

VOL. I. No 1.

6
PRICE, 10 CENTS.

PULPIT TEACHINGS

ON

GREAT SUBJECTS

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES BY REPRESENTATIVE
PROTESTANT PREACHERS ON THEMES
CONNECTED WITH

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

GOD EVER ACTIVE IN CHRIST

BY

HOWARD CROSBY, D. D.

NEW YORK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

182 Fifth Avenue

1877

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,

PRINTERS AND STATIONERS,

182 FIFTH AVENUE,

NEW YORK,

Possess superior facilities for attending to orders for

EVERY DESCRIPTION OF PRINTING

Purchasing their Paper Stock in large quantities, and keeping on hand a choice assortment of the same in every grade and color, they are enabled to furnish supplies for printing purposes at much lower prices than are usually charged by printers.

They also give special attention to orders for

ENGRAVING AND PLATE PRINTING,

WEDDING, VISITING, AND PROFESSIONAL CARDS,

MONOGRAMS, CRESTS, ADDRESSES, ETC.,

STAMPING AND ILLUMINATING.

Doing this work upon their own premises, they are enabled to attend to all orders in the best manner, and at *moderate prices*.

"STATIONERY AND CARD ETIQUETTE," AND SAMPLES OF THE

LEADING STYLES OF WRITING PAPERS, SENT ON

RECEIPT OF SIX CENTS.

Writing Paper, Wedding and Visiting Cards, etc., are sent to any part of the United States, post-paid, upon receipt of price.

ESTIMATES FURNISHED.

Orders by mail will always receive the same attention as those given in person.

182 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

GOD EVER ACTIVE IN CHRIST.

BY HOWARD CROSBY, D. D.

John V. 17. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Herbert Spencer is right, as judging from the position of the natural heart, when he says that God is unknowable. The Bible announced that truth 1800 years before Herbert Spencer. It announces it repeatedly. "No man hath seen God at any time." "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach to—whom no man hath seen or can see." Herbert Spencer is right, as against all those who would see God and know him through the exploits of science and philosophy. He sweeps away all the webs that have been woven by Stoics or Epicureans or Spiritualistic dreamers or Poets, in short all that has been projected of God from the human mind. He is perfectly right in this, and let us thank him

for doing this service for the truth. But Herbert Spencer has not considered that that which is unknowable to the natural man may be made known to the spiritual man by a divine way, that new powers may be given to the soul fitted to new manifestations of the Deity, and he has ignored the fact which, as a scientific thinker, he ought to have noted, that millions have shown at least the strongest presumptive proof that they have known God. God has come down to us in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit has fitted us to see the Son and, in the Son, the Father. This happy experience of the humblest of God's saints is a transcendental and meaningless statement to Herbert Spencer. The vision of Moses at Sinai was a declaration of the two facts that God is unknowable, and yet that he can reveal himself to his people. God there said to Moses "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. * * Behold there is a place by me and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts (or extremities); but my face shall not be seen." Human invention cannot reach God. "Who, by searching, can find out

God?" But God can, in his mercy and power, so cause man and himself to approach one another as that man may know what was otherwise unknowable, and see the extremities or outer edges of God himself. This is done, as we have seen, by a double act; the incarnation of the Son of God, bringing God down, and the bestowment of the Holy Ghost, lifting man up. Of all this Herbert Spencer knows nothing. There is something higher and truer than metaphysics. A revelation from heaven poured down upon earth amid years of overwhelming evidences, and supported by the attestations of lives and experiences innumerable has been refused and despised by these weak materialists, who try to take care of themselves and do without a God, the humility that would not know God being really a foolish pride that would exalt self.

The heart taught by the Holy Spirit loves to visit and study God in the person of Jesus Christ. The wisdom, strength, purity, love and compassion of God are all made visible and comprehensible in Jesus. We are attracted and not overawed. God has a human aspect, and human character. He leaves the abstract, and we hear, see, look upon and handle the Word of life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. We have now *fellow-*

ship with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ. The fatal error of the Jews was their refusal to accept this fellowship—their denial of the Father in the Son. Hence they have been staggering these eighteen centuries in the darkness of despair, all their own Scriptures testifying against them. The words of our text were uttered to these unbelieving and fanatical Jews, who reviled our Lord, because he had healed the cripple at Bethesda on the Sabbath day. In their low carnality they saw nothing in their religion but ritual and regimen, and interpreted Scripture by this low standard. They asserted that abstinence from work on the Sabbath included every activity but such as belonged to the ceremonial services, and so, for a sick man to seek healing on the Sabbath was an infringement of the Commandment. So wild were they in their fanatical rage in this case, that they sought to destroy Jesus, who had performed the cure. Jesus' reply was our text, which only exasperated them the more, as it implied his equality with God. It certainly *does*. He associates himself with the Father as no created being could dare to do. And so it is all through the New Testament, when Christ speaks, or when his apostles speak; God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are spoken of as only an eternal

oneness would warrant, just as we see at last the Lamb in the midst of the Supreme Throne.

