

# THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

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## I. INSPIRATION.

A few years before his death, Theodore D. Woolsey, President of Yale University, was asked by a leading Quarterly to write an article for its pages on Inspiration. He declined to do so, on the ground that the time had not yet arrived for such a thing to be successfully done. President Woolsey died in 1889, and during these intervening years perhaps no biblical subject has had fuller discussion. Yet inspiration is still regarded by most biblical students as a *question*; notwithstanding this, inspiration is generally regarded as also a *fact*.

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup> To every believer in the truthfulness of the Bible, these words of the apostle reveal the fact of inspiration, declare that the Scriptures are, in some sense, the product of a divine influence brought to bear upon human writers. The process by which the Scriptures were formed has been long and gradual. “At sundry times and in divers manners”<sup>2</sup> has God spoken to us in times past. The Koran was given all at once. Full-grown it sprang from the shield of Mahomet, a prophet who not only had no forerunner, but who, as the professed bearer of divine revelation, had no successor. The Bible, however, has come to us through many prophets, each

<sup>1</sup>2 Pet. 1:21.

<sup>2</sup>Heb. 1:1, 2.

### III. THE PERSONAL CHRIST, THE GOSPEL FOR OUR TIME.

From the spiritual side of our age it stands confessed an age of scepticism. The testimony of others and the observation of each one of us affirms that there is a profound and wide-spread unsettlement of soul in regard to the fundamental truths of religion, and also in regard to the nature and existence of the so-called spiritual faculties by which alone these truths can be perceived. The manifestation of this doubt takes the form of uncertainty rather than of positive denial ; of general scepticism rather than of specific infidelity. It not only challenges particular doctrines, such as the Being of God, the inspiration of the Bible, the possibility of a future life, the future punishment of the wicked : but it presents itself everywhere, asking for a reason in the shape of a scientific demonstration. The answers which have been given to these, the most difficult problems of man's inner life, are declared to be unsatisfactory, and without foundation. It is claimed that all of these and kindred questions remain unsolved.

The doubting spirit of to-day is severe but not bitter ; restless but not frivolous. It is not that spirit of mocking atheism such as Bishop Butler described at the close of the last century, which led people of discernment to set up religion "as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule," but the unbelieving spirit of our day takes itself very seriously ; it is also keenly intellectual, nobly artistic, and splendidly humane. Many of its advocates take high rank in science ; they are unsurpassed in literature ; are numbered among the most astute and painstaking politicians, and sometimes claim to possess the highest culture of the religious school with which they are associated. Modern thought, whether expressed in terms of science, or general literature, or even in much that claims the name of religious, supports this indictment. Physical science, with purblind infatuation, refusing to recognize

the fact that there are different kinds of truth, and different faculties and methods of pursuit, claims to tread the foot-prints of the Creator, examines minutely his handiwork, and finds no trace nor suggestion of so-called spiritual phenomena. "The world," it is claimed, "is made up of atoms and ether, and there is no room for ghosts." The spirit of this school tacitly divides all beliefs which are held among men into two classes: Those which are supported by scientific proofs, and these must be accepted; and those which are not thus supported, and these must either be rejected or may safely and properly be disregarded as matters of no consequence. Moreover, current literature is saturated with this religious uncertainty. There is, of course, a strong religious current in the literature of to-day. But in much of it, and in some that is quasi-religious, there is hardly any definite religious belief. Some authors have taken the rich colors of Biblical thought and Biblical characters and used them to paint forms of other than the Christ,—forms sometimes as shadowy and indefinite as the shapeless shapes of Milton's fancy. Others again have evoked magical and charming forms to float above an abyss of disenchantment and nothingness.

To illustrate, I refer to the lay sermons and essays of Huxley and Tyndall, where scepticism appears militant and trenchant. I have only to hint at the fragmentary but majestic life philosophies of Carlyle and Emerson. Over Carlyle hangs forever the shadow of a moody tempest, full of darkness and tumult and muttering thunder; over Emerson the spirit of imaginative scepticism floats like a cumulus of evening vapors, luminous and beautiful, alluringly transfigured,

"In the golden lightning  
Of the sunken sun."

I have but to recall the scepticism at once inimical, idealistic and dogmatic which pervades the vivid and picturesque studies of Renan and Froude. I need only refer to the penetrative and intelligent critiques of Scherer and Morley, where it adheres

with proud but illogical persistence to the ethical consequences of the faith with which logic has broken.

