







Or it may be that the opposite of the "live wire" is found in the "isolated wire." But this too carries the question of safety too far. The isolated wire does no harm, for it is too far away from everybody and everything to do any harm. But neither does it do any good. It cannot do good, for it makes no contacts. It is just a wire--that is all. It has no purpose and possesses no adaptability or adaptation.

But between the live wire and the dead or isolated wire is the "insulated wire." This wire combines the power of the live wire with the safety and dependence of the dead wire. It is harmless in places where contacts are not wanted or needed, but it turns loose power at places where power is desired. It does not strike with lightning along the way, but at the end it turns wheels and feeds lights and does worthwhile service.

There are some preachers who are quite gifted and capable. Under favorable circumstances they will do good work. But they are quite as likely to spoil a horn as they are to make a spoon. In fact, they are quite certain to either do a considerable amount of good or else to do a lot of harm. In administration they will either "rule or ruin." In exhortation they will either move or moor. In preaching they will either convince or disgust. In actions they are either angels or demons. If they ever find the place where they fit, they are capable of doing a good work. But in getting fitted they are likely to give several churches fits also. They are really "live wires." They are capable of burning lights and turning wheels, but they lack "insulation."

Some time ago an evangelist said, "I have a call to conduct a meeting at A . . . . . But they have had Evangelist R . . . . out there a number of times. I am not acquainted with this brother, and I am just wondering in what condition I am likely to find the work where he has been." The answer, by one who knew, was, "Brother R . . . . is sound in doctrine and sane in methods and is a good man. Where he does not do a great deal of good he does no harm and leaves the work so another can follow him and do good. You will do well to go where he has been, for you will find a good situation in which to preach the gospel and have a revival."

This man was an "insulated wire." He had the fire all right, but he' did not burn and blister in a destructive way. He turned wheels and burned lights, but he was sane and dependable. He had heart, but he also had a head. He had divine electricity, but he had good human insulation. He did good, but not harm. Where he could not rule, he served. Where he could not lead, he followed. Where he could not accomplish the task himself, he did not scatter weed seed to hinder the man who followed him.

Perhaps the best compliment that can be passed upon a preacher is to say, "He is a good loser." There are few who do not lose now and then, and the spirit one shows when he loses is a truer index to his character than the temper he shows when he wins.

A preacher was on the way to take charge of a church. In conversation, he extolled the virtues of that church in such a way that one instinctively felt that the preacher who was called to serve it was indeed fortunate. Later the preacher left that church because he was not sufficiently "urged to stay." And now his story was that the people of that church were selfish and worldly and that they would not stand for "straight preaching." Of course what he said in each case may have been true. But if so, the change came under this man's pastorate, and that change was a witness to his failure. But the likelihood is that, there was no great change in the people of the church, the change was in the preacher who was showing up under the tests of winning and losing.

An evangelist of our acquaintance said he was always careful to say nothing unduly offensive when the people were not receiving him. He said he sometimes felt that he would like to say some things which were a little hard, but that when he considered that the people were not following him and that he would be the more readily misunderstood on that account, he refrained. But he said, "When I find that the people are receiving me and will not purposely misunderstand me, then I more readily give them my 'hard sayings.'" Another preacher of our acquaintance said, "It is foolish to say 'skat' when the kitten is running away. That is the time to say 'kitty.'"

But the man who lacks insulation will maim and burn and blister and drive away when there is no chance for him to win and save. He does not necessarily have any more electricity than others, but he simply turns it out in places where it can do no useful work. He does not need less fire, but more insulation -- not less religion, but more sense.

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## 03 -- HISTORICAL STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN DOGMA -- By Basil W. Miller

### Part One, Bibliology

#### Chapter Two. The Development Of Christian Apologetics

Theology is based upon the Bible, and dogmatic or systematic theology must find its roots in biblical theology. If one's system of theology be truthful it is because it corroborates the doctrines of the Bible. Errors in theological thinking have arisen in the past history of Christendom because theologians have failed to conform their postulates to the doctrinal elements of the oracles of inspiration. Heresies owe their existence to the same fact. The great discussions concerning theology proper, or the existence and nature of God, Christology, anthropology, or soteriology have arisen because some theological thinker used human speculation for the elemental tenets of his positions and not the Word of God. Through the course of the centuries there has been developed a well-rounded system of Christian dogma which is in strict agreement with the Bible.

Since theology is derived from the Scriptures, if the Word of God be proved to be false, uninspired, fallacious in its statements, and unauthentic, theology is worthless, as void as its source. Then the great Christian thinkers of the centuries, from the dawn of Christianity to the present, have given much attention to the substantiating of the claims of the Bible as being divinely inspired. For they realized that the claims of Christianity would not be given credence unless they proved the Bible inspired as it affirms itself to be. Before they became theologians, they were first apologists. Before they issued their doctrinal statements or formulated their creeds, they defended the supernatural origin of the Bible. For if the Bible be not supernatural in its origin, an inspiration from God, it must take its place beside all other human philosophies and is due no more trust and belief than they. The early thinkers of the Church such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen skilfully answered the attacks of the opponents of the divine origin of the Bible.

Through the centuries he that would dare be a systemist in theological science, first became proficient in the knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, and devoted much attention to the exposition of the doctrines of the same. John Calvin is an example of this. At the youthful age of twenty-six he published the greatest systematic theology of the Christian Church up until his time. His Institutes of Christian Religion, though based upon the Augustinian doctrine of predestination, are worthy of the study of any investigator of theology. But Calvin will possibly be longer remembered as a commentator on the Bible than as a theologian. The writers on Systematic Theology have first laid the foundation for their work by devoting opening chapters to Christian apologetics. One can verify this by turning to such well known works as Watson, Theological Institutes, Wakefield, Theology, Pope, Compendium el Christian Theology, and Miley, Systematic Theology, all Arminian writers), or Shedd, Christian Dogmatics, Hedge, Systematic Theology, and Strong, Systematic Theology, (Calvinistic in doctrine).

Then in our study of the historical progress of doctrine, as laying a foundation for a systematic statement of theology in the light of present day knowledge, it is fitting that our research shall begin with a study of Christian apologetics of Christian evidences as furnishing the underlying| source of systematic theology in its development through the ages. It may be objected to this procedure that today it is unnecessary to defend the Bible as the source of theology. But in answer it must be remembered that as there has never been a century, an epoch in Church history, when it was necessary to defend the inspiration of the Word of God, so today there are those who make it a prime essential that we re-investigate our belief in the inspiration, authenticity, as well as historicity of the Bible. Those who label themselves as liberals or modernists in theology affirm that the Bible is uninspired, and hence not the fountain spring of doctrine, and thus make human speculations or philosophy the handmaiden or scourge of dogma, and force upon us today either one of two alternatives, that of defending scientifically the inspiration of the Bible, or of being laughed off the stage of modern thought as traditional, unscientific and unprogressive.

**Christianity has been found to conform to the principles of truth and reason, and the most stringent demands made upon it from the standpoint of science, as defined either by deism, pantheism, agnosticism or modern evolution, have been met. The Christian religion has its basis in the essential nature of God and as such must be in accordance with the ultimate standards of pure reason. It is the consummation of truth. As the broad outlines of the final reality of life and Christianity are revealed they will be seen to be harmonious with truth. Philosophically speaking, truth has its nature in the World-Ground, or in theological phraseology in God. It is not contradictory; and reason only affirms the truth of Christianity; scientific inquiry and experimentation strengthen its foundations. Reason as an ultimate principle of the soul has its function in religion; but at the strange limit between finite reason and ultimate truth faith is necessary. Such is also the case with science -- there is attained a position in experimentation or research the most strict where faith is necessary. There have been other ages comparable to this one at this point. For the modern mind would set up reason as the final arbiter in all matters of religion, and would cast aside that which reason cannot fathom. This has been the classic position of rationalism through the course of Christian history. But the defenders of "the faith delivered unto the saints" have believed that the Bible is capable of standing the tests of research, reason or scientific inquiry. The author of these studies has made a serious attempt to state the position of modern apologetics in answering the erroneous claims of science in a manuscript of some five hundred pages as yet unpublished, entitled The Evidences of Christianity.**

## **II. The Apologetic Element In The Bible**

**In the Bible there is a strong apologetic element. The book of Job is a vindication of God's ways with man; in the last chapter the Lord takes a part in the discourse and closes the debate. Numerous Psalms such as the 1, 2, 19, 119, give cogent reasons for righteousness. In one place God comes to reason with man about salvation, "Come now let us reason together, saith the Lord." In another He challenges the people to "Produce your cause . . . bring forth your strong reasons" (Isa. 41:21). Christ defended Himself and His teachings (Matt. 12:24-37).**

**Paul was the master apologist of the early days of the apostolic Church. He frequently reasoned with the Jews and others. His classical defense of his doctrines is found in his marvelous speech before king Agrippa. This and his apologetic discourse on Mars' Hill in Athens, and Stephen's message, which so aroused the Jews to intense hatred that they stoned him to death, are the outstanding discourses on apologetics or Christian evidences which have been delivered. Romans and Galatians are apologetics in favor of justification by faith, the crucifixion of "the old man," the sanctification of the soul, salvation by grace, and against Jewish legalism and heathenish customs. James argues for good works as a fruit of faith; while John defends love as the motivating law of a Christian life. The first epistle of this last named author was written against**

heresies raging in his day, especially that of Gnosticism, which avowed that primal evil, or all evil, dwells in the body or in matter, and that the body could commit the grossest of sins, and the soul would remain pure. In order to substantiate the claim of the spotless purity of Jesus they were forced to deny His essential humanity. John strongly contends against them. (See Scott, *The Apologetic Element in the New Testament*.)

