

Devil Poison.

BY WILLIAM ASHMORE, D. D.

Cavillers question the fairness of so heavy a consequence being visited upon Adam for what they call so small an offence. A common answer to the objection is that one act of disobedience involved the elements of all disobedience. But another thing ought to be said. The first transgression was something more than a transgression. It was an impregnation with a veritable poison. Moral poison is as much an entity as are vegetable, animal, or mineral poisons. Obviously all poisons, whether material or spiritual, conform in their operation to a general law. Let a poison germ of any kind be infused into the blood, and the course it will run is sure and determinate. As soon as the physician knows the kind of poison that has been inserted, he can predict with certainty what will be the condition of the patient's body a few hours or a few days thence.

All poison tends to the reproduction of its kind. An infinitesimal portion of small-pox virus evolves in the direction of the original small-pox, reproducing it in all its pristine loathsomeness. Persons bitten by rabid dogs have been known, in the height of their disease, to bark like dogs. The blowing viper is covered with spots. A characteristic of its deadly poison is that it causes to break out on the body of its victim as he draws near to death spots similar to those found on its own body.

The outcome of a germ of satanic poison is to make man wholly a devil. From the moment of its incipience, it generates incessantly in that direction. But for a divine intervention, no human being would ever escape the final result. What is true of the individual is true of the race, for the race is compounded of units. The concrete race-life is made up of the units of individual life. The former, therefore, differs from the latter not in kind, but in degree. As the perpetual drift of a poison-infected individual is to an absolute devilhood, so also with the race. The history of sin is the history of the incarnation of Satan, until the race is completely devilled.

That first rejected moral poison in the Garden of Eden involved the germ of all the feelings, hatreds, ambitions, malignities, prides, of Satan. All the evils of the devil at the divine government, all the rebellions and unsubmitiveness, all the presumptuous speculations and questionings among devils, that must have existed among them before man was created, were wrapped up in it. Through that tooth-bite all pretemporal devilism passed into humanity. Henceforth the conflict which had existed among spiritual beings was transferred to earth. Adam was like one of those mountain passes between great nations; narrow defiles in themselves, through which only one or two men can pass abreast, but through which, in that way, an army will pass to renew, in the plains beyond, the strifes and contentions unsettled in the region behind them.

Accordingly it is evident that sin in the human race has a goal to which it is hastening. Along the track of the ages it is characterized in its successive manifestations by peculiar phases in different ages, and in different circumstances. Still it is evident that in the main it is confined within its banks, and moves in a fore-determined direction, the result, in large measure, of initial force. The bait that enticed Adam was to "become as gods; knowing good and evil." From the light the Scripture gives us, we infer that something of that nature was the full expression of Satan's ambition. It is that same presumptuous aspiration that he has injected into man. In the subsequent development of the race, the tendency never disappears from sight.

The Scriptures indicate plainly, as we think, that the terminal crime of humanity will be an attempt on a scale of enormous race magnitude to effect what Adam sought when he ate the forbidden fruit. All things are allowed to man except one—Godship is forbidden fruit. In other words, the final outcome of all wickedness is an endeavor to dethrone God and defy humanity. And yet it is capable of a further analysis. It is not so much an endeavor to deify humanity as it is to deify our own individual self. The same disposition which makes a man reject God's supremacy will lead a man to reject the supremacy of every other being; and to make his own desire the supreme desire and his own will the supreme will of the universe, and in the end the fully developed sinner and the fully developed devil must hate and oppose every living being in the universe. The issue of the final attempt is laid before

us in such portions of the Scripture as the twentieth chapter of Revelation. The spots of the viper will show themselves before the final destruction.

This indicates to us a point of eminence from which to view the work of Christ. The Adamic race was not the only stake at issue in Christ's conflict with the powers of evil. It was not necessary that each country of Europe should have a separate Waterloo on which to meet Napoleon. One Waterloo sufficed for them all. So far we can conjecture, this small planet is the Waterloo for all the worlds that God has made. It does not seem to us to be going beyond the warrant of Scripture suggestiveness to speak of undecided issue of a past eternity. Assuredly some such issues there were among angelic beings. The Bible gives us occasional glimpses of them, as when it speaks of Michael contending with Satan about the dead body of Moses, and also in passages in Job and Daniel. Questionings and speculations, reasonings and conjectures about the divine plans and the divine government, must inevitably have entered into the minds of these beings of vast intellectual power. That some of these speculations and reasonings culminated in sin, we know full well, although we do not know how the culmination took place.

