



## SERMON.

The Prospects of the Age.

BY REV. JAMES OER, D. D.,  
Professor of Church History, United Presbyterian  
College, Edinburgh."We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet:  
neither is there among us any that knoweth  
how long."—Ps. lxxiv., 9.

The tone of this psalm is desponding. In default of any external evidence as to when it was written, we are driven back upon the psalm itself, and we find that it belongs to a time when the land was in possession of its enemies—when the sanctuary was being broken down with hammer and axe—when the synagogues were being burned—when the standards of the foe were planted in the most holy places, and the people were being slaughtered without mercy. It was as if the sea, with its roaring waves, had come up over the land, and was threatening the submergence of everything men held dear. But one special circumstance which the psalmist bemoans is the absence from among them of anyone fitted to give them guidance. No more was there among them the sign of God's interposition with which they had been honored in the past. The voices of the past were silent; they had no prophets; there seemed to be no one having the vision and faculty Divine to show them what to do.

If it were suggested that there could be any parallel between our own prosperous, progressive, enlightened age, and those melancholy days to which the psalm relates, the supposition might at once be scouted as absurdity. Yet I am not so sure but that in respect at least of the one particular referred to in the text—the dearth of the greater order of men—some degree of parallel might not very fairly be argued. I shall ask at any rate in this discourse whether it is not so, and whether, if it be so, the causes are such as to lead to a hope that the existing condition may not be permanent, and what are the remedies on which we may rely.

I. First, then, as to the fact—how far this description of the text answers to anything that exists in our own times.

I do not wish to dispute anything that may be justly said of the material, or mental, or moral, or social progress of our time. I believe that in many respects we are far ahead of any past age, and have blessings to be thankful for that no other nation enjoys. There is more wealth, and a more general diffusion of it; more education, and a more general enlightenment; more liberty, civil and religious; an enormous advance in science, and in the means and appliances of material comfort; means of intercommunication which almost annihilate time and space, and practically make the world a great commonwealth. There is plenty of cheap literature; a multiplication of charities and churches; moral and religious agencies such as have never been seen before. I remember, too, that it is always difficult for an observer to take a right estimate of his own age, and of the events in which he himself takes part. We are too near to our age to do justice to it. How few people, for example, in Milton's age recognized *Paradise Lost* as one of the books which would go down to after centuries as one of the great classics of our language. But, granting all this, the question is yet a very pertinent one whether, alongside of it, there is not to be observed another very ominous phenomenon—a certain failure of minds of the highest order—a falling off in original creative power, which, if it were continued, would mean that we are going back—that our past, glorious as it is, will not be the measure of our future. I have in view chiefly the bearings of this subject on religion, but it is not in religion only, but in all the spheres of our thought and life that I think this falling off of the greater order of minds can be detected. We had a series of great poets in the early part and middle of this century, one or two of whom still survive. Where is the poet of the present day whose works are likely to live like theirs? We have had a succession of great writers of fiction—their books are on every one's shelves—but where is the writer of today whose books we would put in the same rank? We have had great musicians—Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Haydn, and the like. Their compositions live. Who are producing pieces of the same grandeur? We have had a century of great statesmen. It is no disparagement of the men of the younger generation to say that they are not of the calibre of those who have led the country for the last fifty or eighty years. We had a generation or two of great preachers—men like Chalmers, Guthrie, MacLeod, Anderson, and many others whose names are familiar. I think the general average of preaching is as good, or better; but among the younger men in any of our churches, how few can fill the places of those who have gone, or are rapidly going, from us? Take even the sphere of science, which is the strong point of our age. We have had a series of master minds in this department—great discoverers, men of original, intuitive, generalising minds. Among the scientific men of the present time, are there many showing evidences of a like greatness? It is the same in philosophy and theology—the epoch-making men and systems lie already half a century behind. We are content today to study, appropriate, criticise, and use what they have given us. Once more the piety and teaching of the past generation gave us Christians, whose weight of religious character it was a pleasure to acknowledge—men reverent, sober-minded, deeply instructed in God's Word, massive in Christian experience, matured and real in Christian piety;—the new type of religious character—brighter and more attractive as it is in some of its aspects—characterised by anything like the same depth, solidity, and durability? While, therefore, I am not disposed to underrate our age. I think there is reason

for the question whether there is not a dying out amongst us of the highest order of minds? It is not simply that the general average has risen—that I admit is true—but the peaks have disappeared; there is a tendency to a mediocre level—an apparent arrestment of original power, which, if not checked, will soon pass over into degeneracy. For societies, any more than individuals, cannot live merely on the impulse of the past, however great or noble these may be—there is needed at every step new, fresh, vigorous creative life, from which, as from a perennial spring, its energies may be renewed. I do think, therefore, that our age is one to which in some measure the words of our text may be applied: "We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." The next question which concerns us is: Is this state of things likely to be permanent? Or is this but a passing phase in our history, arising from temporary causes—and may we hope that it will soon disappear, and start us off again on a career of moral and spiritual progress, with new leaders at our head? The answer to this question will obviously depend on the view we take of the causes of this state of things we have described; and to this second point I accordingly now proceed.