### **III. Christian Apologetics**

There is thus a biblical warrant for the statements of our reasons for belief in the validity of the Christian religion. One of the greatest contentions of the Church through the past twenty centuries has been centered around its defense of its dogmas against heretics and infidels. From the beginning of the ministry of Paul until the present day opposing theories and doctrines have arisen which seek to pervert the faith of Christians. But for every antagonist there has come forth men mighty with word and pen to enter the arena of polemics and apologetics and to wage warfare against false doctrines, and to battle for the inspiration of the Bible and the supernatural origin of Christianity. Each age has presented its peculiar heresies and erroneous theories.

1. **Early Apologetic Period.** The early apologetic period includes the ages from A. D. 70 to 250. (Summaries of the history of apologetics are to be found in: Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, Book Second; Garvie, *A Hand Book of Christian Apologetics*, pp. 3-8; Keyser, *A System of Christian Evidences*, pp. 47-59; Hurst, *History of the Christian Church*, V. 1, pp. 180-206, 410-55.) From the days of the apostles the Christians met with opposition from the Jews, who had crucified Christ and afterward refused to admit the fact of His resurrection and adhere to His claims. It was but natural that the early Church fathers should try to convince them through arguments and cogent reasonings that Jesus was the Christ. During the same period Gnosticism had its rise. Gnostics did not wholly reject the Christian religion but they tried to combine it with human knowledge (gnosis), the philosophy and pagan theosophy of that age, thus degrading Christianity by means of pagan philosophy and corrupt mythology. John, as noted above, and many others who desired to defend the faith wrote against them. The Ebionites, a Jewish sect which had become partially Christian, were encountered. They accepted Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and as the most wonderful of their prophets but denied His incarnation as the human-divine Redeemer.

The Jews were answered by Justin Martyr in his work entitled *Dialogues with Trypho the Jew*. This writer is the most eminent among the Greek apologists of the second century. His full name was Justinus Flavius, and he bore the surname of "philosopher and martyr," from the latter of which came the common cognomen, Martyr. He is a typical apologist, as Sheldon remarks, who devoted his entire life to a defense of Christianity at a time when such a defense meant death. He is the first philosophic theologian, as Schaff states. He was born in Samaria of probably Greek parentage, and was a most studious man, who was familiar with both the Greek and



the Hebrew methods. After passing through several schools of Greek philosophy, he was converted in his early manhood to Christianity, and was instructed in the Christian religion at Ephesus (c. 135) by men who had been trained by the apostles. He at once sought the society of the Christians and devoted himself to the vindication and the promulgation of the new religion. He became a lay-evangelist with no permanent abode, but traveled afar teaching the precepts of the Master. He is the first of the Church fathers who may be said to be both a learned philosopher and a Christian thinker and theologian. In his teaching Briggs remarks that he continued to use his philosopher's garb,, and in it taught and preached the Christian truths. Of his early instructor he writes, "But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are called the friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher." (Apology, ii, 10). His memory was enormous, and his reading extensive. In one of his journeys to Rome he met Marcion, and later wrote his memorable work against the Jews (c. 155-160).

His chief works are apologetic, the one mentioned above and two Apologies against the heathen. His Dialogue consists of 142 chapters, and is a vindication of Christianity from Moses and the prophets against the objections of the Jews. In his two Apologies against the heathen he vindicated Christianity against heathen calumnies and persecutions, and addressed them to the emperor Antoninus Plus, and his adopted sons. He demands justice for his brethren who are condemned without trial. He appeals to the highest tribunal of the nation to stop such persecution. "In the Apologies he speaks like a philosopher to philosophers; in the Dialogue as a believer in the Old Testament with a son of Abraham. The disputation (with Trypho) lasted two days in the gymnasium just before a voyage of Justin, and turned chiefly on two questions, how the Christians profess to serve God, and yet break his law, and how they could believe in a human Saviour who suffered and died," writes Schaff. (Hist. V. II, p. 718).

He wrote polemic works which are lost, Against All Heresies, and Against Marcion. Other works are attributed to him, but many are believed to be spurious. His style was fluent and lively, but often careless. Occasionally in some of his works there is a touch of Plato, or of the other philosophers.

It is wise to note in passing that most of the objections made against Christianity which are heralded today as liberal and modern were advanced in those early days and ably answered by the master minds of the Christian scholars and fathers.

Justin derived his religious knowledge from the Holy Scriptures and partly from the living Church tradition. He cites the Old Testament, and refers to the "Memoirs by the Apostles," and says they were read in the churches. He makes use of Matthew and Luke. His exegesis of the Old Testament is apologetic, typological and oftentimes allegorical. Everywhere he discovers references to Christ. He believed

in God the Creator, and in Jesus Christ His Son, and our Redeemer, and all the other doctrines of the Bible. He affirms that man has reason and a free will and is hence responsible for his acts (See Schaff, op. cit. 719-725).

About the year A. D. 150, Celsus, a pagan of great learning, made a direct and systematic assault on Christianity. Schaff writes that "he anticipates most of the arguments and sophisms of the deists and infidels of later times" (op. cit. V. II, p. 86). He opposed Christianity in an extended work entitled, "A True Discourse," fragments of which Origen, in his refutation has left to us. The author is herein represented as an eclectic philosopher who is well skilled in dialectics. Celsus introduces a Jew who accuses the mother of Jesus with adultery with a soldier. Then he begins his attack by denying the entire idea of the supernatural. He thus negates the thought of a revelation. In his view Christianity has no rational foundation at all. He sneers at the uncultured and ignorant Christians. Schaff says that Chrysostom made the truthful remark that Celsus bears witness to the antiquity of the apostolic writings by quoting from them. Lardner, a writer of a later period in this field, refers the riddle of Samson to the works of Celsus, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Lardner, Works, V. VIII, pp. 210-270). Scott (op. cit. p. 7) also states that "Celsus toward the end of the second century anticipates almost all the objections which still reappear in the most modern criticisms of Christianity."

Origen effectively answered him in the renowned work, *Contra Celsus*. Origenes, or Origen as he is known, is one of the most remarkable men of history for his learning and genius, as well as for the tremendous influence he exerted on his age, and for the controversies to which his thinking and opinions gave rise. He was born in Alexandria in 185. Under the direction of his father, a Christian, and the celebrated Clement at the catechetical school he received a learned and reverent training. When but eighteen he was nominated for the position of the president of the catechetical school of Alexandria which had been left vacant by the flight of Clement. To fill this position acceptably he became acquainted with the heresies, and with Grecian philosophy, and studied under the founder of Neo-Platonism. He learned the Hebrew language, and traveled extensively to Rome, Palestine and Greece, as well as Arabia. Through his position in the school he had the opportunity of extensive research, and his fame soon spread through Egypt. The mother of the emperor Alexander Severus, Julia Mammæa, brought him to Antioch to learn from him the doctrines of Christianity. Through jealousy his clerical career was a rough one (see Schaff, *History*, pp. 780-790).

He was one of the great scholars of the Christian centuries, whose knowledge embraced all the branches of learning of his age, theology, philology, philosophy, etc. He was the father of a critical investigation of the Scriptures, and his commentaries are useful to scholars for their suggestiveness. He is an outstanding witness to the Ante-Nicene text of the Greek Testament. His biblical works are numerous such as the Hexapla, and the Tetrapla, the first polyglot Bibles. His commentaries covered all of the books of the Bible with

but few exceptions. His works in apologetics and polemics are quite numerous. The refutation of Celsus' attack upon Christianity was written in the last years of his life, near the year 248, and has come down to us in the original in some eight books. This is one of the most fertile and ripest productions in the realm of ancient apologetics the Church has. He also wrote *De Principiis*, a study of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in four books. It was the first attempt at a systematic statement of the doctrines of the Church, and was full of errors of Platonic and Gnostic types. The outline is worthy of notice. The first book treats of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit; the second, of creation, the incarnation, the resurrection and the judgment; the third, of freedom, which is defended against the Gnostics; the fourth, of the inspiration and authority as well as the interpretation of the Bible, and concluding with a recapitulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The foundation for a systematic treatment of dogmatics was thus laid by one of the wisest teachers of the ancient Church, though some of his doctrines were erroneous.

In the same period the rhetorician Lucian, who was born in Syria about 120, and who has been termed the Voltaire of Grecian literature, attacked Christianity with the weapons of wit and ridicule. He had likewise ridiculed the pagan faiths of his fathers in numerous well and elegantly written works. He was an infidel, and an Epicurean, and could see in Christianity only vagaries and follies; in miracles he saw jugglery; and immortality he thought to be only a dream. He never called Christ an impostor as Celsus had done before but referred to Him as a crucified sophist, he made the serious mistake of placing the Christian religion alongside and in the same category with heathenism and pagan philosophy. He had to learn that the faith of the Christians was of supernatural origin and destined to conquer the empire of which he so proudly boasted.

