



SUNDAY READING

SERMON.

Hearsey and Conviction.

BY REV. P. M'ADAM MUIR, OF EDINBURGH.
Preached in the University Chapel, Glasgow, on
Sunday Afternoon, March 6.

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."—Job xlii. 5, 6.

This sermon may be said to form the culminating point of the Book of Job. It is the conviction to which all that has been said and done before has brought the patriarch. It is the utterance which all the trials that he has borne, and all the arguments that his friends have spoken, bring from his very heart. It is the moral of the whole story. Not in the outward prosperity which again attended him, not in the renewed abundance of his flocks and herds, not in his home filled again with happy faces, do we see the real victory of the afflicted. It is the real blessedness which came as compensation for all his woes, so much as in the spiritual state which enabled him to say, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, I retract, I condemn myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job had maintained his innocence all along. He had indignantly protested against the supposition that his calamities were the direct result of his evil life. He had repudiated the suggestions which one by one his friends had brought before him as probably the origin of his misfortunes. He had not been false, he had not been unjust, he had not been cruel, he had not been vile, he had not been covetous, he had not been idolatrous. He could challenge comparison with many whose lot was happiness itself, and he could boldly declare that their deeds and their lives were infinitely worse than his. The narrative impresses upon us, moreover, that this assurance of his own integrity was not mistaken; that, as regarded the discussion between himself and his friends, he was in the right and they were in the wrong. He was regarded with the divine approval. "The Lord said to Eliphaz, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right as My servant Job hath. But now go to My servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept that I deal not with you after your folly; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right as My servant Job hath." Yet in spite of this conviction of the injustice of the suspicions under which he had smarted, in spite of the triumphant vindication of his character, in spite of the interiority of his friends to him and the false assumption on which they had been reasoning, the words of Job now indicate that after all he has not been altogether right and the arguments of his friends had not been altogether wrong. They had spoken much to the force of all he now agreed. They had accused him of impatience, of rashness in speech, and at the time he had repelled the accusation; but now he humbly acknowledged "I have uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." They had counselled him to repent, and he had retorted that he stood in need of no repentance; but now he cried in deep abasement, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

What produced this great change? How was it that, emerging victorious from his trying ordeal, his friends silenced and himself approved, he looked upon himself with other eyes than he had looked before, and read another meaning in what his friends had said? It was that he no longer measured himself by human standards, that he no longer compared himself with other men, but with the perfect holiness of the law of God; it was that new light had shone upon him; a new vision had been granted him; he saw order where formerly there had been confusion, he saw mystery where formerly he had fancied there was none; and so in the presence alike of the clearer revelation and the vaster mystery he could only wonder and adore.

Restoration and Revelation.

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee." How had this great sight been granted him? It was by bringing before him the blindness and ignorance of man, and the marvels of the universe, and the majesty of Him by whom the universe was governed. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" one of his friends had said to him, in a very reproachful spirit indeed. "Canst thou find the Almighty unto perfection?" But now that same truth had been otherwise impressed upon him, had been spoken with an authority which he could not resist. What did he know of that Power, that Government which he had been impugning? After he had put to silence his three friends, who could answer him no more because he was righteous in his own eyes, after Eliphaz had interposed as seeking to show the unreasonableness of both Job and his friends, then Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, out of the tempest raging without and within, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" He was summoned to consider the mysteries which lay round about him, the events and the things in which he had been accustomed to think there was any mystery at all, the night, the day, the sea, the snow, the stars, the clouds, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field and the monsters of the deep, and in that consideration there dawned upon him a vision of that Mighty Power in which all things lived and moved and had their being. He saw around him so much that he could not understand, he

saw around him power with which he could not contend; what must be the Power which embraced and controlled them all? How foolish, how presumptuous to make of his own weak sight, of his own insignificant case, the measure of the mighty Whole. There was Order though he might not see it, there was Law though he might not understand it. He was convinced that all was well.