II. We have then to consider the cause of this apparent absence, in all spheres of life, of the greater order of men in our midst, and what are the possible remedies.

One thing, then, which should give us hope is the fact that every great and creative epoch in history, there comes necessarily a period of pause. The human mind cannot always be at its highest stretch. In Bible history, the period of the Exodus, and the occupation of Canaan, was followed by a time of rest, when history flowed on with little that was eventful; and, similarly, the great creative outburst at the introduction of Christianity was followed by a period of no great distinction. Secular history shows the same law. History does not flow on evenly, but in great ebbs and flows—in grand creative epochs, followed by long breathing spaces, in times when the strongest call is made for great men, and they are drawn out and developed by the very magnitude of the crisis that calls for them, and quieter times, when people rejoice in the possessions they have won, and do not feel impelled to great efforts. Had Moses, for example, lived at another time than he did, or living even at the same time, had the call of God not come to him in the desert, he might have moved through an uneventful life, and with all his great powers, never have been heard of; or had Cromwell lived at another time, he might never have been heard of as a great commander. No man on earth knows all that is in him; in new circumstances he often develops quite unexpected powers. The reason, therefore, why minds of the greater order seem at the present scarce, may be, not that such minds do not exist, but that the present is not a time well fitted to call them forth.

Again, it is to be remembered that after every great creative period which men live through, there comes a time when the results of that creative activity have to be gathered up; and this very process puts of necessity a check, for the time being, on further production. This, indeed, is how history proceeds—there is first a great burst of creative genius under the influence of some new idea or impulse; then, when the wealth of that new movement has been poured into the lap of the age, men have the new task laid upon them of sifting down and looking carefully into the nature of their treasure, taking stock of it, as it were; seeing that it really amounts to; getting to understand it, and working it out to its practical results. This is the labor of industry more than of creation, but it is equally essential to the world's progress. There is another part of this task which is of great importance. With every great advance of thought or discovery—with every burst of new truth into the world—there is laid on those who receive it, the duty of adjusting it to the truth they already possess. Advance of knowledge can be made without a great shaking of old ideas, a disturbance of old habits of thought; it takes time before the full bearings of new truth can be perceived, and before it is perceived how the old can be safely adjusted to the new, without anything valuable being lost. But while this process is going on, there is necessarily a period of doubt, of suspense, of uncertainty, of hesitation. I think we are passing through a period of this kind just now, and it largely accounts for the absence of minds of the most creative order. In religion—*et cetera*, there is no doubt that the progress both of thought and of science, the rapid development of new social conditions, the keen criticism that has been bestowed on the Bible and on religious institutions, the new ideas which have become the current property of the time, the increasing knowledge we are obtaining of the religions of antiquity and of the east—I say there is no doubt that all these things have exercised a disturbing influence on the old traditional views of Divine truth; they have had an unsettling, disquieting influence; people did not know at first what to make of them; it was feared that the Gospel itself was going to be overthrown by them. And certainly anyone who supposes that our views of everything will come out of this conflict just as they went in, is greatly mistaken. But there comes by-and-by an adjustment of truth with them. It is found on the one side that while much human wood and hay and stubble has to perish in the fire of trial, the pure gold of the revelation of God in Christ, out with all that this pre-supposes, comes out surer and more refined and better verified than ever; and on the other hand, that extreme views which seemed to conflict with the essentials of religion react themselves, and are brought within proper limits.

There are, however, special causes which do belong to the character of the present age which tend, I think, to explain more particularly the dearth of the greatest type of minds in our midst. Of these I would mention, and do little more than mention, the following:

1. It is obvious that from the very multiplicity of its possessions our age tends to diffusion rather than to concentration. I mean by this that, whereas formerly a man could devote himself with all the strength of his mind to one subject, or one branch of a subject, there are now so many things to know about, that the mind has to spread itself over a much greater area, and is apt to lose in depth what it gains in breadth. Instead of knowing a great deal about one subject, people are tempted now to be content to know less about a great many subjects. There is a wider diffusion of knowledge—more books, more schools, more lectures and speeches—but there is less thorough knowledge. In religion this tendency shows itself as much as anywhere.