Porphyry, a leading Neo-Platonist, made a direct attack upon Christianity and was considered by the Church fathers as the bitterest as well as the most dangerous opponent of their faith. Near the close of the third century he wrote an extended work of fifteen books against the Christian religion, which was answered by many of the fathers, particularly by Methodius of Tyre, Eusebins of Cæsarea, and Apollinaris of Laodicea. In 448 all the copies of his writings were burned by Theodosius II and Valentinian III, emperors, and thus we know of his work only through the fragments which have come down to us from the writing of the fathers. He attacked the sacred books of the Christians, with far greater knowledge than Celsus. He tried to point out criticism and contradictions between the two Testaments, and thus to refute the idea of their being divinely inspired. He made much of the division or collision between Paul and Peter at Antioch. He also charged Jesus with indecision, inconsistency and equivocation.

The last antagonist to Christianity of this period is Hierocles, who, while being governor of Bithynia, persecuted the Christians under Diocletian. He merely repeated the objections of Celsus and Porphyry.

Schaff well summarizes the objections to Christianity during this early age thus: "In general the leading arguments of Judaism and heathenism of this period against the new religion are the following:

"1. Against Christ: his illegitimate birth; his association with poor, unlettered fishermen, and rude publicans; his form of a servant, and his ignominious death. But the opposition gradually ceased. While Celsus called him a downright impostor, the Syncretists and Neo-Platonists were disposed to regard him as at least a distinguished sage.

"2. Against Christianity: its novelty; its barbarian origin; its want of a national basis; the alleged absurdity of some of its facts and doctrines, particularly of regeneration and the resurrection; contradictions between the Old and New Testaments, among the Gospels, and between Peter and Paul; the demand for a blind, irrational faith.

"3. Against the Christians: atheism, or hatred of the gods; the worship of a crucified malefactor; poverty, and want of culture and standing; desire of innovation; division and sectarianism ; want of patriotism; gloomy seriousness; credulity; superstition, and fanaticism. Some they charged even with unnatural crimes . . ." (op. cit. V. II, 103-104).

The foundation for modern rationalistic criticism was laid during this period, largely by the influence of Porphyry. He is the "father of modern rationalistic biblical criticism," as Keyser states (A System of Christian Evidences, p. 48).

The stream of apologetic literature began to appear in the reign of Hadrian, and continued steadily to increase until the close of the period. The works of Justin have been noted as a representative of the Greek school of apologists. The most important Latin apologist is Tertullian, (d. about 220). The differences between the two minds come into view by the study of the writings of each. The Greek apologies are more learned and philosophical; while the Latin are more practical and given to judicial matters in both content and literary style. Schaff again summarized the apologetic literature of this age thus:

"In regard to the controversy with Judaism, we have. . .

"1. The Defensive apology answered the Jewish objections thus: (1) Against the charge that Christianity was an apostasy from the Jewish religion, it was urged that the Jewish law was but a temporary institution and passed away or was fulfilled in the New Testament. (2) Against the assertion that the servant-form of Jesus contradicted the Old Testament idea of the Messiah, that the Messiah was to be regarded in a twofold nature, that of a sufferer and that of a lifted up Christ."

On the positive score the great apologies for the truths of Christianity were the fact that prophecies had been fulfilled; that the types of the Old Testament had

realized in the New; that the miracles of Jesus were divine realities, which could not be denied; that the moral and spiritual effects of Christianity upon the hearts of its professors were such as could not be produced by any other change; and that only by being supernatural in origin could Christianity have spread so rapidly until every class of people during the first few centuries, and every known nation, had heard the story of the Redeemer and in all were followers of Him to be found; that Christianity is a reasonable religion and that its truths can be substantiated by human philosophy; and finally that Christianity is adaptable to the needs of the human heart. These it will be seen are still the classic arguments in the realm of Christian Evidences for the supernatural origin of Christianity, as one can discover from a study of either Paley, or Hopkins, Evidences of Christianity. As most of the arguments of later infidels, skeptics, agnostics and critics were anticipated by the early critics of Christianity, so also were most of the common arguments for its defense anticipated by the early apologists.

2. Polemical Period. The second period may be termed the Polemical age, which extends from about A. D. 250 to 730. It will be seen that this age somewhat overlaps the last. This is a time of conflicts, not with outright infidels and pagans, but with heretics within the Church. Herein apologetics assumes a more scientific spirit. There is a conflict between philosophy and religion, and the distinctions between the natural and the supernatural, faith and science had to be clearly drawn. The dogmatic material is more abundant and various and the defenses are more systematic and elaborate. (1) The distinction had to be clearly drawn between "the natural and the supernatural; for heretofore the two had been closely allied in thought, until the argument was used against Christianity that it was little more than natural religion. In the theological discussions the distinction between the functionings of the human mind in philosophy and the revelations of God in the Bible was forcibly pointed out. (2) A second phase of this age is that the question respecting the possibility of a divine revelation was not raised but was left for the modern mind to discuss. Both the pagan and the Christian apologists, as noted by Shedd, assumed this possibility, and that of the need of a revelation to bring a knowledge of the divine. (3) There is also a strict insisting upon the need of an infallible authority for the human mind. There must be a norm by which man can guide his thinking, and the ancient polemic theologian as well as the pagan thinker assumed this to be a revelation, but the modern mind views this as the product of human thinking and human philosophy. Augustine urges this necessity of an infallible authority in religion, with infallibility he also included the idea of authority in dogmas. (4) Reason and revelation are not arrayed against each other in this age as appears at the present time in our discussions concerning science and religion. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of truth corroborated by the Holy Scriptures and by the authority of correct reason.

Not to state our conclusions concerning the literature of this age, but note should be made of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, (*The City of God*). For this work throws great light upon the *modus operandi* of the apologist. Dr. Shedd writes, "The most powerful and grandest endeavor of the apologetic mind of this period to

evinced the harmony of revelation and reason is seen in *De Civitate Dei* of Augustine. This is a treatise consisting of twenty-two books; the first ten of which contain a searching and extended critique of polytheism, in its principles and their influence, and the last twelve treat of Christianity as supernatural and destined as the realized kingdom or city of God to overthrow all secular and earthly kingdoms and powers. It is a work which merits the study of the modern theologian perhaps more than any other single treatise of the ancient Church" (Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, V. I, p. 154). Milman gives a most excellent synopsis of the same in his *History of Christianity*, III, x.; and Schaff in *op. cit.* V. III, 85-89.

There also went on during this age the conflict between heathenism and Christianity. The Nicene age reaped the fruits of the earlier apologists, and thus more ably defended the common faith. The literary opposition to Christianity had been exhausted practically; and as Schaff remarks that which once was apologetics now becomes triumphant in the realm of polemics. The last enemy was the school of Neo-Platonism with its speculations and with its elements drawn from both Christianity and pagan philosophy. New arguments were also presented. During the former age there was simplicity of morals among Christians, but now they became more corrupt, or took on more of the vices of their age; they were ridiculed for their vices; once they had been persecuted, martyred, but now they became leaders, and were then chastised for hypocrisy and ambition, as well as tolerance. These new arguments had to be answered by Christian defendants.

Julian made a rugged direct and systematic attack upon Christianity. In the winter of 363 he wrote a work against all Christians for their world-wide apostasy. He stood in the realm of the natural and seemed to have no sense of sin and redemption. He but repeated the arguments of the former critics, such as Celsus and Porphyry in a modified form; and in all the work he breathed the breath of the hatred of an apostate from the faith. He terms the religion of the Galilean an impious human invention and a gathering together of the worst elements of Judaism and heathenism without even the good of either. He speaks of the Christians as leeches who draw the bad blood and leave the good. He asserted that the later followers perverted his doctrine and had Jesus call Himself a God, or the equal of God. He tried to expose all the contradictions and absurdities of the Bible. He prefers the philosophers to Moses or the prophets. On through the category of arguments against Christianity he treads his way with true bitterness. But as Dr. Lardner well affirms, rather than defeat or injure Christianity he became one of the outstanding witnesses to its early existence and truthfulness. He writes:

"Julian . . . bore a valuable testimony to the history and to the books of the New Testament, as all must acknowledge who have read the extracts just made from his work. He allows that Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus, at the time of the taxing made in Judea . . . that the Christian religion had its rise and began to be propagated in the times of the emperors Tiberius and Claudius. He bears witness to the genuineness and authenticity of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Acts of the Apostles: and he so quotes them as to intimate

that-these were the only historical books received by Christians as of authority, and the only authentic memoirs of Jesus Christ and His apostles, and the doctrines preached by them. He allows their early date, and even argues for it. He also quotes . . . St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. He does not deny the miracles of Jesus Christ, but allows him to have healed the blind, and the lame and the demoniacs. He endeavors indeed to diminish these works; but in vain. The consequence is undeniable: such works are good proofs of a divine mission. He endeavors to lessen the number of early believers in Jesus, and yet he acknowledgeth that there were multitudes of such men in Greece, and Italy,' before St. John wrote his Gospel. So that upon the whole he has undesignedly borne witness to the truth of many things recorded in the books of the New Testament: he aimed to overthrow Christian religion, but has confirmed it: his arguments against it are perfectly harmless and insufficient to unsettle the weakest Christian (Works, V. VII, pp. 738. 739).