And this conclusion was come to, simply because he saw more clearly what had always been visible. It was not because of any elaborate argument, it was not because his doubts and difficulties were taken up one by one and ingeniously removed. What the voice out of the whirlwind said was no astonishing revelation, was no explanation of any problem which had been perplexing him, did not communicate to him any information which he did not previously possess. It showed nothing that was new, and yet it seemed as if scales fell from his eyes, as if hitherto he had been blind, as if now, for the first time, he saw what he had heard hitherto others describe. He had been told nothing that could be a surprise to him, and yet how much he had learned—how had the familiar sights and events become instinct with meaning and with life! The volume of nature outspread before him revealed to him, wherever he turned, the infinite wisdom and power and righteousness. It was God whose presence and whose working he discerned in everything—nowhere could he look out God was visible.

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." In seeing God he saw himself. The glory of that light streamed upon him, disclosing the recesses of his nature, permitting him with horror to behold imperfections and weaknesses which the darkness had hitherto hidden from his view. It was so different estimating himself in the light which the criticism of his friends threw around, and estimating himself in the light which searched the thoughts and intents of his heart. So long as he had brooded over his sorrow, and had listened to the attempts of his friends to explain the purpose of the Almighty in sending it, so long as he could not detect any unrighteousness in himself, he could declare himself to be guiltless of the evil imputed to him as the exceptional cause of his exceptional misery. But when he looked from himself to God, when he saw the Eternal Holiness and Purity, the new sight awoke within him a knowledge of himself which all his self-inspection had been unable to produce. The greatest earthly wisdom became as foolishness, the greatest earthly virtue became as villainy by the contrast. He might exultate himself before God. He had been uttering words which he ought not. He had been defiant where he ought to have been submissive; he had been misinterpreting the divine law; he had been rushing forward where he ought to have held back. He was face to face not with the prejudiced, partial judgment of men which he might well resent, but with the impartial righteous judgments of God from which there was no appeal; and the knowledge of that judgment removed all pride in his own integrity. All that he could now say, he the upright, he the resolute, in his own justification, was: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The Time of Awakening.

There are many who can bear witness to a change like that which took place in Job having taken place in themselves. They have passed from a belief which is the result of hearsay to a faith which is the result of personal conviction and this experience in some form is needful for us every one. The modes in which it may be attained are very various, but no one can be right till that vision has been granted to him, till the God of whom he has been taught becomes a reality, is seen and known by the eye of faith. The work of fiction which has been most widely read in recent years is the story of a clergyman who had sadly to renounce his faith because, in the presence of modern enlightenment, it was no longer tenable. He is described as a man of noble character who followed truth wheresoever it led him. And in following what he believed to be truth, he, of course, did well. But this has perhaps not been sufficiently noted; in the delineation of his character the beliefs from which he parted were really never his. He had been taught them as a child, he had received them by tradition, he had never turned them over in his mind, never sounded their depths. And so, when another aspect of truth was presented to him which he studied with earnestness, which he found contained much that was helpful to his life, the old beliefs, which he had only fancied that he had believed, could not but fall away. The tradition which we accept may be true in every detail, the authority before which we bow may be worthy of all veneration, but if, having attained to years and powers in which we are capable of making a decision for ourselves, our faith is still held on the frail and solitary tenure that, owing to the accident of our birth in a christian country, we were taught it in our childhood, it will fail us in the time of trouble.

There comes a crisis, a distinct period, in the lives of some when God speaks to them out of the whirlwind, out of the storm of affliction which has broken over them, out of the storm of agitation by which their spirits are convulsed. They have been leading untroubled lives, they have not had much occasion to think deeply, they have taken their prosperity for granted, they have also taken for granted the beliefs in which they were educated; it has never occurred to them to doubt the existence of God, and they have been regular in the observance of religious rites; but a change takes place in their circumstances, they lose their health or a friend dies, or they are reduced to poverty, or intellectual difficulties are suddenly presented to them, and what they had been taking on trust loses its power. They are inclined to renounce it as worthless—as of no avail in the hour of trial. They may be irritated by the way in which well-meaning friends