There are far more books about the Bible; but the Bible itself is less studied; there is more religious discussion, but perhaps less attention to life; there is more running to religious meetings, but less real desire for edification.

2. Our age is critical rather than constructive. This, as I have shown, is an inevitable result of the position we occupy in relation to the inheritance of the past. There is nothing in this world but must go through the fires of exhaustive criticism—it must be sifted, tried, its foundations examined, its premises and conclusions subjected alike to the narrowest scrutiny. We may not like the process; but it is one which, in spite of ourselves, we must submit to. All the same the work of criticism is by no means the highest. It dissects, it takes to pieces, it analyses, but there is no power of life in that process. It is poor fare for a human soul to nourish itself upon. Therefore, an age which, like our own, is before anything else, a shifting, testing, critical age, is not fitted to develop minds of the highest order. Ere that can be done, we must have advanced from the stage of criticism to that of positive construction—not seeking to pull down, but desiring rather to build up. There has, indeed, been a building up in this age—the building of material science—but neither does that touch the heart or life, or show us how the higher wants of the spirit are to be met.

3. The bent of the present age has been to material ends rather than to spiritual. It is perhaps inevitable that this should be the case, where so much attention has been given to the process of material nature, and the acquisition of material wealth. The marvellous strides made in scientific invention and discovery; the constant bending of the mind to the study of laws of nature; and the rapid increase of every kind of material wealth and luxury throughout the land, have undoubtedly had this effect of giving the mind a certain materialised bent, foreign to its proper nature, and have drawn it away from the due realization of the importance of the spiritual life. This is a mistake, so far as the production of minds of the highest class is concerned. The human mind never acts at its highest and best save where it acts under the idea of the Divine. It is the thought of God which lifts a man out of himself, and puts all things in their true light—the world, our fellow-men, our duty, our end, our destiny. The absence of this thought lowers the pulse of human endeavor, dries up the springs of noblest inspiration, and lowers existence generally to the level of materialism. There is need for vision of something above and beyond this world—of an eternal amidst the transitory—of a spiritual and unseen amidst the hard realities of the finite. And it is needful, too, not only that spiritual world should be believed in, but that we should live in it—that, as an apostle says, we should set our affections on the things that are above—that it should become a reality to us in our daily experience. We must live in communion with God, and be conscious of His presence as touching us. His spirit as sustaining and upholding us. His living word as speaking to our souls. If this falling away from the sense of the spiritual into secularity and materialism which, I believe, is doing more than anything else to dry up the sources of the highest life in our time; and the remedy for it is only to be looked for in a genuine revival of religion—a revival which does not confine itself to evangelical doctrines, but is marked by a general re-awakening to the sense of the spiritual—to faith in things eternal and divine—to belief in God, and His all pervading presence, and power, and providence in every region of existence.

Our hope, then, for the future is based on these three things—that, once a little time has been given for the human mind to appropriate and adjust itself to the new truth that has poured in on it in such marvellous abundance during the last century or so, it will be ready for a new start on a career of fresh development; that once the critical movement has exhausted itself, there will be felt the desire and need for new efforts at construction, and for the re-union of all the truths we have gained into a grander and more satisfying whole; and third, and above all, that the present tendency to materialism will be checked by a new revival of faith in the spiritual, the unseen, the divine. If I could not hope for this last, I could not hope for any permanent recovery from the lower level to which meanwhile, I think, we are tending to sink; but I have faith enough in the truth of God, in the needs of the human soul, in the power of God's revelation in Christ to satisfy those needs—in the personal worth and vitality of that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. I have faith enough in God Himself, who rules all, to believe that such a revival will surely come.

## CHURCH WORKERS.

What They are Doing and Saying Everywhere.

Mr. Spurgeon was so fond of making jokes in the pulpit that he used to say he would rather keep his congregation awake by telling them humorous stories than put them asleep by more doctrinal but less interesting preaching.

The Marchale Booth-Chibbion writes in the *Salvation Army's War Cry* that she "spent a whole morning visiting New York millionaires," and that, "though sometimes she did not meet with even common politeness, they were generally gushing and ready with any amount of sympathetic talk." As for cash, she didn't collect her car-fare, she says.

