



# SUNDAY READING

## SERMON.



Sons of the Clergy.

BY REV. PROF. MILLIGAN, D.D., OF ABERDEEN.

Sermon preached before the Sons of the Clergy in St. George's church, Glasgow. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."—1 Timothy ix, 16.

The words of my text were first addressed to a minister, and there is no class of the community that needs them more—except it be the sons of ministers. It has often been said of the sons of ministers that they turn out ill. The charge is not merely a gross exaggeration, but is absolutely false. So far from turning out ill, the sons of the manse have, in proportion to their numbers, been an honor to their families, their country, and their church. They have not only reached the highest places in every profession in which they have entered: they have not only in every department of life inscribed their names on the brightest rolls of fame: what is even of far greater consequence, they have done innumerable acts of kindness beheld only by the eye of God. They have been the friends of innumerable young men striving to obtain an entrance into the business of the world, and to push their way in it. How many a youth, almost lost in the crowds of a great city, and beginning to despair, have they encouraged, cheered and helped. And they have done this, because they were the sons of ministers. They have remembered the happy home of their infancy and childhood. They have thought of it as the centre of all that was gentle and tender and loving in the parish, of counsel to the perplexed, of rest to the weary, of consolation to the afflicted, of hospitality to the stranger. The associations that cling to the manse have gone with them into the every-day hard-working world, and made them resolve amidst the pressure of their own anxieties and cares, that the spirit of their earlier should also be the spirit of their later home. We have no cause to be ashamed of what the sons of the Scottish manse have both been and done.

Yet, even were the charge against them better founded than it is, it would not be difficult to account for it. There is no greater risk than that of being brought constantly into contact with the observances, the rites, and the offices of religion. In the highest degree valuable, when animated by their proper spirit, these things become more dangerous to reality and truth than the world itself when that spirit is absent. Familiarity with sacred things may be, in some cases, as much a curse as it is in others a blessing. In the days of our Lord, the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem were, as a class, wholly different from the Jews of Galilee. They were more fanatical, selfish, cold, and cruel. Various reasons may be assigned for this, but no small part of the explanation is, that they lived near the temple, and the religious ordinances which they had ceased to understand. They felt their own importance. They were enriched by the contributions which flowed in from the Jews in every distant land to the city of their solemnities, the Zion which they loved. Pride thus took the place of humility, and money-making of generosity of heart. The eternal principle involved in words of prophecy of our Lord, and of his apostles was fulfilled in them. The very stone upon which they might have reared the fair fabric of a religious life fell upon them and crushed them. It is always so. Ministers may well be warned. It is an awful reproach too often uttered, against a minister, that when in the pulpit he should never leave it, when out of the pulpit he should never enter it. The constant performance of sacred duties, when their proper spirit was wanting has been his ruin, and what has happened to the fathers may easily happen to the sons. "Take heed to thyself" is a precept, which needed by the one, is not less needed by the other. Let us think first of the precept, and then of the considerations by which, in this wider sense, it is enforced.

1. The precept, "take heed to thyself."

The formation and regulation of individual character is in the apostle's mind. Every man has the gift of character, and it is the greatest gift which he has received from God. It is the stamp of our individuality, that which makes us what we are. We may think of our bodies. They are fearfully and wonderfully made, keenly sensitive to pleasure and alive to pain; capable of being instruments of the basest actions or the most noble deeds. We may think of our affections. They sweeten our existence and render life desirable. When occupied with unworthy objects, they lower the tone of our nature, and we sink below the level of the beasts; when occupied with worthy objects, they make earth a paradise. We may think of our reasoning powers which find a congenial element in the greatest problems of the universe, and which seem to exult, as on angel's wings, when they rise from the wonders of creation to the great Being Who created and sustains the whole. We may think of that moral sense, that conscience in the breast, of which one of the most distinguished modern philosophers exclaimed that, more

even than the starry heavens above his head, it filled him as he listened to its voice, with growing admiration and wonder. Or finally, we may think of the will by which a man determines within himself what he will do, and sometimes gives such a fixed and resolute aspect to his life, that wherever he goes he is a conqueror. These are all parts of our nature. Our character is ourselves. These may be compared separately to the parts of a ship, the masts, the sails, the ropes, the helm, the compass. This is the vessel as a whole, in all her pomp and strength and beauty fitted out for the operation of commerce or of war. If it is a great responsibility to see that each part of the ship is in proper trim, how much greater the responsibility of examining, testing, and completing her as a whole.