keep forcing it upon them, and may impatiently plead that they are better than some who seem to have it. They demand different solutions—they turn aside from all that are offered. The strange thing is, that when at last they emerge from their clouds, when they have a faith which they have verified, and on which they can rest, it is, as a rule, essentially the same as that which they had found so powerless. They have not had their difficulties removed, they cannot give an explanation of what perplexes them any more than they previously could, they cannot be positive regarding the reason why this should be withheld and that should be allowed; but they see their own inadequacy to pronounce judgement on what so far transcends their comprehension. The mystery is not removed, but deepened and expanded. Yet in the very deepening and expanding, in the awakening to the fact that the simplest things are marvellous, there is a strange peace imparted to the heart; for over and beyond all, seen or unseen, familiar and awful, He is discerned who is overruling all; and our poor, frail selves may surely trust themselves in the Almighty Hands. It is, indeed, extraordinary, the new meaning which often comes with the course of years into the commonest words and things. Aged saints, who have been growing all their days in the knowledge of God, will, when drawing near to death, pour out their supplications in the little prayers which they learned to stammer at their mother's knee. Men who have attained to a perfection of character, which is the lot of few, will tell us that their confessions of sin which in their youth they deemed extravagant, are now the plainest statement of fact. And what many of us need is not, as we think, that we should have fresh arguments adduced or fresh discoveries made, but only that the well-known, the familiar, the old, should be seen as it really is. Still for us, as for Job, when the weight of sorrow or of doubt presses upon us, the way of deliverance is to be found in looking once again on the manifestations of divine power and love of which we have heard all our days. Still it is to be found in the contemplation of the works of nature—in the sight of law ever unfolding, of beauty ever appearing, of wonder ever multiplying before our very eyes. Still it is to be found in that greater revelation which Job had not, but which to us is most familiar of all—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That story which for eighteen hundred years has been repeated and repeated—that story which is contained in one small volume—that story, the chief incident of which may be compressed into a page—that story which we have heard with the hearing of the ear till we think it cannot possibly contain anything which we do not fully understand—it is that old well-worn story which alone truly discloses God as He is, which enables us to cast from us our fears and perplexities, which humbles us to the dust indeed with a sense of our ignorance and folly and sin, but which inspires us with confidence and hope for all the future.

Description and Vision.

It is the vision of divine love and power and forgiveness which strikes our "doubting dumb," which alone affords relief to the spirit longing to believe that all is well, that human hopes and aspirations are not a mockery and an illusion. But it is a vision which each must see for himself; one cannot communicate to another what he has seen. The impression made upon us by the description of any scene from the lips of others is always in many points strangely unlike the scene when we see it for ourselves. The most skillful word-painter cannot give us a perfectly true conception of a glen or a hill or a stream if we have never seen it. He may record every feature of the landscape—he may delineate with matchless accuracy the tints of the trees, the ruggedness of the rocks, the luxuriance of the wild flowers, but so long as we merely read his description, we make mistakes as to the multitude of details, we could not from his mere words draw a picture which in every respect should be like the original. We have to see it before we can appreciate the fidelity of the description. So it is that each of us must see the vision of God for himself, must hear the voice of God for himself, otherwise we have no adequate conception of what it is, and no attempt to make it plain will be successful. What was it that Job saw? In what way did he discern the awful presence? Not one word is here to tell us. The same scenes, the same influences, were around him, but he saw what they did not see. He saw, he worshipped, he trusted, he repented, he went forth with new life, new power; he went forth a new man.