During this age, as was the case with the preceding one, the Bible held a very emphatic position as to its inspiration and authority, as far as the early fathers were concerned. Though it was ridiculed by such skeptics as Julian, and Christians were chastised with the most scathing wit. and were termed hypocrites, still it remains true that the Church believed in the Bible as its sacred Book. The sacred writers were regarded as the Organs of the Holy Spirit and were so completely under this guidance that their words became altogether infallible and divine. This theory can be found in the writings of Eusebius, as noted by Sheldon. so much so: that for one during that age to think that there might be a mistake or an error due to the transmission of the text. was for him to be branded as a heretic. Augustine writes. "Such implicit subjection as to follow their teachings, without admitting the slightest suspicion that in them any mistake or any statement to mislead could find a place is due the canonical Scriptures (Epistles, LXXXII). Again he states, "All that He was minded to give for our perusal on the subject of His own doings and sayings, He commanded to be written by those disciples, whom He thus used as if they were His own hands" (De Consensu Evang., V. I, p. 35). Gregory the Great in his marvelous preface to the Exposition of the book of Job remarks, "It is superfluous to inquire who wrote these things, since the Holy Spirit may be regarded as the author of the book. He himself, therefore, wrote these things who dictated that which was to be written." He also affirms that since the Holy Spirit filled the writers that it was not unnatural for them to write concerning themselves, as though others were doing the dictating. Many other writers of this age affirm that the Bible was inspired thus, or literally written by the Holy Spirit. Cyril speaks of the Holy Spirit as uttering the Scriptures. The human element was not forgotten or overlooked in the preparation and composition of the Scriptures. Jerome in one place avers that there is a possibility that one of the apostles uttered a sentence which was the outbreaking of his temper-rather than the result of the inspiration of the Spirit. Chrysostom took note of the variance of the style of the different writers, and of their diverse statements of minor details of the same events (Hom. I on Matthew). Augustine allows that there is a certain scope wherein freedom was permitted for the writer of the books of the Bible. The truth remains that this age

looked upon the writers of the Bible as being the organs of the inspiration of the Spirit.

On the score of the authority of the Scriptures this period as was true of the former one, looked upon tradition as supplementing the statements of the Word of God, and as bearing a direct relationship to the same. Sheldon remarks that the decrees of the Nicene fathers were pronounced by the council of Chalcedon to be in every respect unalterable, "for it was not they who spoke, but the Spirit Himself of God and the Father" (Sheldon, History of Christian Doctrine, V. I, p. 185). Gregory the Great wrote, "I confess that I receive and venerate the four councils (those of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon) as I do the four books of the Holy Gospel." Justinian makes a similar remark, "The doctrines of the four councils we receive as we do the Holy Scriptures, and observe their rules as the laws." Sheldon states that thus, quoting from Schaff's Church History, there was recognized an extra-biblical source of religious authority. This enlarged the importance of tradition in the sight of the Church. It accustomed men to look elsewhere than to the Bible for the only statement of doctrine. It also increased the bearing and the importance of the councils and their decrees with reference to the heretics and their dogmas. Thus the councils became tributary to the largely increasing stream of tradition and authority with reference to doctrine, and this afforded a basis for a standard of decision as to what constituted correct doctrine and theology. Also the councils and their decrees tended to crystallize the tradition of the early Church and to give a norm as to the traditional teaching of the fathers with reference to the tenets of religion.

This became of vital importance in the future history of doctrine, for as the controversies of this polemic period began to flourish, councils were called and they decided upon the truthfulness or erroneousness of doctrines which were involved in the contentions. In the transformation of the world through the gradual diffusion of Christianity, the more common objections of the former age, and those of Julian began to wane and finally became almost extinct. But the emphasis then began to shift from the defense of Christianity against the literary assaults of pagans, to a correct formulation of the doctrines of the Church. Thus apologetics took on the form of polemics, passed from the mere defense of Christianity as of supernatural origin to the more positive work of refuting the erroneous teachings of the Christian heretics.

In the next section this shall be treated at some length, wherein shall be pointed out the numerous controversies concerning the fundamental Christian doctrines. This becomes one of the important divisions of the development of Christian apologetics. And when this polemic period closes there is a shifting of the emphasis. to the newer arguments against the Bible. -- Pittsburgh, Pa.

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I have been asked by our editor to write a series of articles on the above subject. I yield to his judgment that they may prove useful to the present and future ministry.

I was born in a pioneer's log cabin in western Michigan. The Michigan Central railroad was pushing west toward Chicago, then but a small town. It established a station within a mile of my birthplace and my father drove through the first street the day it was opened, with me in his arms, when I was six weeks old. So being reared in a frontier village I was out of the range of great preachers. But while yet in my teens I entered Oberlin College, where several of my father's family had been educated.

Can I ever forget that first Sabbath? I went up into the gallery of the great First church and looked upon the audience of nearly two thousand. In the pulpit was that prince of preachers and evangelists -- Charles G. Finney.

His greatness needed no endorsement and no advertising. It told its own story and advertised itself. In the first place, he had a peculiar and most imposing presence. He was seventy-five years old that month, but his majestic frame stood erect and towered high above his fellows. His piercing eyes still blazed with the fire of energy, and the conviction of eternal realities. He prayed the heavens open, and delivered a message from God to men with heavenly unction and power, such as might have been expected from the aged Moses, when he spoke with all the burning intensity of his great heart, "his eye undimmed and his natural force unabated."

That first impression never waned, but rather deepened as time went on. We sang in the great choir of seventy-five voices behind him for four years. We watched his methods of discourse, studied his oratory, and marked the astonishing effects of his preaching. Now after studying preachers and orators for more than sixty years, we are free to say that as an effective ambassador for Christ, we never saw his equal, either in America or Europe.

His style of preaching was peculiarly his own. He would unfold the meaning of his text in calm and clear speech, and with critical and logical exactness, like a judge on the bench. And after analyzing the text and explaining it for perhaps forty minutes until a child could understand it, he would say, "A few remarks and I have done."

Then by way of application of the truth to the living audience before him, he would let loose a fiery eloquence that often reminded one of chain lightning. Every eye would be riveted upon him. Strong men would tremble. Often whole audiences would be melted by his moving and tender appeals. Thus people would be by turns appalled, or melted and subdued, and would bow before the Lord. The effects of his preaching were often indescribable. His piercing eyes would flash and blaze with

the pent-up fire of his soul until people on whom he fixed his searching look would tremble.

There was great freedom in his manner and yet a dignity and majesty of action and a reverence for the Lord's house and the sacred work of the ministry, which restrained him from overstepping the bounds of pulpit decorum.

In his early years, he often preached without a written word before him, but it was not memoriter preaching. In his later years he usually preached from a written outline which might cover two or three pages of ordinary letter paper; and his sermons were as rigidly homiletical and logical as his astute legal and analytical mind could make them. A rambling, disconnected talk from him, in the place of a well-digested logical sermon, was a mental impossibility.

Finney was an original in theology for many reasons. He had had no religious training in his youth. Though one of his ancestors, seven generations back, came over in the Mayflower, which makes illustrious pedigree in Massachusetts, yet his immediate parents, so far from being "righteous" and "blameless" and "filled with the Holy Spirit," were utterly godless. When Finney was twenty-nine years old he had never heard a word of prayer in his father's house. Evidently no Christian lullabies ever greeted his childish ears, or soothed to infant slumbers.

Nor viewed from a religious standpoint were his surroundings any more propitious than his home. When Charles was two years old, his parents moved into central New York, in Oneida County. There he seldom ever heard a sermon, and when Charles reached the age of sixteen a meeting house was erected in his neighborhood, but his parents, as if afraid of a sanctuary and Christian civilization, took their family and made another plunge into the wilderness, going to the extreme eastern end of Lake Ontario and far to the north, approaching the border line of Canada. Here again he was unblessed by religious privileges.

But the New England emigrants, true to their native instincts, planted their common schools even in the wilderness. One of these the boy attended until he himself was able to teach a country school, which he did in a German settlement where there was no preaching in English. He taught and studied by turns under a private instructor who had graduated from Yale, until he had completed half the Yale College course. He then began the study of law in the town of Adams, Jefferson County, New York, at twenty-six years of age in 1818. He afterward wrote, "Up to this time I had never enjoyed what might be called religious privileges. I do not think I had heard a half a dozen sermons while I taught and studied in New Jersey, a period of three years. Thus when I went to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. I had been brought up mostly in the woods. I had little regard for the Sabbath, and no definite knowledge of religious truth. At Adams, for the first time in life, I sat stately under an educated ministry, and never could attend a regular prayermeeting.