Transatlantic preachers are popular in London, where quite a number of ministers from Canada now occupy pulpits. The *British Weekly* says, "Dr. Fraser's death adds another to the already long list of vacant metropolitan churches. London has hardly ever been so poor in preachers who

have the popular ear, and the burden on those who are left is very great. For all reasons, it is a mistake to keep pulpits long empty. Each month without a pastor means an increasing drain on the fidelity of the congregation, and nothing paralyses energy more than the weekly sight of a half-empty building. Our churches might do worse than turn to America for their pastors. The experiment has already succeeded beyond expectation. The best American preachers have a warmth and heartiness that take well here, and they are free from the dependency so apt to become the normal mood of a man who has given the best of his life to London."

## Eggs in the Nest.

A charming story is told of Corliss, the great engine builder.

A short time before his death Corliss found it necessary to enlarge his large machine shops, and set a squad of men at work to prepare the material for building.

While the masons were arranging to blast a huge rock, a workman pointing to a bird hovering over a ledge high up in the rock, said:

"That bird will have to change its nesting in short order if it wants to save its neck."

"Are there eggs in the nest?" inquired Mr. Corliss, with evident interest.

"Yes, four little speckled fellows, over which the mother bird has been tussling ever since we began to work," replied the man. "The young birds will soon be peeping through their delicate shells."

"Then let the work stop until the birdlings are ready to fly," was the great-hearted man's command.

## Mothers

Nestlé's Milk Food for infants has, during 25 years, grown in favor with both doctors and mothers throughout the world, and is now unquestionably not only the best substitute for mothers' milk, but the food which agrees with the largest percentage of infants. It gives strength and stamina to resist the weakening effects of hot weather, and has saved the lives of thousands of infants. To any mother sending her address, and mentioning this paper, we will send samples and description of Nestlé's Food. Thos. Leeming & Co., Sole Ag'ts, Montreal.



## KOFF NO MORE

**WATSON'S COUGH DROPS**  
WILL GIVE POSITIVE AND INSTANT RELIEF TO THOSE SUFFERING FROM COLDS, HOARSENESS, SORE THROAT, ETC., AND ARE INVALUABLE TO ORATORS AND VOCALISTS. R. & T. W. STAMPED ON EACH DROP. TRY THEM

## Notice of Dissolution

THE undersigned hereby give notice and certify that a certain limited Partnership under the laws of the Province of New Brunswick, conducted under the firm name of "W. C. PITFIELD & Co.," for the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business, which by the certificate of Limited Partnership registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of the City and County of Saint John in the said Province, was to commence the Twenty-eighth day of December, A. D. 1889, and terminate the First day of January, A. D. 1892, did terminate and is and was dissolved the said First day of January, A. D. 1892.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.  
S. HAYWARD.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.:  
Be it remembered that WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed notice and certificate, personally came and appeared at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, J. E. BARNES, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said City and County of Saint John, and acknowledged the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said notice and certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the same.

Given under my hand at the said City of Saint John this Twenty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) J. E. BARNES,  
J. P. City and County of Saint John.

## Partnership Notice.

THE undersigned, desirous of forming a Limited Partnership under the Laws of the Province of New Brunswick, hereby certify:

1. That the name of the firm under which such partnership is to be conducted is "W. C. PITFIELD & Co."

2. That the general nature of the business intended to be transacted by such partnership is the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business.

3. That the names of all the general and special partners interested in said partnership are as follows:

WARD C. PITFIELD, who resides at the City of Saint John in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, is the general partner, and SAMUEL HAYWARD, who resides at the Parish of Hampton in the County of Kings and Province aforesaid, is the special partner.

4. That the said SAMUEL HAYWARD has contributed the sum of forty thousand dollars as capital to common stock.

5. That the period at which the said partnership is to commence is the Second day of January, A. D. 1892, and the period at which the said partnership is to terminate is the Second day of January, A. D. 1896.

Dated this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.  
S. HAYWARD.

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.

Be it remembered that on this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891, at the City of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, JAMES A. BELYEA, a Notary Public in and for the said Province, by lawful authority duly commissioned and sworn, residing and practising in the said City of Saint John, personally came and appeared, WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed certificate, and in the said certificate mentioned and severally acknowledged, the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the said certificate.

In witness whereof, I the said Notary have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Seal at the said City and County of Saint John, the said Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) JAMES A. BELYEA,  
Notary Public.

Nearly Two Million Bottles sold in the Dominion in Ten years.

IT CONQUERS PAIN

• A  
• CURE  
• IN  
• EVERY  
• BOTTLE

**ST. JACOBS OIL**

The Great Remedy for Pain

•••••

**Rheumatism** A SAFE, SPEEDY, SURE CURE FOR **Neuralgia**

REMEMBER THE PAIN KILLER

Ask your Druggist for it and take nothing else.

