

God's Sovereignty Illustrated.

The church is God's building, and from the way in which man's sovereignty is exercised in man's building, we may see how God's sovereignty is exercised in rearing God's building. The builder first lays a plan—draws out on paper a sketch of the whole—its dimensions, its apartments, its ground floor, its elevations, and its necessary materials. With this plan before him, he goes to the quarry and selects and blocks out the stones, for each and every part of the stone work. He opens the quarry and finds it an unformed mass of stones, all alike unprepared for his use; and yet capable of being split and hewn into what shape he will give it. He applies his blasts and throws out the shapeless blocks—of these he takes one for a corner stone, another for a threshold, and others for his walls, giving to each the place which he will, and some originally as good as the rest, he throws aside as useless for the purpose in hand.

So in God's building:—When he comes to select from the mass of human beings the materials of his spiritual house, he finds them all in the rough quarry—all equally unfit in their present shape, yet capable under his instruments and power of being made polished stones and fitly framed. He does not take a particular block because it is already fit for its place; but he takes it with a design to make it fit.

So the builder goes into the forest for his timbers. He does not take the whole forest—but only such as is required to fill out his plan. He fells this tree for a sill, that for a post, and that for a rafter, and so on. His tree for a post is taken perhaps from a hundred like it, seemingly as fit for its use; and a looker on might not be able to see a reason why the one should be taken and the other left. But we know, that the reason is not, because he foresees, that this will make a post and the others will not; for he could foresee no such thing, till he had determined to make it so. Nor was it that this tree had any claims in preference to others; for none had any claims to come under the builder's axe. So God, in choosing men, as the timbers in his building, goes into the forest of the human race, free to choose this or that. His completely drawn plan lies under his eye; he selects this or that, for reasons best known to himself. He selects no person because he is already framed and fitted to the place—nor because he foresees that he will be—nor because the one chosen has a claim to be chosen, or any moral difference from others; but he selects him with a purpose to make him what he will have him. He bestows his grace where he pleases, and says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." His will, concurrent with his wisdom, determines the whole distribution of the gifts of his grace. They go forth not like the rays of the sun, scattered by an involuntary agent according to fixed laws. It is the exercise of God's uncontrolled will in the case, that makes them gifts, and entitles him to our thanks for them. We do not thank the sun for his rays; for thanks are the mind's response to an exercised will, which the sun has not. And all the pardoned sinner's gratitude for redeeming and renewing grace recognizes the sovereignty of God, in that it attributes to the gracious will of God, the bestowment of grace where it is bestowed.—*Puritan Recorder.*

SLANDER.

What a habit some persons have of talking! Their words will rattle on like the peltings of a hail storm on a shingled roof; and often you get about as much sense out of one as the other. But as words are signs of thought—images of ideas—instruments by which the thoughts of one mind are transferred to another, some of these everlasting talkers will have meaning enough to their clatter, to get a whole neighborhood by the ears, and scatter slander enough in half an hour, to make the best of friends, enemies for life. There is, probably, no more fruitful source of mischief than a reckless or thoughtless use of words. It was the voice of truth that said, "the words of folly are drawn swords," and "life and death are in the power of the tongue." And yet how many thousands there are who produce death all around them by the use of this same sword.

We lately heard several ladies complaining of another one who was then absent, and charging her with having broken the peace of several families by tattle from one to another, and adding to her stories false and slanderous items. But the way the complainers talked

of the absent one, even were she in fault, was a caution. They might have been right in their charges, perhaps; but we thought their tongues needed a little bridling, as well as hers.

Slandrous reports are usually false, though they are not always so in whole. Truth, when told in a particular connection, or without the circumstances which would qualify actions, may do as much mischief as falsehood itself; indeed it is false in the impression it gives.—The emphasis, too, and the tone in which words are uttered, go far to fix a false impression in the minds of the hearers, though the words themselves may be strictly true. A man may tell what is strictly true, and yet be guilty of a lie; or he may state what is absolutely false, and yet be innocent of all moral wrong. The intention is the thing in most cases. But persons who are in the habit of gossiping about their neighbors, though it may not be with intention of wrong, can hardly be innocent, because there are a thousand chances for misunderstanding, misconception, and misconstruction; and the least addition or omission will often entirely alter facts, break up the peace of friends, and set a whole neighborhood on fire.