All these speculations might have been answered then, but it seems to have been the divine purpose to transfer them all to an earthly arena. Into this arena Christ comes in creature form, emptied in His Godhead, made under law, taking the place of a subject under a Lord, and a servant under a Master, those very positions which devils and sinful men rebel at, and here He, alone and single-handed, settles all the issues of the past. All the queries, all the conjectures, all the surmisings, about the proper relationship of the creature to the Creator, and the wisdom of the existing constitution of things, are met and answered by Christ. Christ is God's key to all the problems of the universe, God's answer to all the questionings of His creatures, God's vindication of His own divine administration.

Pulpit Elocution.

No. 3.

RUSSELL.

Man as a communicative and expressive being, naturally imparts his states of thought and feeling by visible as well as audible language. All vivid and powerful emotions of the human breast become legible and are transmitted by their effects on the features of the countenance, the attitude of the body, and the actions of the arm and hand. This fact is universally exhibited in the unconscious habits of childhood, and, with no less certainty, in those of manhood when under the influence of earnest feeling. It is but a superficial and narrow philosophy which leads to the neglect of this ordination of Divine wisdom, and few among the numerous deficiencies of existing modes of education are greater, than the general omission of such culture and training as might yield to every youth, and especially those destined to the sacred profession, the unspeakable advantages arising from the cultivation of the eloquence of action.

Our conventional modes of life which quench or suppress expression by withholding corporal action—the natural accompaniment of speech—are as faulty in point of true taste, as they are false to nature. The very condition of eloquence in address is that we become sufficiently exalted by thought and emotion to rise above such habits, and give sentiment an expression and a character to the eye as well as to the ear.

Another current error on this subject of gesture is that it is a thing not capable of being reduced to study or systematic practice, that it is a pure result of unconscious impulse, and beyond the search of the understanding. So was musical sound thought to be till man had the patience to observe it attentively, and trace its relations and principles. All expressive arts have a common groundwork of principles. Patient application deserves and defines these, and embodies them in rules. Depth, breadth, force, truth, and grace are each the same in whatever art, be it architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry or oratory.

The child is a model and a study for the sculptor and painter in the spontaneous perfection of attitude and gesture. But the awkwardness of the school-boy and the stiffness of the student are proverbial. The minister in the pulpit naturally—we might almost say necessarily—exhibits the

habitual faults of the student to their fullest extent. His modes of life, if not counteracted by express care and due self-cultivation, lead him to a cold, reserved, ineffective, inexpressive style of action. So much so that nothing is more frequently or more generally a subject of popular remark than the coldness and lifelessness of the style usually exemplified in the pulpit. And when we advert to the fact that in pulpit addresses more than in any other form of speaking, every look and action has an immediate, and perhaps an abiding effect of the deepest moral character, and of the utmost moment to the objects of the sacred office, the duty of self-culture in this branch of eloquence becomes inexpressibly important to all who are already occupied in that sphere of usefulness, or who are expecting to be. For appropriate action carries sentiment home to the heart with a power not second to that of the fitting word. Awkwardness is to be shunned not merely because it is unseemly, but because whatever is so is repulsive and offensive, and hinders the speaker's access to the heart. The genuine eloquence of inspired feeling acknowledges no arbitrary limitations. But the subduing and chastening influences of judgment and taste, ought to mould every tone, look, and action of sacred eloquence.

FROM JOSEPH ADDISON.

Most foreign writers who have given any character of the English nation, whatever views they ascribe to it, allow in general that the people are naturally modest. It proceeds perhaps from this one national virtue that our orators are observed to make use of less gesture or action than those of other countries. Our preachers stand stock still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world. We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and keep our temper in a discourse which turns upon everything that is dear to us. Though our zeal breaks out in the finest tropes and figures, it is not able to stir a limb about us. One who has not seen an Italian in the pulpit, will not know what to make of that noble gesture in Raphael's picture of St. Paul preaching at Athens, where the Apostle is represented as lifting up both his arms, and pouring out the thunder of his rhetoric, amidst an audience of pagan philosophers.

It is certain that proper gestures and powerful exertions of the voice cannot be too much studied by a public orator.