And we must not rest content till spiritual things become realities. "We have heard with the hearing of the ear," we hear every Sunday of God, of Christ, of the Unseen and Eternal. But it is mere hearing? Are the most sacred truths for us no more than platitudes? Are they but venerable traditions which we never have been roused to question? In these days it will be strange if you escape being called on to test the beliefs in which you have been trained, if there does not come a time when you are forced to ask, "Are the lessons which we learned long ago fancies or realities? Are the disquisitions to which we have listened on the divine government of the world true or false? It may be that in fiery suffering we rise up in revolt against the narrow prejudices of good men, and fiercely tear to pieces the flimsy arguments with which they would vindicate the ways of God to man; it may be that in the demolition of their common-places there is no more true reverence for God than in the common-places themselves; but when the voice of man is hushed, and our angry spirits brood over the hardness of our lot, and the falsehood of the aspersions to which we have been subject, and the mystery of all things—then there speaks a voice to which we must give heed, a voice which but recalls the truths which we have heard before and puts them in a different light, and there dawns upon us from nature and from the gospel a vision of that which we had often heard described in feeble, stammering accents, and we fall down in contrition, yet in hopefulness, before Him of whom no tongue of man has ever spoken, in sublimest flights of imagination of what approaches the Divine Reality.

As we think of what our relation to Him in the past has been, we may recall that we have said much about His ways that had no meaning even for ourselves; we have uttered in light and frivolous moods the most awful truths. May the reality of these

words come home to us; and so acknowledging our presumption in rushing in where angels fear to tread, acknowledging that we have uttered what we understood not, things too wonderful for us which we knew not, may we each one, as we bow before Him in silence and in shame, say in the depths of our hearts: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS.

The Pope has decided to publish an encyclical letter at the time of the Columbian exposition on Columbus, in which he will trace the life of the discoverer, and, in particular, indicate the part taken by the holy see in that marvellous epoch of the history of civilization.

Mrs. Beecher says that her husband used to prepare the bulk of his sermon Sunday morning after breakfast. But it was never certain that he would use this material. Frequently after the services had begun, the prayer been delivered, the scriptures read, and the choir was half through the hymn, Mr. Beecher would be struck by an idea, and jotting it down on a scrap of paper or the back of a letter taken from his coat pocket he would preach extemporaneously one of the best sermons.

Years ago I was having a few days' climbing in the lake district when Mr. Spurgeon came by in an open carriage and pair. I was carrying my knapsack and alpenstock. Stopping to salute me, he said: "What seems your paradise would be my purgatory." I really thought a little such purgatory would be salutary. I asked him what he replied to those who objected to his driving to service on Sunday. "Oh, I tell them 'all I am a christian and my horses Jews. They rest on their seventh day, Sabbath, and so help me to rest on my first day, Sunday. Were I to walk it would be my hardest day of work.'"

He told us of two passages of arms in his early ministry. "Dr. Cumming, in a letter to the Times, said that Spurgeon needed more honey. I replied that if Cumming would send me some honey I would send him some salt, which might do him good. They dealt more in salt at the Tabernacle." Beecher had said that Spurgeon owed his popularity no more to his Calvinism than a camel owed its excellence to its hump. "I replied," said Spurgeon, "that the hump was a store of fat on which the camel lived on a long journey, and that its value depended on its hump."—Good Words.

AYER'S Sarsaparilla

512 Dufferin St.
Windsor, N. S.
I have taken a great deal of medicine in my life but no remedy ever helped me so much as Ayer's Sarsaparilla, which I consider the best blood purifier in the world.
E. Walz

CURES OTHERS,
Will Cure You.

COLONIAL HOUSE, PHILLIPS SQUARE, MONTREAL.

WE ARE NOW SHOWING
New Goods

IN ALL DEPARTMENTS.
STABLE AND FANCY DRY GOODS
CARPETS,
CURTAINS,
UPHOLSTERING GOODS,
FURNITURE,
MANTLES,
MILLINERY,
READY-MADE CLOTHING,
LADIES BOOTS AND SHOES,
KITCHEN UTENSILS, ETC.

Finest
Assortment
In Canada.

N. B.—Mail orders promptly and carefully attended to.

HENRY MORGAN & Co.,
COLONIAL HOUSE,
MONTREAL.

INTENSE SUFFERING!