The scepticism of our literature is perhaps more insidious in the form of the modern novel. Even a superficial acquaintance with such writers as Zola and Thomas Hardy,—representing unflinchingly the school of Naturalism,—will evidence how in them scepticism speaks with a harsh and menacing accent of the emptiness of all life and the futility of all endeavor. In the psychological romances of George Elliot and Mrs. Humphrey Ward, it holds the mirror up to human nature to disclose a face darkened with inconsolable regret for lost dreams. Current fiction in its more superficial form, betrays its scepticism by a serene, unconscious disregard of the part which religion plays in real life. In how many of the lighter novels of the day do we find any recognition, even between the lines, of the influence which the idea of God or its absence, the practice of prayer or its neglect, actually exercise upon the character and conduct of men?

In the poetry of to-day we again hear the voice of this scepticism, and hear it clearly. As another says, "Listen to the sonorous chantings as they come from France, and we hear either the celebrations of the unknown and mighty tyrant who agitates them endlessly for his own amusement, or else the sounding of the delicate lyrics that sing of defeat in life, and man's thirst for annihilation." If we turn to our English tongue, we hear Matthew Arnold, with cool, sad, melodious tones, confessing,—

"Forgive me, Masters of the mind,  
 At whose behest I long ago  
 So much unlearned, so much resigned—  
 I come not here to be your foe ;  
 I seek these anchorites not in ruth,  
 To curse and to deny your truth ;—  
 Not as their friend, or child, I speak,  
 But as on some far northern strand,  
 Thinking of his own gods, a Greek,  
 In pity and mournful awe might stand  
 Before a fallen Runic Stone,—  
 For both were faiths, and both are gone."

Only a poetic song, you say: Yes, only a poet's song, but how many souls to-day are feeling the same vague sadness, as, standing by the fair shrines of immortal desire and aspiration and of a traditional faith, they see the ancient land-marks disappearing in the onward waves, silently creeping or surging with sombre music out of the vast deep of doubt,—

“The unplumbed, salt, estranging Sea.”

But possibly the most serious form of current unbelief is that found in our *Christian Congregations*. I refer to the spirit of criticism abroad in the church. A criticism which undertakes to review and revise the integrity, the authenticity, the literary features and the credibility of the sacred writings. I come not here with the proud boast of “expert” in these matters. I confess that in my limited study in this field, I have become confused. Prof. Edwin Bissle speaks for me, touching the whole subject. He says: “We have seen one scheme of the origin and structure of Genesis and its companion books give place in quick succession to another, until it would seem the very limit of possible combinations had been reached,” and we are left in confusion amid the wrangling of the schools. I believe that in spite of my tender and jealous regard for my mother's Bible, I would not impose an unreasonable restriction upon the reverent and scholarly investigation of its every claim. Nevertheless, I am troubled at the iconoclastic spirit of that class of critics which comprehensively we call the Destructive School. “That school which challenges the gem of a plenary inspiration set in the crown of scripture, which avows that the pentateuch as we have it is simply a five-fold imposition, a neatly written composite of mingled cleverness and fraud. That school which leaves us nothing of patriarchal history except some floating myths; nothing of Mosaic history, except some scattered debris borne downward on the heaving waters of a beclouded tide; of the Old Testament properly speaking, practically nothing. A criticism which readjusts the whole idea of the ancient sacrifice on a



different plane, and proposes for it a totally different aim. A criticism which altogether leaves the history of redemption without an orderly beginning and without a sufficient end. A criticism which, denying the one fitting consummation of the national life and religion of Israel to be Jesus, the Christ, of the seed of David, whose day Abraham saw and was glad, and declares the intention of the whole thing was a prophecy of the political catastrophe which overtook the Jewish state seventy years after our era began." And what is the influence of such leaven as this among the people? Is it not true the masses of men are being affected with the spirit of these teachings? As a result, do not we on every hand encounter uncertainty of view, restlessness of spirit, and impatience with the old doctrines and the old applications of the principles of the word of God? I very greatly fear that in the minds of many representative people of our congregations the Scriptures are no longer regarded as "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." The conviction of some of them, plainly stated, is that the doctrines of these Scriptures, both of the New Testament and the Old, are but the imperfect utterances of half-taught enthusiasts, and their application is not to be taken seriously; or else they were intended only for local application in point of time and people, and so need not,—nay, must not, fetter us in the larger liberty and boasted humanitarianism of our time. With unflinching hand we may now lay hold of the Ark of God without fear of judgment.