**"In the law books, I found many references to Scripture, which excited my curiosity. I bought a Bible to hunt up the passages referred to -- the first Bible I had ever owned in my life." This led to careful reading and meditation upon the Holy Word.**

**Here follow two facts of profound importance to all churches, and to all preachers who would be successful soul winners. Rev. George W. Gale was his pastor in Adams, a graduate of Princeton College and Theological Seminary. His theology was hyper-Calvinistic, the kind taught at that time and we may add, so much of the time since at Princeton. He believed that man's nature was so totally sinful that he was utterly incapable of any good; the will was incapable of a right choice; the soul was utterly passive in regeneration; "there was no adaptation in the gospel to change his nature, and consequently no connection in relation between means and ends. This brother Gale sternly held; and consequently in his preaching he never seemed to expect, nor did he ever aim at converting anybody by any sermon that I ever heard him preach. And yet he was an able preacher, as preaching was then estimated. The fact is these dogmas were a perfect straight jacket to him. If he preached repentance, he must be sure, before he sat down, to leave the impression on his people that they could not repent. If he called them to believe he must be sure to inform them that, until their nature was changed by the Holy Spirit, faith was impossible to them. And so his orthodoxy was a perfect snare to himself and his hearers."**

**The pastor was in the habit of dropping into the young lawyer's office to see what impression his sermons made on the lawyer's mind. Finney was the leader of his choir and of course their relations were familiar. We may "be sure the lawyer satisfied the minister's curiosity completely. He questioned him, lawyer fashion, "What do you mean by repentance? Is it a mere feeling? Is it altogether a passive state of mind or does it involve a voluntary element? In what sense is it a change of mind? What do you mean by regeneration? What do you mean by faith? Is it merely an intellectual state? Is it merely a conviction or persuasion that the things stated in the gospel are true? Or does it involve a -choice on the part of man? I could not tell what he meant, neither did the minister seem to know himself."**

**As one reads such words, can one help wondering how many ministers now are as vague and misty as was Rev. Gale; and how many multitudes are still sitting in the pews and wondering what the preachers are talking about? Neither can one help reflecting that with such a theology prevailing it is little wonder that infidelity was widespread at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and revivals were few, with seldom a conversion and that only one in fourteen of the population of this country was even a professor of religion and multitudes of that small fraction had no intelligent faith and no salvation.**

**People in so-called orthodox circles were taught that "God eternally and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass;" that "By the decree of God, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-**

ordained to everlasting death;" that "these angels and men thus predestined and fore-ordained are particularly and unchangeably designated, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished;" "that those predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world hath chosen, without any foresight of faith or perseverance or good works, or any other thing in the creature; that they who are elected are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept unto salvation;" "neither are any other redeemed by Christ, called or saved but the elect only." "The rest of mankind God was pleased to create and pass by and ordain to wrath (eternal), for the glory of his sovereign power;" that those "not elected, neither do nor can come to Christ. and therefore cannot be saved;" that "man is altogether passive in regeneration," because "fallen man is afflicted with absolute moral inability" to do anything toward his own salvation: and "almighty power" by "irresistible efficacious grace" "must effectually draw them to Christ;" that "sanctification is imperfect in this life;" and "there is none that doeth good and sinneth not;" "yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on them who truly repent."

Such was Gale's theology. All were told that they were absolutely helpless, and could do nothing to secure their own repentance or conversion; and they generally believed it. With one accord they were waiting in imaginary helplessness, for a sovereign God to enable them to repent and believe; and thus whole generations were sweeping into hell. What appalling results can flow from a false theology! Finney rejected it all.

Infant Methodism was then but little known in this country and God did not wait for it. A young woman collected a group of young people, who began to pray for Finney. On a Sabbath evening in early October, 1821, he began to feel concerned for his soul. Monday and Tuesday he "spent much of his time in his office, reading his Bible and praying, His conviction was very great. He thought he should die. Wednesday morning, on the way to his office, a divine voice seemed to speak to him, "What are you waiting for? What are you trying to do? Are you trying to work out a righteousness of your own?" God opened to his mind the whole plan of salvation as clearly as he ever saw it. Gospel salvation seemed to be offered to him as something to be accepted, and that all that was necessary was to get his own consent to give up his sins and accept Christ. "Will you accept it now," today, today? He replied, "I will accept it today or die in the attempt!" and he started for the woods. He hid in a tree-top and went to prayer. After some hours, he said, "Lord, I take Thee at Thy word!" Soon he was "tripping through the bushes on the way to the road," saying, "If ever I am converted, I will preach the gospel." In his ignorance, he did not know that peace had come, and he was converted!

"That evening, after supper, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a

manner that seemed to go through me body and soul! No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart! I wept aloud with joy."

A young man who was fitting for college listened to a few words of Finney's conversation and suddenly fell to the floor and cried out in agony, "Do pray for me," and was soon converted. The next morning Squire Wright came into the office, when Finney said a few words to him about his soul which pierced him like a sword, he dropped his head, left the office and was soon converted. He entered a shoe shop and there was a young man, son of an elder of the church, defending Universalism. Finney answered his arguments. He dropped his head, left the shop in silence, went to the woods to pray and was converted. He spoke to several others about their souls and each one was converted. In the evening he sat down to the tea-table at which was an unconverted young woman and a young man who was a Universalist and a whiskey-distiller. Being requested to ask the blessing, Finney began to pray for them. The distiller rushed from the table, locked himself in his room and was seen no more till he was converted. He afterward became an able minister of the gospel. The girl also was converted.

That evening the people, unbidden, packed the church. The pastor was there; but neither he nor anyone else ventured to lead the meeting, conscious of unfitness. Finney went forward and spoke and God used his words to put conviction upon the whole audience. One prominent citizen got so excited he ran out of the church and went home without his hat.

I now call attention to the astonishing fact that this cultured pastor, with all his college and seminary training, long after this, confessed that he had never knowingly led a soul to Christ; while this young lawyer, not college-bred, and never having read a line of theology, within twenty-four hours after he was baptized with the Spirit and thirty-six hours after his conversion, had seen many converts, among them a lawyer and a distiller, and had been used by God to launch a full-fledged revival upon a whole town that swept over the county and state.

Verily a poor, false theology is worse than none! I am sensitive on this point, and I refuse to be misunderstood. I thoroughly believe in college and seminary training. I had the best myself and have spent thirty years in giving them to others. But the devil will prevent these things if he can, and make them bonds and shackles. Who shall say that the sixty thousand barren Protestant preachers of the United States in 1927, who preached six million sermons without a convert, were not spiritually handcuffed and shackled and put in mental bonds and restraints by the false philosophies and doctrines of the very professors who were supposed to be educating them for large achievement? Finney providentially escaped it all, by getting a flesh view of truth from his new Bible, with his rare intellect and spiritual perception, illuminated only by the Holy Spirit. Not everyone under such circumstances could have drawn out such a practical body of truth and such an effective working theology as he did. Doubtless God was in it all.

He read his Bible with the same fresh vision that he read his law books, and expected to find in it the same self-evident truthfulness. So, naturally, he rejected the old Calvinistic dogmas that we have quoted above and the "theological fiction" as he called it of "imputation," and of "obligation beyond ability." He had dedicated himself at conversion to the great work of saving men and he rejected these old doctrines because they were not a help but a hindrance to his work. He needed doctrines, as John Wesley did, that he could preach effectively to move the consciences of men and bring them to repentance and faith in Christ as a personal Savior. He believed he found them on his knees before his open Bible, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and thus he wrought out his theological system.

So he naturally rejected the doctrines that were the heart and core of Calvinism -- God's eternal and unchangeable ordination of whatever comes to pass, unconditional election, limited atonement, moral inability and irresistible, efficacious grace. He once said in a sermon of the doctrine of moral inability: "It is echoed and re-echoed over every Christian land and handed down age after age, never to be forgotten. With unblushing face it is proclaimed that men cannot do what God requires of them. It is only moderate language to call this assertion from the confession of faith a libel. If there is a lie either in hell or out of hell, this is a lie, or God is an infinite tyrant. If reason be allowed to speak at all, it is impossible for her to say less or otherwise."

At another time he cried out against one of the blasphemous statements of the creed that logically makes God the responsible author of all the wickedness in the universe. "It is as vile a slander against God as was ever vomited out of hell." So far from being a Calvinist, he was such a one as John Calvin himself would have burned at the stake with far more relish than he burned Serbetus.

Is it any wonder that the healthy mind of Finney, so rich in common sense and so "filled with the Spirit," and so entirely void of any theological bias or preconceived opinions, should revolt at this mass of theological rubbish and inconsistency? God mercifully and providentially saved him from accepting a theology that would have made his great and unequalled usefulness utterly impossible. He was destined to "reason with men," lawyers, judges, theologians, -- master-minds of "sin, righteousness and judgment." He could not have done it without a theology which commended itself to the right reason of men, and with which he could charge home on the conscience.

He paid his respects to the Presbyterian Confession in these words: "When I came to read the confession of faith, and saw the passages that were quoted to sustain their peculiar positions, I was absolutely ashamed of it. I could not feel any respect for a document that would undertake to impose on mankind such dogmas as those sustained, for the most part, by passages of Scripture that were totally irrelevant and not in a single instance sustained by passages which in a court of law would have been considered at all conclusive" ("Autobiography," p. 60).