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR The Celebrated

**CHOCOLAT MENIER**

Annual Sales Exceed 33 MILLION LBS.

For Samples sent Free, write to C. ALFRED CHOUILLON, MONTREAL.

## Children's Clothing Department.

Our high reputation for Juvenile Garments is well established, and this season we have excelled all previous efforts. In ordering, state chest measure and age of boy, and we will Ship Goods for Selection, subject to being returned at our expense.

E. C. COLE, - - Moncton.

## COLLECIATE SCHOOL,



WINDSOR, N. S. FOUNDED A.D. 1788.

HEAD MASTER: REV. ARNOLDUS MILLER, M.A.,—Classics and Science. Toronto and Victoria Universities, Ont.

RESIDENT ASSISTANT MASTER: MR. JAMES C. SIMPSON,—Mathematics, German, Provincial Certificate, Province of Ont. Late of the Engineering Staff, Canadian Pacific R. R.

RESIDENT ASSISTANT MASTER: MR. ROBERT SIMPSON,—English and Classics. University of Toronto.

TEACHERS IN PIANO AND VIOLIN MUSIC: PROF. W. H. WATTS. MISS GOURLAY. MISS KING.

VIOLIN—J. W. S. BOULT, Esq.

CHARLES G. ABBOTT, Esq., B.A., Kings College.

TRINITY TERM COMMENCES APRIL 6.

62 CIRCULARS giving full information, will be sent on application to THE HEAD MASTER.

## IMPERIAL SUPERPHOSPHATE. - POTATO PHOSPHATE.

THE PRIZE CROPS. 1st Prize for Potatoes, \$60.00, taken by C. Pickard, Sackville.

This is to certify, that I the undersigned, assisted Mr. Lund to measure one acre of Potato Land, and assisted Mr. Bowser in checking and weighing the Potatoes taken from said acre, on which we used 5 barrels of your Special Potato Phosphate only, and find the crop four hundred and thirty-one bushels, 27½ lbs., (431, 27½). About three-quarters of the Potatoes were Beauty of Hebron, the remainder Black Montana. The Hebrons grew at the rate of about 400 bushels to the acre, and Montanas full 600 bushels to the acre.

(Signed) C. PICKARD.

Affirmed before me this 13th day of Nov. 1891, at Sackville.

(Signed) CHARLES E. LUND, J.P.

This is to certify, that I have this day parted off one acre from Mr. Charles Pickard's potato field, and marked the bounds of the same for the purpose of a prize competition.

Dated at Sackville, 26th Sept., 1891. (Signed) C. E. LUND, D. L. Surveyor.

SEND FOR CATALOGUE.

Provincial Chemical Fertilizer Co., 89 Water St., St. John, N. B.

## THE CLYDE STEAMSHIP COMPANY.

New York, Charleston, S. C., and Jacksonville, Fla., Service.



Tri-Weekly departures between NEW YORK and CHARLESTON, S. C., the South and Southwest, JACKSONVILLE, FLA., and all Florida Points.

The fleet is composed of the following elegant steamers: "ALONGQUIN" (new), "INOCENTIS," "SAMI KAZ," "CHRONOS," "YEMASSIS," and "DELAWARE," one of which is appointed to sail from Pier 29, E. R. (foot of Roosevelt Street), New York, MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS and FRIDAYS, at 3 p. m.

This is the only line between New York and Jacksonville, Fla., without change.

Making close connections at Jacksonville with F.C. & P.R.R., J.T. & K.W.Ry., & J. St. A. & H.R.R.

## CLYDE'S ST. JOHN'S RIVER LINE,

Comprising the elegant steamers "CITY OF JACKSONVILLE," "FRED'K DEBARY," "EVERGLADE," and "WELAKA," leaving Jacksonville daily at 3 p.m., except Saturdays, for Sanford, Fla., and intermediate landings, making connections with all rail lines at Palatka, Astor, Blue Springs and Sanford for all points in Florida.

Passenger accommodations unsurpassed, steamers being supplied with all modern improvements, staterooms, electric lights, electric bells, baths, etc. The cuisine on the steamers of the "CLYDE LINE" is unequalled by any other line, the table being supplied with the best Northern and Southern markets afford.

For further information apply to

WM. F. CLYDE & CO., Gen'l Agts.,

5 Bowling Green, New York. 12 So. Wharves, Philadelphia, Pa.

THEO. G. EGER, T. M., 5 Bowling Green, New York. R. F. ARMSTRONG, Halifax, N. S. C. E. J. JARVIS, St. John, N. B.