If these things are true, then it cannot seem strange that the historical creeds of the church should suffer. It *is* true, and no intelligent man will deny it, these venerable symbols are in many minds almost contemptuously regarded. To some they are nothing better than magnificent mausoleums, in which are enshrined the genius of their authors; to others they are only the imperfect utterances of the mind of the church in the days before her swaddling clothes were taken away, and her infancy gave place to intellectual manhood. Amid all this confusion and destruction, let us not forget the further and

significant fact that there has not yet arisen a constructive genius capable of building the torn down and scattered stones of truth into a temple sufficiently unique to suit the tastes of his contemporaries.

Unquestionably, our age stands in doubt; such is its spiritual character. And so ominous is it that some pious minds find therein the fulfilment of the Apostle's prediction that "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" or again, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

In the face of all this, which I have sadly enough confessed, are there no symptoms which seem to promise better things? I believe there are. I incline to look upon "the sunnier side of doubt." In brief order I will submit some of the signs which seem to me to promise us a better state of things.

Strangely enough it may seem, I find my first hopeful sign in the general, yea, the universal sadness of our time. We have seen how deep and widespread is the wave of scepticism: I raise the question,—What is the result of all this unbelief? Are men happy because of it? Nay, there is acknowledged discontent and pain everywhere. Says an observant student of the times, "Never, I believe, have men been more universally sad than in the present hour." For the most part, modern doubt shows a sad and pain-drawn face, heavy with grief and dark with apprehension. The pessimism which goes hand in hand with scepticism is a cry of suffering.

But conscious and exquisite pain is not only a warning of disease, but a sign of life as well. If despair is settling like a storm cloud in the night over the souls of men, "why despair, unless, indeed, because man in his very nature and inmost essence is framed for an immortal hope." As Van Dyke<sup>1</sup> de-

<sup>1</sup>In the preparation of this paper, I am greatly indebted to "The Yale Lectures on Preaching for 1896," by Rev. Henry Van Dyke, D. D., of the Brick Church, New York City, and now published by The Macmillan Company in book form under the title, *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*.—J. T. P.

clares, "No other creature is filled with disgust and anger by mere recognition of its own environment and the realization of its own destiny. This strange issue of a purely physical evolution in a profound revolt against itself is incredibly miraculous. Can a vast universe of atoms and ether, unfolding out of darkness into darkness, produce at some point in its progress, and that point apparently the highest, a feeling of disappointment with its partially discovered processes and resentful grief at its dimly foreseen ends?" There are but two solutions which really face the facts. One is the black unspeakable creed, that the source of all things is an unknown, mocking, malignant power, whose last and most cruel jest is the misery of disenchanting man. The other is the hopeful creed that the very pain which man suffers when his spiritual nature is denied, is proof that it exists, and is part of the discipline by which a loving God would lead man to himself. Let the world judge which is the more reasonable faith; for my part, I will cling to the creed of hope; and see in the shadow that doubt casts the evidence of a light behind it.

I find a second hopeful sign in the fact that many of the finest minds are to-day recoiling from the voice of absolute scepticism. In his book, *The Return to Faith*, Prof. A. C. Armstrong, Jr., one of the most cautious students of philosophy, has noted with care the indications that "the day of doubt is drawing to a close." Such a statesman as Signor Crispi does not hesitate to cut loose from his former atheistic connections and declare that "the belief in God is the fundamental basis of the healthy life of the people, while atheism puts in it the germ of irreparable decay." Mr. Benjamin Kidd, a noted sociologist of England, assures us that "since man became a social creature, the development of his intellectual character has become subordinate to the development of his religious character," and concludes "that religion affords the only permanent sanction for progress." Romanes, the famous biologist, who once professed the most absolute rejection of revealed, and the most unqualified scepticism of natural reli-



gion, thinks his way soberly back from the painful void to a position where he confesses that "it is reasonable to be a Christian believer," and dies in the full communion of the church of Jesus.

All along the line we see men who once thought it necessary, desirable, to abandon forever the soul's abode of faith in the unseen, returning by many and devious ways from the far country of doubt, driven by homesickness and hunger to seek some path which shall at least bring them in sight of the Father's house.