When Jesus said "My father worketh hitherto and I work," he showed that God's resting from the physical creation was not to be associated with ideas of fatigue and exhaustion, but rather a testimony to the value of the spiritual over the material. God's creation of the material universe can be marked in time, but his activity in the spiritual spheres of being and in the physical world as connected with and guided by spiritual forces has no limit whatever. The Sabbath therefore represents retirement from the lower to the higher life, and not idleness or sleep, the results of the dominancy of the lower life. The *rest* of the Sabbath is not physical rest, but rest from the lower applications of the energies. This the Jews could not understand, and so they rebuked our Lord for healing on the Sabbath, counting such a holy exercise of love and compassion a work that dishallowed the sacred day. They should have seen, first, that if physical rest was the meaning of the Sabbath, their literal construction should logically forbid the lifting of a finger, or the taking of a single step with the foot ; and, secondly, that that which constituted "work" in the Sabbatic law, was to be measured and defined from the

spiritual side. When God ceased creating and making, he did not cease working. He became no Hindoo *Brahm*. His activity has never ceased and *can* never cease. It knows no Sabbatism, and in the nature of the case can have no Sabbatism. The Sabbatism has relation only to earthly ends. Says the Saviour "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." It was as much as to say to the Jews "All the holy influences of God are in perpetual operation; his grace is ever achieving its conquests; and all who are connected with his purposes of mercy will continue to engage actively in the holy work of love without any Sabbatic limitation affecting them." Now while this high definition of the Sabbath appears to be the primal intent of this saying of Jesus, yet the incessant working of the Son in conjunction with the father is a truth very prominent in the words, and to this thought we may profitably direct our minds as in itself full of suggestion, without relation to its application to Sabbath observance.

With God unseen by the natural eye and even inconceivable to the mind in his essentiality, and with his Son, who is his expression and image (*χαρακτηρ*—Heb. 1. 3. *εικὼν*—2 Cor. 4. 4) though once seen, now hidden from view, it is not a ready thought that

the Infinite One is, in and by the Son, just as active for us as when the solemn scenes of Gethsemane and Golgotha were enacting. We are prone to suppose that there is now a time of *were* waiting, an interval in which nothing is doing, and the next great day of action will be the judgment day. But the love of God is never dormant, and if his love is not dormant, how can his energy for us be dormant? It is true now as when Christ spoke it to the Jews—his Father is working up to this day and Christ is working too. We have but little idea of the spiritual world. But we know that there are tremendous agencies of evil at work, agencies that show themselves in such facts as the entrance of 2000 demons into one man, and the racking of men's bodies by diabolic forces,—agencies whose leader and guide is called again and again by our Lord "the prince of this world"—agencies that can, through the body, (and perhaps without its aid), tempt the mind to falsehood, and the heart to crime. The word of God also assures us that the strife caused by these evil powers is prosecuted in the unseen world, that oppositions and thwartings are permitted for some wise reason there. Where the veil has been drawn aside we have seen that the other world is all activity between the powers of good and the powers of evil.

This is what the books of Job, Daniel and the Revelation clearly teach us. It is not all contention here and all quiet there. There is a vast war still in progress in the wide universe of God, and chief in all the activity is the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His increasing energy is exercised in behalf of his redeemed. He ever liveth to make intercession for them. This implies a constant activity for them against their accuser, an assumption of their cause in all its mysterious necessities. We know the result. It is salvation and eternal glory for them,—but we know very little of the means by which this result is acquired. We see a part here in the incarnation and sacrifice, but what do we know of the profound meaning of that word “intercession?” What are the relations between God and the “principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this world and the wicked spirits in heavenly places”? What was the contention of Michael the archangel with the devil? What was the twenty-one day hindrance of the holy one on his way to Daniel, when Michael came to his help? We catch but glimpses of that wonderful world beyond the sense, and doubtless could not understand it if we should see more of it, and so we are not tantalized and perplexed with further visions

of it. But we see enough to know that processes are going on, forces are organized and in conflict, progress is made, connections between heaven and earth are continuous, in all which prayer is a constant element and the Lord Jesus Christ is the Defender and Saviour of his people.

While we may not detail his continual working in the spiritual realm, we may know it is all an *intercession* (Rom. 8. 34. compared with ver. 26. where the spirit does the same in *us* that Christ does in *heaven*.) He is interfering in our behalf (ἐντρογχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), meeting the necessities of the case, just as he met part of those necessities at Calvary. The old ritual betokened this. There was not only sacrifice, but the appearing of the High Priest with the blood of the sacrifice in the holy of holies, into which the rest could not look. May not the very length of time before Christ came in the flesh be an indication that God's grace in Christ has other spheres of activity than this world, and to that fact may we not attribute the delay of the final consummation? May not the fulness of time in each case refer to things heavenly as well as things earthly? We cannot appeal against this to God's almightiness, for God works in nature by laws and plans and through long times, and why may he not