We have not to deal, however, at present only with character in general. There is a specific element in it to which we must advert. "Take heed," says the apostle, "to thyself and to the teaching." He alludes no doubt, in the first instance, to the Christian truths which Timothy was as a preacher to proclaim. But St. Paul would never have allowed that Timothy could have properly proclaimed these, if he did not himself believe them, live in them, and allow himself to be moulded by them. He feels that there is a close connection between the words, "thyself" and "the teaching." It is Christian character that he has in view. A wide-spread impression exists in our day that these two things can be separated from each other, that Christianity is no more than a high system of morals, and that its chief aim is to supply motives, not otherwise felt, to make men honest, upright, good, useful citizens in their public walk, kind and affectionate in their private life. Hence the complaints so often heard against what is called doctrinal teaching. It is not practical, men say, and they undervalue or even condemn the whole range of glorious thoughts associated with the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, with living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, with breathing the air of a heavenly citizenship, and with the hope of immortality.

Now, it is an unquestionable fact that Christianity does aim at a high moral life, that it commands and enforces upon us whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, whatsoever things have any virtue and any praise; but it does this in its own way. For it is far more than these things. It is a new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead. It is in its deepest sense the translation of man into a new world, where already he treads a different soil, breathes a different atmosphere, and is nourished by different food from that of ordinary life. Without this, there is no Christianity. There may be goodness and loveliness, many a beneficent action, and the praise of men; but the essence and the peculiar favor of Christianity are not there, for that essence and flavor are to be found in Christ and Christ alone.

If you read the New Testament carefully, you will find that this super-earthly, that this heavenly essence, is that which distinguishes the life to which we are called in Christ from that which we would otherwise lead. The change is described in the words, "while we look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal." "ye are dead, and your lives are hid with Christ in God, seated in the heavenly places." Redeemed man is in many respects, indeed, the same as he was before. He has the same affections and reasoning powers and conscience and will—the same at least in themselves. His foot is on the same ground; he works the same work; goes forth to his labor for the same number of hours, rests during the night under the same providential care, and wakes each morning to the same round of returning toil. Yet, he is not the same; he looks at all things under the influence of a light that comes from heaven—a light that never was on land or sea—but by it they are touched and glorified. "The old things are passed away; behold they are become new." Nor, let it be always observed, is man made unnatural by the change. The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, the great type and representation of what we are to become under the influence of our Christian faith, was not unnatural. He admired the color of the lily; He marked the changing aspect of the sky; He rejoiced to see the little birds fed by their heavenly Father's care; He called His disciples friends; John leaned upon His bosom; Mary sat listening at His feet; He took children in His arms; He laid His hands upon their heads and blessed them. In all this He did not destroy our human nature. He rather exhibited it in its noblest perfection and its most attractive beauty. So also with His people. When the new heaven is first introduced into their hearts, they may seem unnatural; there may be a restless movement in the mass, and we may be at a loss to determine what the result will be. But the heaven spreads, the surging of the sea is calmed, as by oil upon the waters; then all become natural again.

Here, then, is the main task set before the followers of Christ. To live in the world and yet be above the world; to throw one's heart into the business of every day, and yet to hear in the depths of the study, the factory, the counting room, the quiet tune of the stream of life which issues from the throne of God and of the Lamb; to be ready for every piece of active work and every scene of innocent enjoyment; to be the lover of nature and of man; to be the companion, friend, and unselfish citizen; and yet all the while to behold in secret glimpses of Divine fervor the land that is afar off, and to hear in secret joy its music—oh, that is the hard task of the Christian's life, the task which makes it so needful to cry to him continually, "Take heed to thyself." All else is nothing in comparison. We may speak with the tongues of men and angels; we may have the gift of prophecy, and may know all mystery and knowledge; we may have all faith so as to remove mountains;

we may bestow all our goods to feed the poor; we may give even our body to be burned, and yet, if we have not love—that love which God Himself is—we are nothing. Brother, whatever else thou doest, take heed unto thyself.