In the same connection, we must not overlook a third fact,—as an able writer points it out to us,—viz: the sublime contradiction between the unhappy view of man "as the hero of a lamentable drama," and the doctrine that it is his supreme duty to sacrifice himself for the good of humanity. "How," inquires he, "shall we explain the splendid courage and patience of the ethical instinct of mankind, without the foundation stone of faith in God and man's responsibility to him?" How strangely contradictory for men to love truth and justice and moral enthusiasm, and at the same time suspect that themselves are the products of a nature which is blind and dumb and heartless. "Never have the obligations of self-restraint, and helpfulness, and equity, and universal brotherhood been preached more fervently than by some of the English Agnostics," and I might add, by some of our American Agnostics as well.

A fourth ground of hope for the future lies in the teaching which comes from the history of the formulation of our Christian faith. Let it not be forgotten that Theology in every department of it is the outcome of agitation and conflict, not passive inactivity. In his *Cure of Souls*, Ian MacLaren says truthfully, "The history of doctrine is rather in the way of a series of circles than of a straight line, each circle as a rule having its four segments. There is the predoctrinal period, when truth is held in solution, we may almost say sentimentally, before it has crystalized. The Christian simply believes

in Christ, lives with him, learns from him, loves him, follows him to death, and yet the church has not formulated her creed. Then comes a period, when, under pressure of speculation or the attack of unbelief, the church pauses in the current of her emotions and inquires what she believes. Slowly and painfully, with fierce intellectual tumult and often disgraceful commotions, the church discovers her mind, and formulates her doctrine. This period has been succeeded by the age of scholasticism, a period characterized by unexpected applications, hair-splitting distinctions; cold metaphysical discussions take the place of truth flowing molten from hearts fired with divine love. Then comes reversion, when the church, weary of the heartlessness of refined and icy forms, goes back to her first love, and in confusion and grief, assumes again Peter's position and exclaims, 'Lord, unto whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of everlasting life.' " Some observant minds believe the church is upon the eve of this last period, reverting to simple, adoring adherence to the Person, the work, and authority of her divine Master and his apostles. I cannot agree that this will prove a loss, nay, it will prove an inestimable gain; but before it comes the battle must be fought, and the Lord must "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

These several signs, if accounted no more than riftings in the cloud, are yet reassuring. But for the consummation of their promise there must be some sure method. The supreme question of the hour, back of and more fundamental than any political or social economy, is, What Gospel shall be preached that will have in it the certain power to dispel the unbelief and lift the shadow from the souls of men?

In looking for such a gospel, how hoarsely does the pessimistic doctrine of Max Nordau grate upon us, as in his curious book, *Degeneration*, he tells us that there is no cure but in social and individual degeneration. Says he, "We have become a race of degenerates." The trouble with us and our time is not a loss of faith, but a fatal increase of nervous irritability produced by the strain of an intricate civilization.

What is the cure? Why, he says bluntly, "there is no cure." The malady must run its course; and the only palliation for it will be found in an invincible aversion to progress. In other words, the world's unbelief and all its ills must be healed by a universal and voluntary relapse into a peaceful and contented barbarism. Surely such a prescription is not inviting to the palate, nor does it furnish prospect for bettering the patient.

At the opposite extreme of opinion, we hear the optimistic voice of science claiming that speedily she will provide the antidote for all scepticism and despair. New discoveries will be made, new arguments will be constructed, and these together will supersede the necessity for faith, because they will furnish demonstration. For one, I do not depreciate the march of science, nor am I disposed to circumscribe a limit to its future advancement, nor to measure the degree of its possible ministry to the well-being of man. In this, as in other views of it, I believe we live

"In an age on ages telling."

But it seems improbable that science is about to make any such advance as is claimed either in methods or results. Conservative leaders among scientists admit this, and warn us that there are "limitations in the nature of the universe which must circumscribe the achievements of speculative research." Besides this, it may as well be admitted now as any time later that all knowledge is not thought knowledge, there is faith knowledge as well; all truth is not speculative truth, some truths are experimental.

In the field of spiritual phenomena, it is not and can never be possible for pure science to solve the deep problems which now and hereafter shall invite investigation. Men will see with clearer and clearer vision, not only this, but they will see further that different kinds of facts and different faculties and different methods must be employed to answer the question in the different spheres of inquiry,—"What is Truth?"