Of course the devil detected the coming of this spiritual giant, and did everything he could to turn him aside, or oppose him. The presbytery, perhaps out of policy, ventured to license him to preach, and appointed Rev. Gale to superintend his studies in Calvinistic theologies, but his studentship was one continual battle between this strange pupil and his teacher and text books. Rev. Gale once deigned to permit him to occupy his pulpit. When he had finished his sermon his teacher said to him, "Mr. Finney, I shall be very much ashamed to have it known, wherever you go, that you studied theology with me." Just one more shaft from Satan to discourage him! To Mr. Gale's credit be it said that years afterward he confessed how utterly mistaken he was, and blessed the Lord that in all he said to his great pupil, he had not the least influence to change his views. He admitted that, if Finney had listened to him, he would have been ruined as a minister. Oh, what multitudes of preachers have no such happy escape from bad theology and impractical training! What vast numbers have had the fire of enthusiasm and oratory extinguished by school criticism, and go into the ministry utterly unfitted for practical work by theories and notions that will cramp their energies and hinder their usefulness while they live!

Probably no minister ever went to his life work with less expectation of dazzling success than Finney had. Without any special training, he never thought of preaching in large towns and cities, or of ministering to cultivated congregations. He expected to preach in new settlements and in schoolhouses and barns and groves as best he could. But God attends to all these affairs. John Baptist could not be hid though he preached from the top of a rock out in the desert. So Finney in spite of the combined opposition of preachers, and infidel clubs and Universalists and Unitarians and the devil and all hell, went on and on like an irresistible conqueror. He went from backwoods villages to towns and cities. Western, Rome, Utica, Auburn, Troy, Wilmington, Philadelphia, Reading, Columbia, New York City, twice in Rochester, Buffalo, Auburn again, back again to New York, five times meetings in Boston, twice meetings in Providence, Hartford, two great campaigns in England and Scotland occupying years, and the campaigns years apart, Syracuse, and a college career in Oberlin.

Once Calvinistic theologians called a convention to oppose Finney and keep him out of New England. One of these preachers "held that both sin and holiness were produced in the mind by a direct act of the Almighty Power; that God made men sinners or holy at His sovereign discretion but in both cases by a direct act of Almighty self; that, in fact, God was the only proper agent in the universe, and that all creatures acted only as they were moved and compelled to act by His irresistible power; that every sin in the universe, both of men and of devils was the result of a direct irresistible act on the part of God." Such an insane theology is certainly a blasphemous libel on God! Of course men holding such views and the accompanying philosophy and methods would oppose Finney! But they might as well have tried to sweep out the ocean tides with a broom! Finney was soon in Boston preaching in the pulpit of one of the men who had opposed him.

**One man testified that the revival in his community was so sweeping and universal that it was impossible for six years to organize a dance and it was unprofitable to have a circus. Do not picture one of these revivals under Finney as a modern two weeks' meeting and a little spasm of excitement. He would go into a city and stay six months or a year or more to get a grip on the whole city and on all the regions around, to carry a blessing to all the ministers and churches who were willing to be blessed. The ministers would crowd in to hear him and get convicted and converted, or revived and filled with the Holy Spirit and then go out to spread the fire. Dr. Beecher reported that growing out of one revival center where Finney was preaching and in surrounding sections of country, one hundred thousand joined the churches, the greatest revival of religion the world had ever seen in so short a time. This was at Rochester, where nearly all the lawyers, judges, bankers, physicians, merchants and leading Citizens were swept into the kingdom. The only theater of the city was converted into a livery stable!**

**College presidents and cities petitioned him, from far and near, to come and preach his mighty gospel. In New York city they bought a church for him, where he preached nearly every night for a year. Prominent lawyers, leading business men and vast numbers of people were saved. An urgent call came from England and he went to the village of Houghton, and soon there were, as in this country, multitudes of converts. Then he was called to Birmingham; then to Worcester; then to London and labored in Whitefield's Tabernacle that held three thousand people. Dr. Campbell said Finney preached to more people during the week-day evenings than all the other preachers in London together. He found that London had been cursed by Calvinistic preaching just like this country. But Finney knew his gospel would win. When he was ready to draw the net he asked for an inquiry room. The pastor thought a room that held forty would do. Finney got him to secure a church near by, that held 1,500. After a sermon in the Tabernacle, he made the call, telling that he did not want Christians to go, nor careless sinners, but only those who were anxious about their souls, and were willing immediately to make their peace with God. To the amazement of the pastor, the street was crowded with people and the church was packed. Finney made them understand that God required them to yield themselves at once entirely to His will, to make their submission to him as their rightful Sovereign, and accept Jesus as their only Redeemer, then and there. As he was about to ask them to kneel and commit themselves forever to Christ a man cried out in greatest distress. To avoid an uproar, he hushed it down as best he could, and called them to kneel down, but to keep so quiet that they could hear every word of the prayer he was about to offer. With great effort amidst sobbing and weeping, they could hear the prayer! Fifteen hundred on their knees Reeking God at one time! And this went on day after day and week after week for nine months!**

**The Church of England rectors came and learned of Finney how to win souls. One of them had fifteen hundred hopeful converts, and half a dozen were thus holding daily services for conversions, and these efforts had never ceased when Finney went back to England years later. Henry Ward Beecher heard him two nights in London, during his second campaign in England, and saw a thousand seekers**



each night! It was conservatively estimated that in the revivals Finney conducted for forty years, five hundred thousand were blessedly converted, besides the uncounted multitudes that were saved indirectly by his influence. And this is the man whom Rev. Gale, who had never seen a convert, thought he would be ashamed of!

In my book, "Holiness and Power," chapter three, I point out Finney's mistake relative to the philosophy of sanctification, which caused him to diverge from Methodist teaching, and unfitted him for great success in teaching that doctrine; but in soul-winning he was peerless.

In my "Life of Charles G. Finney," I point out fully the theological errors he confronted, the opposition he faced, the victories he won, and his comments on evangelism, which are invaluable to ministers. Dr. C. J. Fowler said, "The book drove me to my knees."

When Finney first preached in Boston, Dr. Edward Beecher was pastor of Park Street church and invited Finney to preach. Fifty-seven years afterward he wrote, "He preached the most impressive and powerful sermon I ever heard. It rings in my ears to this day. No one can form any conception of the power of his appeal!" Now this Edward Beecher was valedictorian of Yale, son of Dr. Lyman Beecher, of national fame and elder brother of Henry Ward Beecher of world-wide fame as one of the noblest preachers of the centuries. He had heard all these countless times, and all the greatest preachers of his age, yet he pronounces Finney's sermons, "The most impressive and powerful I ever heard."

This confirms my judgment that for matchless power to sway men and bring them to Christ he was the prince of preachers and the greatest soul-winner of the ages.

Finney to the end of his life gave all the honor to the Holy Spirit for his matchless power and achievement. He insisted that the Spirit gave him his theology and taught him how to preach and often gave him his sermons. He always insisted on the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the greatest need and most important preparation of a preacher for his life work. Whenever his power declined he fasted and prayed till the Spirit-power returned. He felt that without it the greatest genius might fail, while with it a less talented man could do exploits and move three worlds.

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05 -- HINTS TO FISHERMEN -- By C. E. Cornell

Windows For Sermons  
(From The Expositor)

## **Something Better Ahead**

**"Therefore we are always confident" (2 Cor. 5:6).**

**A while ago I spent some twenty-four hours floating on the great Atlantic ocean on a small pan of ice, onto which I had crawled out of the freezing water. No picture was formed on my retina of a single living soul. However, I slept peacefully through a large part of the night, in the absolute conviction of an unseen Presence, and of something better before me, even if it should be behind the sun which rose in the morning, gloriously, from beyond the boundless horizon. -- Wilfred T. Grenfell, "On Immortality."**

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## **The Immortal Life Will Follow The Mortal**

**"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:46). At the age of ninety-four Chauncey M. Depew voiced his unfaltering faith in life after death. In the course of an interview with James Martin Miller, in November, 1927, Senator Depew said, "The anticipation of a life beyond the grave so belongs to our human mastery over the conditions of animal life that it seems to be an integral part of our human endowment. Life comes first, faith afterward. We had the stars of the constellation before we had astronomy; plants and flowers ahead of botany; religion preceded theology, mineral before geology. The mortal life came to me first, the immortal life will follow it; but we must seek it and prepare for it."**

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## **No Dark Valley**

**"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Psa. 23:4).**

**"How well I remember the last time when I was with the beloved Sankey," said Dr. F. B. Meyer, when speaking of his memories of Moody and Sankey, "it was when he was near the end, very ill and very weak. He had been blind for a number of years. There, in his New York home, I visited him. His wife was fanning him that hot summer afternoon. When I was about to go he protested and said, 'You are not going until I sing for you, are you?' I replied that he was too weak to sing. But he responded that he must sing for me, and how sweetly he sang, 'There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes!' And he sang the entire song, the four stanzas." -- William M. Runyan In The Sunday School Times.**

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## **The Life That Is To Be**