II. The considerations by which the precept is enforced.

1. Our own salvation, both here and hereafter, depends on it. "Rejoice," our Lord said on one occasion to His disciples, when they returned to His full joy at the great works they had accomplished. "Rejoice, not because the devils are subject to you, but because your names are written in heaven." It may be a delightful thing indeed, to do something in our Master's service, to take our part in advancing that kingdom of God which is the salvation of the world, to reclaim one wanderer, to cheer one drooping heart, or even to wipe away one tear. But there is a more lasting source of joy which rings from a well-regulated mind, from a heart at peace with God, from the testimony of a good conscience, that He who knows the end from the beginning is our friend, and that, though we may sometimes be called to suffer, He will make joy out of sorrow and life out of death. A happiness like this is independent of every earthly change. The sun is always in the sky; or, should it be at any time obscured, it is ready to burst through the shower of tears, and to make the heart resound with song.

As, too, this is our best possession here, so also it is that which alone we can carry with us when we go hence and are in this world no more. What a picture is in the words, "He heareth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them." He has made a fortune and he cannot take a penny of it beyond the grave. But our character goes with us into the eternal world. The members of this society take an interest in education. Why? Because the boy is the father of the man. In training the boy they are laying down the lines of his future manhood. Eternity is our manhood, and we are now educating it. The seed we sow here will ripen there after its kind. We have not the slightest reason to suppose that at the instant of death our character will undergo any very sudden or miraculous change; while it is in the very nature of things impossible that we should receive more than we are able to contain. Rather, as we leave this world, so shall we enter into the next, and in proportion to the use made of the talents committed to us now, shall be our reward there. Every enlargement of intellect, every deepening of our sense of duty, every determination of the will to good, will there meet its corresponding recompense, and that not of merit, but because in each case we shall have increased our capacity for that blessedness which the mansions of our Father's Home are always more than able to satisfy. We shall behold God's face in righteousness; we shall be satisfied when we awake with His likeness—the likeness which we have loved, and into which we have been growing here below.

2. Our power over others depends on it. It is not merely outward advantages that make one person useful in the world, and another is not necessarily useless because he wants them. A man may have all the wealth of a large commercial city, at his command, he may be placed in the highest position of authority, his word may be a law to thousands, and yet he may exercise less power over others for their good than the meanest person dependent on his bounty. Exertion even in Christian benevolence will produce no deep or abiding results if it is not the expression of truth and reality on the part of him by whom it is exhibited. How differently are you often affected by the same sentiment when uttered by two different men. The words may have been the same, but the sentiment went home to you in the one case with a far greater power than in the other. Or you may have heard an opinion quoted by a friend in such a manner as to show that your friend had been greatly impressed by it. I have often said the very same thing to him myself, may have been your thought, why does he not quote from me?

In both cases the explanation is the same. The power lay less in the sentiment or the opinion than in that character of the utterer which made it enter like a flaming dart into the soul. The same principle is applicable to religion, or rather it is far more applicable. Nowhere is the want of reality so offensive as where there is much outward labor in the cause of Christ without corresponding depth and earnestness of character. The sharp eye of the world will soon penetrate the flimsy veil; will soon detect the unworthy motive; will soon expose the shallow delusion that is real Christian, work which does not proceed from the heart. A Turkish proverb says "There is a window in every man's breast." And so it is. People look into it. They do not always tell what they see while the man is living. They are more communicative after he is dead. Yes, my brethren, if we would be really useful, it is not the passing act alone that will make us so. The man must speak in it, and the man must be disciplined if he would speak with power.

One word only in conclusion. Let us bear in mind that every day a certain character is stamping itself more and more upon us. Every scene in which we move, every action of our lives, every course of thought in which we indulge leaves an impress behind it on our souls, till, at last, our life has a particular coloring, our spirit a particular tendency which, even when we ourselves are not aware of it, distinguishes us by a peculiar mark. And this goes on constantly in the commonest actions of our lives. Every day our character is shaping itself whether we will or not. Every day is forming in us certain tastes, and is giving to our habits greater power. If these tastes and habits are evil, what misery are you preparing for yourselves, not only in eternity, but in time? You may say that you will not afterwards repent. But repentance won't undo the mischief. Neglect some bodily infirmity when you are young, and not all the care of future life when you awake to