Men will come to judge the claims of truth by the principles and faculties which legitimately apply to the kind of truth under investigation. The investigator will settle clearly and first of all the field of knowledge to which the subject of his proposed investigation belongs. If the subject to be considered is physical, he will collect his facts through his physical senses; upon these he will experiment, analyzing them and then putting together the result of his physical experiments. If his facts are well chosen and exhaustive, his analysis thorough, his inductions complete, no man will dispute his principle. It will be accepted as established upon the incontrovertible basis of fact and reason. But if the subject proposed be moral, if it raise such questions as God, his moral character and his relations to man; or if it be the question of human character and human responsibility; or if it seek to inquire, "What after Death?" then it will be recognized that the facts here to be studied are not *physical*, but *spiritual*, and that not the physical senses but the spiritual faculties must direct the investigation and pronounce upon the issue. I do not believe it chimerical to hold that in the brighter future, towards which I trust we are drifting, men will cease to put the human soul and all that is involved in spiritual experience into their retorts as if they were bits of metal, and, because, forsooth, they cannot separate them into material elements, reject their claim as truth. Nor is it beyond my hope that theologians will cease to dogmatize in questions of pure science. Religion will come to know that Gallileo was truly a martyr for truth's sake; and science will join in the ascription of praise to those who died by torture for the faith once delivered to the saints. Science shall not envy religion, and religion shall not vex science. Righteousness and science shall meet together, and all men will recognize them each as a distinct and demonstrable revelation, each exhibiting in its sphere and by its appropriate evidence the being and purpose of him who is Eternal Truth.

Another proposed gospel for the ills of our time is the gos-

pel of culture. The culturist says remove ignorance and you put an end to every evil. Advocates for culture as man's redemption seem to present themselves under a two-fold classification, those advocating scientific culture, of whom I mention Huxley as a type; and those advocating literary culture after the fashion of Mr. Matthew Arnold. Let us glance at the pretentious claims of this gospel as presented by these admitted champions. Mr. Huxley defines education as "in learning the laws of nature and training oneself to obey them." And within the laws of nature which we have to learn, he includes not only the physical laws but also those moral laws which govern man and his ways. This view of the conditions of our existence, Mr. Huxley sets forth under the striking figure of a game of chess. Education or culture with him is the learning of the rules of this mighty game. As the result of this learning, Mr. Huxley's ideally educated man will have his passions trained to obey a strong will; his will becomes the servant of a tender conscience; he will love beauty, hate vileness, and respect others as himself. I promptly admit there is much in all this worthy the claim of a high ideal education. There are serious objections to it, however; among others I mention that while it implies that life is a game of chess, and that while there is probably some power behind the phenomena of our experience, we have no means of ascertaining what the mind and character of that power is; or what purpose it has in creating and upholding this universe, if indeed it did create and does uphold it.

Another defect in the theory is its failure to make clear the origin of these virtues which persuade and enable us to choose the better part. For instance, when he tells us that "the ideal man is to respect others as himself," I submit if there is one fact in human experience more continuously displayed than that men do not respect the welfare of others. If experience teaches us anything, it is, that every man seeketh the things that make for his own, rather than those things which make for the welfare of others. Man is constitutionally selfish, and



he cannot seek the welfare of others rather than his own except by being taken out of himself as his center of thought and feeling and desire, and finding a new center about which these energies centralize and from which they will draw inspiration. But Prof. Huxley's theory supplies no such new center. Again, he tells us that in the ideal man "a vigorous will is to be the servant of a tender conscience." But whence the conscience? Surely, in the light of human history and experience, it will not be claimed that a tender conscience, a true and quick sense of right, is born full formed in men. The elements of such a conscience may, indeed, lie in all men, but it requires long and careful training to bring them to maturity. Mr. Huxley has not told us what resources his theory supplies for maturing such a conscience. The fact, destructive and final of Mr. Huxley's theory, is, God in himself and God in his relation to man is altogether ignored. And let me say it solemnly, slowly, not as a dogma of theology, but as the expression of human life, that no theory which leaves God out of account is adequate to explain life's phenomena, and for this reason, every such theory will be ultimately rejected.

A different view of culture as a cure-all for human ills,—a view which may be called the literary or æsthetic view,—is presented us by Mr. Matthew Arnold. Let me hasten to state that whatever seems lacking in Prof. Huxley's theory, as leaving out of sight the spiritual needs of man, the same objection cannot be urged *in the same way* against Mr. Arnold's theory of culture. He fully recognizes religion as an element, and a very important one, in his theory. We do, however, promptly object to the relative place which he assigns religion in his system. With Mr. Arnold, "culture is the perfection of our human nature on all its sides and in all its capacities." First, it tries to determine in what this perfection consists, and in order to solve this question, it consults the manifold human experience that has expressed itself throughout science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as through religion. As a conclusion, it places human perfection in an internal condition

of the soul, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality.