**"O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55). The poet laureate, in his Gareth and Lynette, one of the "Idyls of the King," draws a wonderful picture of the warfare of human life. Gareth is a king's son, who in disguise has served as scullion in the king's kitchen until Arthur sends him forth to do battle for the liberation of an imprisoned lady, typical of the human soul. He encounters morning, noon, and night, the succession of armed warriors who guard the castle. Then at last he faces Death in the form of a dreadful being clad in black armor, with a grinning skull at its crest. This foe also he unhorses, and cleaves the black helmet, only to liberate a smiling and beautiful boy, who pleads that the other champions have persuaded him to don this dreadful disguise of terror. Death faced, overcome, forced to disclose himself, proves no dreadful specter, but a form of blooming youth. -- The Epworth Herald.**

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## **The Lifting Power Of The Spiritual Life**

**"The power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16).**

**A titled woman, in Germany, having no faith in immortality, had the courage of her convictions or lack of them, and caused herself to be buried in a tomb of masonry covered with a heavy stone slab, on which was inscribed a declaration of her opinion that was the end for her. She was mistaken. A tiny seed found lodgment in the mortar, took root that fed upon her body and grew to be a tree that burst the slab asunder. I have seen a photograph of the tree growing from this tomb, proclaiming nature's own refutation that death is a finality or the tomb impregnable.**

**Just as surely as the tree has inherent in its life the power of lifting water and transforming it into sap and wood-fiber and leaf and blossom, so has the spiritual life its own lifting power. It can raise men out of despondency, desolation and sin. It can lift and transfer them and make them sons of God. It can give them a hope which is more than a gentle and pleasurable sensation; a hope that is alive and full of dynamic vigor. -- W. E. Barton.**

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## **The Lawyer's Boy**

**"Be not deceived" (1 Cor. 15:33).**

**A certain lawyer who had always been a religious man denied all his early beliefs when his beautiful girl wife, whom he deeply loved, died in giving birth to a son. "What right had God to take her from me?" he cried again and again.**

He became an atheist, a cynic who delighted in assailing the faith of others. Often in argument with guests at his home he would pooh-pooh the idea of immortality. "When you're dead," he would say, "you're dead, dead as a doornail."

Meanwhile his son grew up in the care of the housekeeper. Though the boy saw little of his father, he frequently overheard his conversations and arguments. One day the housekeeper asked to speak to the lawyer. The boy had learned to swear. "You must talk to him, sir," she said. "Send him to me," replied the lawyer.

A few minutes later father and son looked at each other. "How like my dead-and-gone Lucy the boy looks!" thought the father. He spoke sternly to the boy of his fault and then sent him away.

But the housekeeper came again and again with the same complaint. At last, seeking in desperation for some argument that would appeal to the boy, the lawyer said, "You know, my boy, that if your mother were alive she wouldn't like to hear you talk like that."

"But mother isn't alive," the boy replied, glibly. "She's dead, dead as a doornail."

The words struck to the heart of the embittered man; all his being seemed to surge up in protest against such words from the lips of his wife's son! He leaped to his feet. "She is not dead!" he cried. "Boy, your mother is alive and hears every word you utter!" He paused and then added, "I have been a wicked fool and have spoken what is not true. Come, my boy, we'll begin again and from now on see more of each other. Let us live in a way that is worthy of her !" -- The Youth's Companion.

\* \* \*

## Our Kinsman

"We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

You remember the ancient tale of Theseus, about to enter the black labyrinth, sword in hand, to battle with the monster whose lair was in this gloomy and bewildering fastness; and how his sister, Ariadne, tied around his ankle a silken thread, and told him that whenever he felt a pull on that thread he would know that she was thinking of him, and was with him in his hazardous search and combat, and how thus fortified with her sympathy, Theseus slew the destroying Minotaur. There is a like pull on the heart-strings of men from the cross of Christ, in our conflicts with the woes and wrongs and evils of life which makes us aware of His spiritual fellowship, and renders us more than conquerors through this kinsman of ours. -- H. S. Coffin.

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### **Give Me Passage**

**"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).**

**Did you notice how the flowers grow through dirt? Did you ever notice a flower coming up? Does it come up through the dirt? Does it put on any vestments to keep the dirt from crowding all around it? It does not. The flower comes up through the dirt, and grows in the dirt, and always close to the dirt, and, amongst the dirt, blooms. Ah me, we are God's flowers; we are meant to be where the dirt is; but we are meant to convert the dirt into bloom and beauty and perfume. What are we here for? To dodge the issue? No. What are we here for? To enjoy the issue? Yes. Keep in the world, impinged on by it, raptured with it, rejoicing for it. And when you come up the long hill they call Zion's hill, and will come up with a great armload of immortelles that you grew on the road you traveled -- as you come they ask, "What are you sowing, man?" He said, "Flowers." "What for?" "Oh, for fun." "Who will pick them?" "I don't know." "Will anybody pick them?" "I wouldn't wonder." "What if nobody does?" "God will," he says. Sowing flowers. Not looking where he sows them, but going down on the roadways and by the hardest highways, along the loneliest places, up along the weary mountain ways, and when the gleaners of the flowers call to him he looks around and says, "Planting flowers in the world?" "Yes." "Didn't get away from it?" "No." "Sowed it to beauty?" "Yes." Please God, if He will help me, I don't want to get to heaven a nondescript. I don't want to dodge from the lines, not a bit. I want to walk straight along and say, "I own this road. Give me passage. I own this road, give me passage." Some of these days I want to walk down, and Death will see me and say, "You can't go this road." And I will say, "Old man Death, you have terrified many, but my Christ told me to walk this way, and I am going along this road. Give me passage." And he will. -- W. A. Quayle.**

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### **An Enormous Sale**

**"In His Steps," written by Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, has had the enormous sale up to date of more than twenty-two million copies, and is second only to the Bible in volume of sales. An error in copyrighting the original book, however, prevented Dr. Sheldon from realizing any financial return from the book's enormous sales.**

**Dr. Sheldon is the author of many other readable books but none so widely read, or nearly so, as "In His Steps." Dr. Sheldon celebrated his seventy-first birthday recently. He is now one of the contributing editors of The Christian Herald.**

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## **Revivals: Suggestive Texts**

**"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit"  
(Psalm 51:12).**

**"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted  
unto thee" (Psalm 51: 13).**

**"Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be  
saved" (Psalm 80:7).**

**"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalm  
85:6).**

**"Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a  
fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (Isa. 32:15).**

**"O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in  
the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember  
mercy" (Hab. 3:2).**

\* \* \*

## **Elisha**

**The successor of the prophet Elijah: a model spiritual leader.  
A man of great energy (1 Kings 19:19).**

**When called made a complete surrender (1 Kings 19:20, 21).  
Sought a spiritual equipment (2 Kings 2:9).**

**Spoke with authority, as the oracle of God (2 Kings 3:16. 17).**

**Put his entire personality into the work (2 Kings 4:34-35).  
Was of incorruptible integrity (2 Kings 5:16). Lived in the spirit of victory (2 Kings  
6:15, 16). A man of spiritual vision (2 Kings 6:17).. Died a victorious death (2 Kings  
13:14-19).**

**Had a wonderful posthumous influence (2 Kings 13:20, 21).**

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## **06 -- THE TEST -- By Elizabeth Cheney**

**A New Religion came to me  
With buoyant step and radiant smile,**

And at my door asked joyously  
Just to come in and chat awhile.

Her jeweled hands were fair to see,  
Her white robe glistened in the sun,  
'Twas quite agreeable to me  
To listen to her silver tongue.

She spoke of health and wealth and peace,  
Of pleasure and prosperity,  
Of Love Divine that fills all space,  
The only great reality.

Despite her look, her smile, her speech,  
My spirit shrank, strange to remark,  
Like one whose groping fingers reach  
Some cold, dead thing amid the dark.

"Give me," I cried, "O stranger-guest,  
Before I entertain thy plea,  
An answer to this one request--  
Dost come by way of Calvary?"

Swift changed her eyes from noon to night,  
Her smile to cold, superior scorn;  
She vanished from my wondering sight,  
But left me neither sad nor lorn.

A shining Presence filled my room,  
A voice divine spoke peace to me,  
A person full of truth and grace,  
Who came by way of Calvary.

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07 -- ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL -- Compiled By J. Glenn Gould

### The Sufficiency Of Christ

"When the railroad was being planned from Petrograd to Moscow, some of the engineers who were consulted told the tsar that it was impossible. There were too many obstacles. Others proposed various loops and detours around swamps and lakes, or to avoid the impassable places. The Czar quietly took a map of the region, laid down a ruler from one of the cities to the other, and with his pencil drew a perfectly straight line, saying, 'The road is going there; now go and build it along that straight-edge line.' And there is where it was built. It is always thrilling when

someone meets the doubts and questions and negations of men with an everlasting yea, when one comes who breaks a positive path for the race. This is one of the most striking things about Christ. He is the Way. He is the Door. He is the Life. St. Paul was impressed by this as much as St. John was. 'In Jesus Christ,' he says in Second Corinthians, 'at last the divine yes has sounded.' The character of God is revealed in concrete life. We have seen 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'" -- Rufus M. Jones.