They are a kind of comment to what he utters, and enforce everything he says, with weak hearers, better than the strongest arguments he can make use of. They keep the audience awake, and fire their attention to what is delivered to them; at the same time that they show the speaker is in earnest, and affected himself with what he so passionately recommends to others.

I have all along acknowledged myself to be a dumb man, and therefore may be thought a very improper person to give rules for oratory. But I believe every one will agree with me in this, that we ought either to lay aside all kinds of gesture, or at least to make use of such only as are graceful and expressive.

FROM REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

It is commonly answered to any animadversions upon the eloquence of the English pulpit, that a clergyman is to recommend himself, not by his eloquence, but by the purity of his life; an objection good enough if any connection could be pointed out between eloquence, heresy and dissipation. But if it is possible for a man to live well, preach well, and teach well at the same time, such objections, resting only upon a supposed incompatibility of these good qualities, are duller than the dullness they defend.

Mr. Gladstone.

Rev. Charles Williams, of Acerington, England, a worthy Baptist minister, and prominent member of the Liberation Society, in a letter to the *National Baptist*, thus speaks of British politics:

There are signs of complications arising out of the peculiar position and unexampled popularity of Mr. Gladstone. In 1874, the right honorable gentleman sought solace in defeat by devoting himself to Homer and other studies. The Marquis of Hartington succeeded him in the leadership of the Liberal forces in the House of Commons, Earl Granville retaining the lead in the Lords. It soon became evident that Mr. Gladstone could no more refrain from taking part in public life than the wind can cease to blow or the sun to shine. He must speak; he can do none other than tell his thoughts and fight for righteousness

and liberty. You remember how he came to the front at the time of the Bulgarian atrocities. He, not the noble lords named above, led the Liberal party. He, not Earl Beaconsfield, decreed that there should be no war on behalf of Turkey. And now the interest centres in Mr. Gladstone. His speeches in Mid-Lothian, to be made within the next fortnight, are looked forward to with intense concern. He is the oracle of the Liberal party; and when he speaks all the country listens. And yet he is not our nominal leader. The situation is anomalous, and full of difficulties. My own conviction is that Mr. Gladstone must be chief. He cannot be second or third in command upon the battle field, any more than your own George Washington, or Napoleon the Great, or the Duke of Wellington could have been, after they had filled the highest post. It is whispered, however, that the Queen will not again accept his services. He displeased Her Majesty by his outspoken opposition to the Royal Titles Bill, by his uncourtly aversion to calling her Empress. Therefore—so well-informed authorities tell us he was the only one of the ex-Ministers not invited to the last Royal marriage. In vain the Prince of Wales protested against the exclusion of the great Commoner. The Queen was inexorable, and the insulting slight was put upon Mr. Gladstone. Already there are calls for Mr. Gladstone to resume his proper place and to lead his party. His is a name to conjure with. It is an immense power with the people. And should he respond to the call, and even so cautious a journal as the *Spectator* insists that he must do so, we may witness a conflict between the constituencies and the Crown. Should the battle be fought and won by Mr. Gladstone, and the Queen refuse to him the reward of victory, there will follow—what no friend to Her Majesty cares to contemplate.

Questions Not To Be Answered.

"How many members are essential to the constitution of a church?"

Ans.—Two or three. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." A church of two or three pious, active Christians is worth a house full of drones.

In the diminution of its membership, "by deaths and removals," there is no point short of annihilation, where the church would lose its identity and competency to the discharge of its proper functions. It might, in some cases, be an inefficient body, but still would be a church, competent to choose a pastor, and, with him and through him, to do the work of a church. Whether the church be reduced to sixty or to six females, it is still a church. Circumstances might render it prudent, if convenient, for them to join some other church, but they are competent to hold the fort, till reinforced, especially if they are as earnest and efficient workers as were Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, and other noble women that labored with Paul in the gospel.

"Could they authorize the valid administration of baptism?"

Unquestionably. The authority to do the work, "all the work," of a church, is not vested in numbers or in gender. Numbers, generally, add but little, if any, to its efficiency. A few—a very few—in our churches, conventions, associations, &c., do all the work, "especially the paying."

I am no advocate or apologist for female preachers, lecturers, deacons, or prayers in public, but, in my opinion, circumstances may and do occur, in which some one or all of these positions may be filled by women, especially in heathen lands. J.A.D.

We have in this article the *uninspired* opinions of a very good man.—*Religious Herald*.

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