The firm and uncompromising objection we raise to Mr. Arnold's theory by which he proposes to realize all this is, that religion, while recognized and admitted among the elements of culture, is yet regarded as only a subordinate division in the general distribution of a perfect culture. Says he, "Culture is an harmonious expansion of all the powers which make for the beauty and worth of human nature; culture goes beyond and means more than religion." Religion, according to Mr. Arnold, aims only at the cultivation of *some* of the powers of the soul; so it falls short of the many-sided, even-balanced, all-embracing totality of development which is the aim of the highest culture. Mr. Arnold graciously grants church organizations have done something. They have helped to subdue the grosser animalities, they have made life more orderly, moral, serious. But when we go further than this, and look at the standards of perfection which these religious organizations have held up, he finds them poor and miserable, starving more than half, and that the finest part of human nature. Turning to modern religious life, he inquires, contemptuously, "What do we find there? A life of jealousy of other churches, disputes, tea meetings, opening of chapels, sermons," and then he exclaims, "Think of this as an ideal of human life, completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!" While recognizing the merits of Mr. Arnold's theory, I am profoundly impressed that it is unsatisfactory, and doomed to rejection. It will be rejected, because, first of all, there are some things which are either of first account or they are of none; things which are either an end in themselves, or they are nothing; and such I conceive religion is. It is either supreme, a good in itself and for its own sake, or it is no good at all. In every man there is the feeling, deep and abiding, that the first and greatest commandment must be so set before us as to be obeyed, entered into, *in and for itself*, or it cannot be obeyed at all.

Another thought showing the insufficiency of this theory, is, this so-called gospel would raise men by bringing them into contact and sympathy with whatever of best and greatest the past has produced. But is not a large portion of what is best in the literature and lives of past generations based on faith in God, and on the reality of communion with him as the first and chief good? Would this best any longer live and grow in men if you cut them off from direct access to its fountain head, and confined them to the results which it has produced in past ages? If, in brief, you made the object of the soul's contemplation, not God, but past humanity? If not, then are we of these latter days to be content with the communion of others, and not have direct access to God ourselves? To read and admire the high thoughts of à Kempis, Pascal, Leighton, and such men, and not to go on and drink for ourselves from the same living well-heads from which they drank. Arnold's theory brings us to the very threshold of man's inheritance, God, and then forbids our entrance. This will never satisfy.

And then again, while through all this literary culture there runs the oft repeated word "perfection," yet in estimating its value let it be remembered that this perfection is meant only for us *here and now*. When this is done what a mockery indeed does it become! Surely that was a higher and truer idea of perfection which Leighton had, when he wrote "It is an union with a Higher Good by love, that alone is endless perfection. The only sufficient object for man must be something that adds to and perfects his nature, to which he must be united in love; somewhat higher than himself; yea, the highest of all, the Father of Spirits. That alone completes a spirit and blesses it, to love him, the Spring of spirits." For such reasons, I am sure it may be predicted of this theory, "this too will pass away."

In the travail of a sympathetic pastor's heart, I have thought my way through the boastful claims of these pseudo-gospels; and as I measured their intrinsic ability to meet the wants of

my people, I have written over against them all, "Weighed in the balance and found wanting." The healing and the comforting of man to-day cannot come from such as these; it must come alone from the divinely simple and divinely true gospel of the Son of God. By the gospel of the Son of God, I mean the whole Word of God as it is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Herein *alone* have we the wisdom of God and the power of God not only to salvation, but to education and civilization as well. My conviction is profound that what this age needs is not argument about Christianity, not learned and elaborate defenses of its truth, not so much criticisms upon the received text—all these are serviceable in their place and when presented by men furnished and trained—but what our age as an age needs from us as preachers is the authoritative preaching by manly men of these Scriptures in their entirety and of these Scriptures *without admixture*. The sermon for our times is the simple, impassioned, uncompromising expression of a personal conviction of the truth revealed in these Scriptures; and spoken in a spirit that breathes forth love for all humanity and enjoins a service of practical righteousness.