Many persons think they have a perfect right to report again whatever they hear, though it may seriously injure the one to whom the report refers. This is most decidedly wrong. I have no right to injure my neighbor by circulating falsehoods about him, though I am not the originator of them. Because another man is engaged in an evil work, shall I lend him my aid, with no better excuse than to say he commenced it? And it is not always right to circulate reports about another even when they are true, admitting they will injure him, and do no one else any good by hearing them, except the gratification of an idle curiosity. Boerhaave used to say "The sparks of calumny will be presently extinct of themselves, unless you blow them." Augustus had a distich written on his table, which intimated that whoever attacked the characters of the absent, were to be excluded.—There are many tables in these days on which a distich might be written to some profit. We like much the course generally pursued by Peter the Great. When any one had spoken ill of another, he would say, "Is there not a fair side also, to the character of the person of whom you are speaking? Come, tell me what good qualities you have remarked about him. If such a course were generally pursued by those who hear calumny, the slanderer would soon hide his head for shame, and the community would be happy, compared with what it is now, while every one like the Athenians in Paul's day, takes delight in hearing as well as in telling some new thing, and the more injurious it is to some fellow-being, the better it would seem. The slanderer is a curse to society.

Difficulty in Believing the Bible.

The reason why men do not readily receive and embrace the Scriptures, is to be ascribed not to the want of evidence. It lies in the heart. Truth which men do not "like to retain," they cast away. Rev. Dr. Hodge in his excellent work on the Way of Life, thus speaks of the main difficulty under which we labour in believing the Bible.

It often happens that those who hear the gospel, doubt whether it is really the word of God. Having been taught from infancy to regard it as a divine revelation, and knowing no sufficient reason for rejecting it, they yield a general assent to its claims. There are times, however, when they would gladly be more fully assured that the Bible is not a cunningly devised fable. They think if that point was absolutely certain, they would at once submit to all the gospel requires.

Such doubts do not arise from any deficiency in the evidence of the divine authority of the Scriptures; nor would they be removed by any increase of that evidence. They have their origin in the state of the heart. The most important of all the evidences of Christianity, can never be properly appreciated unless the heart be right in the sight of God.—The same exhibition of truth which produces unwavering conviction in one mind, leaves another in a state of doubt or unbelief. And the same mind often passes rapidly, though rationally, from a state of scepticism to that of faith, without any change in the mere external evidence presented to it.

No amount of mere external evidence can produce genuine faith. The Israelites who had seen a long succession of wonders in the land of Egypt; who had passed through the

divided waters of the Red Sea; who were daily receiving by miracle food from heaven; who had trembled at the manifestations of the divine majesty on Mount Sinai; within sight of that mountain, made a golden calf their God. The men, who saw the miracles of Christ performed almost daily in their presence, cried out, Crucify him, crucify him.—Hence our Saviour said, that those who hear not Moses and the prophets would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. We may confidently conclude, therefore, that those who now believe not the gospel, would not be persuaded had they seen all the miracles which Christ performed.

The Death of Christ.

This was the hour of the abolition of the Law, and the introduction of the Gospel; the hour of terminating the old, and of beginning the new dispensation of religious knowledge and worship throughout the earth. Viewed in this light, it forms the most august era which is to be found in the history of mankind. When Christ was suffering on the cross, we are informed by one of the Evangelists, that he said, *I thirst*; and that they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to his mouth. After he had tasted the vinegar, knowing that all things were now accomplished, and the scriptures fulfilled, he said, *It is finished*; that is, This offered draught of vinegar was the last circumstance predicted by an ancient Prophet, that remained to be fulfilled. The vision and the prophecy are now sealed; the Mosaic dispensation is closed. And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

It is finished. When he uttered these words, he changed the state of the universe. At that moment the Law ceased, and the Gospel commenced. This was the ever memorable point of time which separated the old and the new world from each other. On one side of the point of separation, you behold the Law, with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side, you behold the Gospel with its simple and venerable institutions coming forward into view. Significantly was the veil of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubims. The legal High Priest delivered up his Urim and Thummin, his breast plate, his robes and his incense; and Christ stood forth as the great High Priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice, which he now offered, he abolished sacrifices forever. Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood, he now entered into the Holy Place, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

This was the hour of association and union to all the worshippers of God. When Christ said, *It is finished*, he threw down the wall of partition which had so long divided the Gentile from the Jew. He gathered into one, all the faithful, out of every kindred and people. He proclaimed the hour to be come, when the knowledge of the true God should be no longer confined to one nation, nor his worship to one temple; out over all the earth, the worshippers of the Father should serve him in spirit and in truth. From that hour, they who dwelt in the uttermost ends of the earth, strangers to the covenant of promise, began to be brought nigh.—*Dr. Blair.*

Natural Depravity and Spiritual Inability of Man.