Mr. William Buchanan, 24 years engineer in the Cunard Steamship Company's service, 8 St. John's Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, Eng., writes: "I suffered two years of agony from an affection in the head which six physicians pronounced incurable."



They were divided in opinion as to whether it was acute neuralgia of the head or rheumatic affection of the brain, but all agreed that I could never recover. In my paroxysms of pain it needed two and sometimes three men to hold me down in bed. When at death's door,

ST. JACOBS OIL

was applied to my head. It acted like magic. It saved my life. I am well and hearty, and have had no return of the trouble."

"ALL RIGHT! ST. JACOBS OIL DID IT."

ESTABLISHED 1868.

TELEPHONE 738.

MILLER BROTHERS.

CALL AND SEE OUR STOCK.

Importers and Dealers for the BEST CANADIAN and AMERICAN

Pianos, Organs

SEWING MACHINES.

Pianos and Organs Tuned and Repaired.

Sewing Machines Repaired.

—We buy direct in Large Quantities for Cash, and are able to give Large Discounts.
—Pianos Sold on the Instalment Plan.—

116 and 118 Granville St., Halifax, N. S.

Four Diplomas taken on Stock shown at late Provincial Exhibition.

COLLEGIATE SCHOOL,

Founded A.D. 1878.



Windsor, N. S.
HEAD MASTER: REV. ARNOLDUS MILLER, M. A.—Classics and Science. Toronto and Victoria Universities, Ont.
RESIDENT ASSISTANT MASTER: MR. JAMES G. 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.
FRENCH: CHARLES G. ABBOTT, Esq., B.A., Kings College.
TRINITY TERM COMMENCES APRIL 6.
Circulars giving full information, will be sent on application to THE HEAD MASTER.

Famous Fiction by the World's Greatest Authors!

A CHARMING SET OF BOOKS,
EMBRACING
Ten of the Greatest Novels Ever Written
BY TEN OF THE
GREATEST AUTHORS WHO EVER LIVED!

If you will study the biographies of the great authors of our day, you will observe that in most instances their reputations were made by the production of a single book. Let but one work that



is really great—one masterpiece—emanate from an author's pen, and though his future efforts may be trivial in comparison, his name will live and his works be read long after the author has passed away. A well-known New York publishing house has issued in uniform and handsome style ten of the greatest and most famous novels in the English language, and we have perfected arrangements whereby we are enabled to offer this handsome and valuable set of books as a premium to our subscribers upon terms which make them almost a free gift. Each one of these famous novels was its author's greatest work—his masterpiece—the great production that made his name and fame. The works comprised in this valuable set of books, which are published under the general title of "Famous Fiction by the World's Greatest Authors," are as follows:

EAST LYNNE. By Mrs. Henry Wood.
JANE EYRE. By Charlotte Brontë.
JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN. By Miss Mulock.
ADAM BEDE. By George Eliot.
THE WOMAN IN WHITE. By Wilkie Collins.
LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET. By Miss M. E. Braddon.
VANITY FAIR. By W. M. Thackeray.
THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII. By Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.
THE THREE GUARDSMEN. By Alexander Dumas.
PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE. By Charles Reade.

Each of these great and powerful works is known the world over and read in every civilized land. Each is intensely interesting, yet pure and elevating in moral tone. They are published complete, unaltered and unabridged, in ten separate volumes, with very handsome and artistic covers, all uniform, thus making a charming set of books which will be an ornament to the home. They are printed from new type, clear, bold and readable, upon paper of excellent quality. Altogether it is a delightful set of books, and we are most happy to be enabled to afford our subscribers an opportunity of obtaining such splendid books upon such terms as we can give.

Our Liberal Premium Offer! We will send the ten great novels above named, comprising the "Famous Fiction by the World's Greatest Authors," also the "Progress for one year, upon receipt of only \$2.50, which is an advance of but 50 cents over our regular subscription price, so that you practically get this beautiful set of books for only 50 cents.

EDWARD S. CARTER.