*But, if in a word I may be more specific, the pulpit that meets the want of to-day must preach a personal Christ, with a persistency and prominence hardly as yet achieved.* This I say, because, as some German writer has expressed it, our age is one that "hungers for facts." This gospel of a personal Christ meets that hunger. It comes to an age benumbed with doubt, and says, *Here is a fact*, a personality, real and imperishable. It is not merely a doctrine, not a history only, but it is a some One who was born and who lived among men. We need not fear to do this, for the person of Jesus Christ stands solid in the history of men; all attempts to resolve him into a myth, a legend, an idea,—and many such attempts have been made,—have drifted over the enduring reality of his character and left not a rack behind. The fact abides that a real Christ appeared in the world and created Christianity. Moreover, our gospel

has in it the fact of Christ's personal force. The world is only moved by personality. "Truth," says one, "is mighty and must prevail, but it never does prevail actually until it gets itself embodied, incarnate in personality." Now, then, Christianity has its organization, and it has its doctrines too, but the force that gives power to the whole is Christ, whose personality gives vitality to the organization and reality to the doctrine. If as preachers we forget this, we shall be shorn of our power. I do not go beyond the truth in saying, that his own personality was the core of Christ's own ministry. He offered *Himself* to the world as the solution of its unbeliefs and its sorrows. His universal invitation was, "Come unto *Me* all ye that labour and *I* will give you rest." It was the same personal element that gave force to the Apostles and life to their Epistles. In the Acts and the Epistles this personal Christ is the all and the everything. The offices of the church, as set forth, are simply forms of service to him, as Master; the doctrines are simply the unfolding of what has been received from him, as Teacher; the worship is but the adoration of him, as Lord. As an elegant writer says, "The music of that name rang through all the temple of the church and to its harmonies her walls were builded. The acknowledgment of that name was the mark of Christian-discipleship. To confess that 'Jesus is the Christ' was the way to enter the Church, and from his personality proceeded every symbol and rite and work." The same thing is true as we follow that church down the current of her history. The inward, vitalizing, self-propagating power of Christianity as a religion has always come from the person of Jesus Christ, who stands at the center of it.

A third fact in our gospel, and one peculiarly adapting it to our materialistic age, is, that the influence of this personal Christ has always been to bring men to an immediate sense of spiritual things. All who came in contact with him while he was bodily in the world, felt that, in love, if they believed; in repulsion, if they refused to believe. In his presence, faith



in the invisible, in the soul, in the future life, in God, in every spiritual truth revived and unfolded with new bloom and color. And this faith did not grow out of doubting hearts by merely what Jesus said to men, but there was a something in *Himself*, an atmosphere surrounding him that made it necessary for them to believe. This effect has not vanished from the world with Christ's return to his Father.

Another fact testified to by the whole company of believers is, that this force which resides in the personal Christ goes beyond the single result of a vivid sense of the reality of the unseen, and carries with it a purifying, cleansing, delivering, uplifting and sanctifying effect. In other words, this personal Christ has always in the past and to-day gives evidence of a power to save men from the guilt, the power, the defilement, the consequences of sin. The publican and the harlot find in him somehow not alone that which is beautiful, but as they gaze upon his cross they experience a sense of profound change of moral relation, an unutterable relief; and a sweet quietude diffuses itself through all the recesses of their troubled hearts; they feel their sins forgiven and they are at peace with God and with themselves.

Now the only explanation of this strange and abiding power of Christ is that in him there is the incarnation of God; in his humanity Jesus is the unveiling of the Father to men. In the shining of his face men see the personality of God; in his cross they discover the righteousness of God; in his suffering they find assurance of the goodness of God; in his saving power they learn the purpose of God to reconcile the world unto himself; in his "delighting to suffer" they spell out the true meaning of filial obedience; in his resurrection they learn that those who sleep in him will God bring with him when he comes again. The only gospel which has in it the power to redeem our age from scepticism and lift it out of the veil of sadness, is the gospel which preaches this personal Christ, in all the fulness of his personal constitution; in all the majesty of his claims; in all the efficacy of his death; in all the

power of his resurrection ; in all the promise of joint heirship with him in glory. If then we are to prove efficient to our age and in our work, we must, first of all, deeply, experimentally, and vitally *ourselves know Him*, and the power of *His* death and resurrection ; and then preach *Him*, the hope of the World.

In conclusion, let us say over again, slowly and in faith, the ancient creed for the comfort and refreshing of our hope:

*"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, only begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father ; by Whom all things were made which are in heaven and earth : Who for us men and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate, and was made man, and suffered and rose the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead."*

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