
[54]**galvanic appliances** – electrical apparatus that produce movement in muscles.
[55]**disingenuous** – not straightforward; crafty.
[56]**intermits** – pauses.
[57]**fluctuates** – changes often from high to low levels in an unpredictable way.
[58]**wan** – of an unhealthy color, often applied to the human face discolored by disease.
[59]**straitened** – narrow.
[60]**spurious** – reasonable on the surface, but false.
[61]**fecundity** – fertility, productivity.
[62]**oratorios** – a musical composition for voices and instruments telling a story, but not using costumes, scenes, or drama.
[63]**wards** – a person under the protection or care of another.
[64]**mazy dance** – an intricate dance full of windings and turnings.
[65]**Desiderius Erasmus** (c. 1469-1536) – leading Christian humanist scholar of the Renaissance; wanted to reform Roman Catholicism, but never broke with it; initially neutral toward Martin Luther's reforms, he later condemned them.
[66]**Martin Luther** (1483-1546) – German Reformer.
[67]**John Calvin** (1509-1564) – French Reformer.
[68]**John Knox** (c. 1513-1572) – Scottish Reformer.
[69]**irksome** – so lacking in interest as to cause mental weariness.