Dr. Gill was once preaching on the natural depravity and spiritual inability of man. A gentleman, who heard the sermon, was greatly offended; and taking an opportunity some time after of calling on the doctor, told him that, in his opinion, he had degraded that noble being, man, and laid him much too low.

"Pray, sir," answered the doctor, "how much do you think can men contribute toward their own conversion and salvation?"

"Man can do such and such things," replied the gentleman; reckoning up a whole string of free-will abilities.

"And have you done all this for yourself?" said the doctor.

"Why no, I cannot say I have yet, but I hope I shall begin soon."

"If you really have these things in your power," replied the doctor, "and have not done them for yourself, you deserve to be doubly damned; and are but ill qualified to stand up for that imaginary free-will, which according to your own confession, has done you so little good. However, after you have made yourself spiritually whole (if you are

able enough to do it,) be kind enough to come and let me know how you went about it; for at present, I know but of one remedy for human depravation, namely, the efficacious grace of Him, who worketh in men both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure."—*Toplady.*

A Hundred Years Hence.

Its strikes me as the most impressive of all sentiments, that "it will be all the same a hundred years after this." It is often uttered in the form of a proverb, and with an importance of a mind that is not aware of its importance. A hundred years after this! Gently will with what speed and with what certainty those hundred years come to their termination! This day will draw to a close, and a number of days make one revolutionary year, and a number of years make up a century. These little intervals of time accumulate and fill up a mighty space which appears to the fancy so big and so immeasurable. The hundred years will come, and they will see the wreck of whole generations. Every living thing that now moves on the face of the earth will disappear from it. The infant that now hangs on his mother's bosom will only live in the remembrance of his grand-children. The scene of life and intelligence that is now before me will be changed into the dark and loathsome forms of corruption. The people who now hear me, they will cease to be spoken of; their memory will perish from the face of the country; their flesh will be devoured by worms; the dark and creeping things that live in the holes of the earth will feed upon their bodies: their coffins will have mouldered away, and their bones be thrown up in the new-made grave. And is this the consummation of all things? Is this the final end and issue of man? Is this the upshot of his busy history? Is there nothing beyond time and the grave to alleviate the gloomy picture? to chase away these dismal images? Must we sleep forever in the dust, and bid adieu to the light of heaven?—*Dr. Chalmers' Sermons and Posthumous Works.*

A Striking Illustration.

A company of individuals united themselves together in a mutual benefit association. The Blacksmith comes and says, "Gentlemen, I wish to become a member of your association." "Well, what can you do?" "Oh, I can shoe your horses, iron your carriages, and make all kinds of iron implements." "Very well, come in, Mr. Blacksmith." The Mason applies for admission into the society. "And what can you do, Mr. Mason?" "Oh, I can build your barns and houses, and stables and bridges." "Very well, come in, we can't do without you." Along comes the Shoemaker and says, "I wish to become a member of your society." "Well, and what can you do?" "I can make shoes and boots for you." "Come in, Mr. Shoemaker, we must have you."

So, in turn, apply all the different trades and professions, till lastly an individual comes and wants to become a member. "And what are you?" "I am Rum-seller." "A Rum-seller! and what can you do?" "I can build jails, and prisons, and poor houses." "And is that all?" "No, I can fill them; I can fill your jails with criminals, your prisons with convicts, and your poor-houses with paupers." "And what else can you do?" "I can bring the gray hairs of the aged to the grave with sorrow; I can break the heart of the wife, and blast the prospects of the friends of talent, and fill your land with more than the plagues of Egypt." "Is that all you can do?"—"Good heavens!" cries the rum-seller, "is not that enough?"—*Poughkeepsie Blacksmith.*

THOUGHT.

I may be poor! but do not care;
The world's rude scorn I'll bravely bear,
And treat as nought;
Since there's an empire own'd by me—
An empire vast, and fair, and free;
Including heaven, and earth, and sea,
With things past, present, and to be—
Unbounded thought!

The following exhibit of the number of yards in a mile, in different countries, will prove useful no doubt to some of our readers. Mile in England or America, 1760 yards; Russia, 1100; Italy, 1467; Scotland 2400; Ireland, 2400; Poland, 4400; Spain 5028; Germany, 5857; Sweden, 7283; Denmark, 7282; Hungary, 8800.