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thoughtfulness, may be able to cure it. You may go down to the grave a sufferer. So sin may be forgiven, but, even when forgiven, it may leave behind it, its bitter fruits in shame and remorse and weakened influence. Whereas if you take heed to yourselves in time, how blessed may be both your progress and your end. You will go on your way rejoicing, firmer and firmer, stronger and stronger, more loving and more loved: peace, hope and joy, increasing in you with your increasing nearness to the divine image, till at last you are thoroughly ripened in calm and storm, in sunshine and rain, and, the labor of life accomplished, you enter there where those who die in the Lord rest from their labors, and their works follow with them.

### Prayer.

Almighty God, the Father of Jesus Christ and our Father; help us as we seek through our prayers to draw near unto Thee; to bow our wills to Thine, and to yield our spirits to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Help us as we would worship Thee eternal goodness; meditate on the unwearied mercy of which we are constant partakers; confess our shortcomings and sins and give ourselves up to be led by Thee in the ways of purity and peace. Pity us, the frail children of a passing day. Let not our littleness and unworthiness take from us the thought that we are loved by Thee. Let not the darkness and the mystery of the world and life rob us of our faith in Thee. Keep us ever in the fellowship of those who believe unto the saving of the soul through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### HYMN.

#### The Path of Duty.

Onward, onward, though the region  
Where thou art be drear and lone;  
God hath set a guardian legion  
Very near thee, press thou on.

Be the thorn-road, and none other,  
Is the mount of vision won;  
Tread it without shrinking, brother;  
Jesus trod it,—press thou on

By thy trustful, calm endeavor,  
Guiding, cheering, like the sun,  
Earth-bound hearts thou shalt deliver;  
O, for their sakes, press thou on.

Be this world the wiser, stronger,  
For thy life of pain and peace;  
While it needs thee, O, no longer  
Pray thou for thy quick release.

Pray thou, undisturbed, rather,  
That thou be a faithful son;  
By the prayer of Jesus,—“Father,  
Not my will, but Thine, be done.”

—J. Johnson.

#### A Prayer for Deliverance.

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble,

and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

And it shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.

Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, we Thy frail and sinful children bow before Thee, confessing our weakness and failure, and our need of a strength which we do not find in ourselves. We do not ask to be protected from Thee; we come to Thee for protection and deliverance. From despising the counsels of wisdom and truth: from neglect of Thy law, and contempt of Thy grace: from thinking and doing what is contrary to the mind of Christ, and from grieving and quenching Thy Spirit.

#### Advice to All Young Men.

We must not trust every saying or suggestion, but warily and patiently ponder things according to the will of God.

Yet alas! such is our weakness that we often rather believe and speak evil of others than good.

But perfect men do not easily credit every one who speaks to them; for they know that human frailty is prone to error in words.

It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy doings, nor to stand stiffly in thine own conceits.

As also not to believe everything which thou hearest, nor immediately to relate again to others what thou hast heard or dost believe.

Consult with him that is wise of sound judgment, and seek to be instructed by one better than thyself, rather than to follow thine own inventions.

A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things.

The more humble a man is in himself, and the more subject unto God, the more wise and peaceful shall he be in all things.

### HYMN.

#### Noblesse Oblige.

Go forth to life, O child of earth,  
Still mindful of thy heavenly birth;  
Thou art not here for ease or sin,  
But manhood's noble crown to win.

Though passion's fires are in thy soul,  
Thy spirit can their flames control;  
Though tempters strong beset the way,  
Thy spirit is more strong than they.

Go on, from innocence of youth,  
To manly purities, manly truth;  
God's angels still are near to save,  
And God Himself doth help the brave.

Then, forth to life, O child of earth,  
Be worthy of thy heavenly birth;  
For noble service thou art here,  
Thy neighbor help, thy God reverse.

—S. Longfellow.

## BIBLE QUESTION COMPETITION.

This competition is open to all the readers of PROGRESS, but is more especially intended to interest the young people—the boys and girls who are, or should be attending Sunday school. The following rules should be strictly observed:

### RULES FOR COMPETITORS.

1. A prize of one dollar will be awarded every week for the first correct answer that reaches PROGRESS office. If there is no correct answer the person who sends the first best answer will receive the dollar. In case two correct answers reach the office at the same time the dating stamps of the post offices at which they are mailed will be taken into consideration.