work in the spiritual world or spiritual life also by plans and laws and through long times? But besides this constant working of the Father and the Son in the unseen world, we are daily beholding the movements of grace upon earth which we must refer to the same divine source. Whether diseased bodies or diseased souls are healed, beyond all secondary laws where science has its field, we recognize Him who created and who upholds all things by His Son. It is He "who forgiveth all thine iniquities and who healeth all thy diseases." The working of nature implies the working of the Divine hand. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God. Whenever the Divine power touches these visible things, it is the Son, who "upholds all things by the word of his power," "in whom is Life," "by whom all things consist," the very same who is Head of the Church. There is a demoniacal power ever working upon the earth, but by its side and superior to it is a divine power in constant exercise and that is Christ, whose presence with his people has never been removed. "I am with you always" is said by Him, when removing his visible body from the sight of men. In this conflict of demoniacal and divine powers upon earth, the latter uses the former for its own holy purposes allowing Satanic agencies to act

only so far as infinite wisdom decides. Over against Satan's desire to sift is the Son praying to the Father. Over against the strong man aroused is the stronger than he, the Overcomer, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

The eye of faith thus sees the ever-active Christ working to-day with the same love and the same power and the same aim with which he worked when the eye of sense saw him in Galilee at Judea ; and the heart of faith is cheered and comforted beyond all expression when it thus recognizes Jesus Christ the same yesterday to-day and forever. It was necessary that the Jesus of Nazareth should go away in order that the Church should understand this more intimate and universal presence of the Lord. The eye of faith could not be exercised when the eye of sense had such an absorbing object, and the grander truth was lost by reason of the lesser. Not only in all the evangelistic efforts of the Church of God, but in every individual spirit-growth with all its attached temporal circumstances, the Son of God is working in every detail, and he who sees the Son sees the Father. When the soul is accustomed to this sublime view of an ever-present, ever-energizing Saviour, it has conquered the world ; it is no longer a pensioner on its bounty, or a slave to its whims.

It lives in a sphere where the world's forces are all cancelled. This is the secret place of the Most High—this the pavilion where God loves to hide his own. This is where martyrs and sufferers of all kinds have found a triumph over all their sufferings, in the presence of a working Christ.

A SELECTION FROM STANDARD PUBLICATIONS

By JOHN BASCOM.

President of the University of Wisconsin.

I. The Principles of Psychology.

12mo, Cloth, \$1.75.

"To the few who think and investigate, this book will be a rare delight."—*San Francisco Bulletin.*

II. Science, Philosophy, and Religion.

12mo, Cloth, \$1.75.

"Vigorous, thoughtful, sometimes brilliant, and uncommonly refreshing reading."—*Boston Commonwealth.*

III. The Philosophy of Religion.

Large 12mo, Cloth, \$2.00.

IV. The Philosophy of English Literature.

12mo, Cloth, 1.75.

"A knowledge of forces as well as of facts is essential to our comprehension of any phenomenon. It is this which the author helps us to gain."—*Chicago Tribune.*

By P. A. CHADBOURNE,

President of Williams College.

I. Natural Theology ; or, Nature and the Bible.

From the same Author.

12mo, Cloth, \$1.50.

"Once taken up cannot be laid down unread."—*Washington Republic.*

II. Instinct—Its Office in the Animal Kingdom, and Its Relation to the Higher Powers in Man.

12mo, Cloth, \$1.75.

By JOHN J. ELMENDORF,

Professor of Mental Science in Racine College.

The Outlines of the History of Philosophy.

12mo, Cloth.

A succinct Chronological Record and Analysis of Systems of Philosophy from the earliest times to the present day, prepared as a guide to the Student and to the general reader.

By JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D.

I Religion as Affected by Modern Materialism.

12mo, Cloth, 75 cents.

II. The Attitude of Materialism Towards Theology.

12mo, Cloth, \$1.50.

"The ablest analyses of Tyndall and his school of thought that have yet appeared."—*London Spectator.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,

182 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK.

PULPIT TEACHINGS

ON GREAT SUBJECTS

A Series of Discourses by Representative Protestant
Preachers on themes connected with

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The general subject selected for the first volume,
which is planned to consist of twelve Sermons, is
"THE NATURE OR WORK OF CHRIST."

Early contributions have been arranged for from
the

REV. HOWARD CROSBY, D.D.,

REV. E. A. WASHBURN, D.D.,

REV. LLEWELLYN D. BEVAN, D.D.,

REV. HY. W. BELLOWS, D.D.,

REV. E. H. CHAPIN, D.D.,

REV. T. D. ANDERSON, D.D.,

REV. WM. F. MORGAN, D.D.,

REV. CHAUNCEY GILES.

The Sermons will be supplied separately to the mem-
bers of the several Congregations and to the public, at
the nominal price of ten cents each. The complete vol-
ume, which will form a very important contribution to the
religious and theological literature of the time, will be
published in the fall of 1877.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS,

182 Fifth Avenue. N. Y.