2. Competitors must write on one side of the paper only, giving name and address in full with each answer. These need not be published except in the case of prize-winners and successful competitors.

3. The winner of a prize will not be eligible to compete for another for four weeks.

4. All replies must be received on or before Saturday one week after publication of the questions, thus allowing competitors a clear week for their efforts.

5. No post-cards can be received. All replies should be addressed to the "SUNDAY READING," EDITOR PROGRESS, St. John, N. B.

I have much pleasure in stating that a new name is the successful competitor for "Prize Bible Questions" No. 12. Miss M. A. Estano, Moncton. The questions were answered correctly by the following six: Miss Katie Newham, St. Stephen; Miss Janet S. Gust, Yarmouth; Miss Annie Watson, Fredericton; Miss Melissa A. Thorn, city; and Miss Grace B. Robinson, Annapolis Royal. With regard to the first question, Jerusalem was given as the city whose timely repentance delayed for a time her destruction. If you read over carefully II Samuel, xxiv chap., you will see why Jerusalem was not destroyed. David had sinned in numbering the people contrary to God's wishes. God gave him his choice of three chastisements: pestilence, famine, or to flee before his enemies three months. David felt he was in a great strait, but wisely chose to fall into God's hand. So the Lord sent a pestilence, seventy thousand of the people died, when the angel was about to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord repented and said, "It is enough;" therefore it was the Lord's repentance or turning away from his purpose, saved Jerusalem. Some gave Corinth as the city where Paul spent a winter. Paul spent a year and six months in Corinth. Acts xviii, 11.

The third question was answered correctly by all. Zedekiah was given as one who received his name amidst family and national calamity. Zedekiah received his name from the King of Babylon when he was raised to the throne. I do not think he would look upon that act as a family chastisement, but rather as a mark of prosperity. I am sorry to say there was not a boy among the competitors this week. I hope they will not leave the field so ingloriously to their sisters, but still compete whether they gain the prize or not.

### ANSWERS.

Answers to Prize Bible Questions No. 12.

1. Give the name of a city whose timely repentance delayed for a time her destruction?  
Ans.—It is said in Jonah iii.: 5-10, that the city of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah; but was miserably destroyed some 200 years later (see Nahum iii.: 5-7; 15-19).

2. Give the name of a city where Paul spent a winter?  
Ans.—Paul spent a winter at Nicopolis (see Titus iii.: 12).

3. Give the names of the pillars of the early Christian church?  
Ans.—James, Cephas and John are spoken of as pillars in Gal. ii.: 9.

4. Who received his name amidst family and national chastisement?  
Ans.—Zedekiah received his name in a time of great chastisement. Israel was defeated by the Philistines and the ark of God taken away, the father and uncle of I-chabod being among the slain (see 1 Sam. iv.: 1-21).

M. A. ESTANO.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.—No. 14.

1. Who was the inventor of musical instruments?  
2. Give the name of a pious Jewess, whose "unfeigned faith" is traced by Paul in his "laughter and grandson"?

3. Prove from our Saviour's sayings he was familiar with the writings of the minor prophets?  
4. Scripture character No. 2. To whom do the following statements refer? and where are the facts recorded?

1. She was one of the faithful women who ministered to Christ. (2) Her husband held a responsible position in a royal household. (3) She took part in the last act of devotion towards our Saviour. (4) She became one of the first missionaries to tell the news of a risen Saviour.

### The Child Jesus.

Strange and true, that, like your boy and girl that last night lay sleeping in the little bed, in the firm and true belief that the Christmas morn would bring some pleasant gift brought by God's kind angels, even such like was Christ. The round smooth face that was to wear that most glorious crown of thorns—a human mother bent over it, with the light shaded from its sleeping eyes. The little hands that were to be the most beneficent that ever were in this world, that for our advantage were to be nailed to the bitter cross, were the helpless hands of an infant, and grew gradually stronger and bigger, as did your and mine. That is Emmanuel, God with us. To whom be love, trust, faithfulness, glory and blessing, now and evermore.