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### God Slumbers Not

Martin Luther was discouraged. The ecclesiastical Philistines were pressing hard upon him, and the hero of the Reformation was downhearted and he seemed to have lost his consciousness that God was living. In the morning his wife came before him dressed in heavy mourning, and he said in surprise, "My wife, why this mourning? I have not heard of any death; why do you wear the crape? . . . Oh," she said, "I am in mourning for God; you seemed so discouraged this week I thought that surely God must be dead." And Luther said, "O God, forgive me," and he sat down long enough to pen that wonderful hymn, "Ein jeste Burg ist unser Gott." Many of the bravest souls of earth have been tempted because the hour was midnight. God is not dead, neither has He forgotten the world. When the frightened soldiers of Cæsar awoke him from his slumber in the fury of the storm, the ruler cried, "Quid times? Cæsarea vehis! . . . What do you fear? Cæsar is in the ship!" Then why should I be discouraged, for God is in His world. He lives and rules today. The victory is not always on the side of the strongest battalions. God and myself make a majority. -- W. E. Biederwolf In The Expositor.

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### God's Forgiveness

There is a story of John Callahan, once a noted criminal. He was convicted in prison, and his conversion was so remarkable and manifest that he was paroled. He immediately launched his life upon a career of Christian service and testimony that more than matched his previous life of sin. Six years after his conversion he wrote the Governor of Illinois, asking the Governor to send him all records of his crime and commitment to the Joliet state prison. The Governor replied that it was an altogether unusual request, that it had never been done before, but in view of the conspicuous change that had come into the life of John Callahan the request was being complied with. Callahan sent similar requests to the mayors of the various cities in which he had been convicted of crime. They all followed the Governor's example, with the result that there came a day when John Callahan held in his hand the record of every crime and committal to prison which had been written against him. He laid them all in the fire, and when they had burned to ashes, stood up and cried out:



**"Thank God there is nothing against me on the records of heaven, there is nothing against me on the records of earth! I am now free from the condemnation of sin and the curse of a broken law." -- J. C. Masee.**

**\* \* \***

### **Jesus Christ The Same**

**There are a few things which we must have if we are to go on at all. They are those spiritual realities by which we live, the eternal stars by which we steer, those indispensables which are absolutely necessary to life. There was, sixty years ago, a well-known room in Florence, cluttered everywhere with rubbish and old, broken furniture. The spiders spun their webs in its corners. The walls once white with whitewash were dingy and filthy with the accumulation of many years. Someone came who suspected that a precious work of art was hidden away under the outside covering of the walls. He cleared away the rubbish, washed off the grime, peeled off the layer of whitewash and there he found Giotto's priceless painting of Dante. Now all the temporary material that fined the room is gone and only the immortal face is left, and everyone who visits Florence stands in awe before that single solitary treasure. So we, too, gradually work our way back to what eternally matters and we can see the surface things vanish without being in the least disturbed. -- Rufus M. Jones.**

**\* \* \***

### **The Decay Eating Out The Heart**

**I saw a great oak tree fall flat to the ground one day in the midst of a thunder-storm. To the untrained eye it had appeared sound and strong. But it was merely a standing shell. Its heart had been eaten out by worms, and it could not stand the strain of sudden storm. The virulent germs that are multiplied in the mind by every evil thought eat out the heart of a man in much the same way. The man is struck by a sudden gust of temptation, and the wreckage reveals the rottenness. A man must think morally and not immorally if he would make his record true -- "for to be carnally minded is death." That is a real fundamental. -- H. H. Crane.**

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### **Mock Humility**

**"There is," said Phillips Brooks in his famous sermon on "The Curse of Meroz," "there is such a thing as a 'false humility' which accounts for the uselessness of people who might be useful. Humility," he added, "is good when it stimulates, it is bad when it paralyzes the active powers of a man. It may do either! We have noble examples of humility as a stimulus -- the sense of weakness making**

**a man all the more ardent to use all the strength he has | But if conscious weakness causes a man to believe that it makes no difference whether he works or not, then his humility is his curse." -- Quoted By P. R. Frothingham.**

**\* \* \***

### **Are We Becoming Pagans?**

**Under the above title Dr. P. W. Roth writes as follows in the current number of the Expositor:**

**"If ever in the history of our country the salt of a consecrated and self-sacrificing Christianity was needed, that time is now. We used to be known as a nation of idealists, but we are fast becoming a people without real morality and religion. Our patron saint seems to be the prodigal, who wasted his substance with riotous living. We are not only spendthrifts in money matters, but we are wasting the fine substance of our moral and spiritual being. It is amazing how near to the level of crass materialism and Epicureanism our people have descended. Even among Christians and church members there seems to be little concern to keep their pursuits and ideals above the level of those who are without God in the world. That means paganism. Money-getting, no matter how, extravagant expenditure, no matter for what -- seem to be our chief concerns in life. The root of our evil tree is irreligion. We are rearing a generation of atheists and pleasure worshipers. Our great educational institutions, endowed with millions, ignore the Bible and all that it stands for. Our theaters are pandering to the lowest cravings of human nature. They seem to delight in outraging modesty and decency, and make sport of all the sanctities of life -- while Christians look on unperturbed. Even our little children are allowed full freedom in attending picture shows made up of vulgarities and falsehoods about life and love. Our literature is paganized. Only those books and magazines that fairly reek with ethical and spiritual debauchery seem to have a wide sale. Study the crowds on the great thoroughfares of our cities, especially in the districts where the places of amusement are found, look into the faces of all the people you find jostling each other in their mad scramble for amusement. You will see all the types that were found in Ephesus in her wickedest days. There are the peacocks that strut, the wolves and hyenas that prowl, the apes that mimic, the serpents that crawl -- a whole menagerie of beastly things in human form. It is a well-known fact among doctors that millions of our young men and women are utterly unfit to enter the marriage state and rear children, while the number of the married who are becoming divorced is ever on the increase. How can anyone face these ominous facts without serious misgivings as to the future of American civilization? It is high time for the Church to awake from her sleep, to put on her whole armor instead of a third of it, and wage warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil, Our riotous living must give place to something entirely different unless we are to repeat the history of the pagan nations of antiquity and go down in a welter of moral. and spiritual ruin. Christ showed His power to conquer paganism in the apostolic age. He did it again in the time of St. Francis of Assisi. He has never**

failed to do so when men have earnestly turned to Him for guidance and deliverance. He is our only hope for America today."

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## A Revival Of Wonder

There is a saying, attributed to Christ, which beautifully says, "Let not him who seeks cease until he find, and when he finds he will wonder and wondering he will have rest." Everyone must have noticed how often the New Testament uses the word, "Behold!" It is a word of wonder. Something like it is the "Selah" of the Psalms. We might almost translate it, "Think of that!" It is a throb of wonder, a sense of joy. It takes the soul away from the everlasting interrogation point and lets it feel surprise, admiration, joy and wonder. If our meetings and our services could bring us into moods and experiences like that, we should throng to them and come away refreshed. If we could get in them "that sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused," we should give up our superficial pleasures and our overtime devotion to business and flock with our neighbors to what then might properly be called "the house of God." -- Rufus M. Jones.

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## 08 -- THE BLESSED MAN -- By A. M. Hills

Text: The First Psalm, "Blessed is the man," etc.

People vainly imagine they must live in sin to have a good time. It is a delusion of the devil, one of his impudent falsehoods. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim 4:8). Our text gives the experience of a man who is living a truly blessed life, having lost all appetite for sin. He is described both negatively and positively.

### I. Negatively

1. He does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor of Satan himself. He does not go in that direction for advice or instruction. He does not read the devil's books, nor look at his pictures, nor listen to his voice, nor delight in his vices.

2. He does not stand in the way of sinners. He does not go loitering around the vile districts where the wicked are likely to be found and where evil-minded men and women are accustomed to gather, to see what he can see and hear what he can hear, and where the very atmosphere is laden with the stench of vice.

3. He does not sit in the seat of scoffers and the scornful. This is the third degree of sinfulness, where men, who have walked and stood among the wicked and wanton and leprous sinners, until they have acquired a relish for their words

and ways, and say to themselves, this is the crowd I like, and this is the kind of life I desire to live. Here I decide to pitch my tent and spend my days with those who mock at virtue and piety, and scoff at religion and God! Is it an awful picture! No man ever found blessedness in such a career.

## **II. This Is The Positive Side Of This Blessed Man**

1. "He delights in the law of the Lord." And why not? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever," etc. "In keeping them there is great reward" (Psa. 19:7-11). This law is his meditation day and night. His supreme choice is to live in the center of God's sweet will.

2. Like a tree, he is planted and stays put. He is not running after every new fad of doctrine, higher criticism, evolution, new theology, Christian science, theosophy, spiritualism, Russelism, modernism. He is rooted and grounded in the infallible Word of God. The psalmist said, "My heart is fixed."

3. He brings forth much fruit -- is a winner of souls, blesses others, and gets blessed himself in doing it. He is an evergreen Christian planted by the rivers of water, the living fountains of grace in Christ. He does not dry up and blow away six weeks after every revival, but is always bearing fruit. His leaf also does not wither. He looks beautiful the year around. He is always prospering and growing and ripening for heaven. Sanctified, Spirit-filled, and blessed!

## **III. "The Ungodly Are Not So!"**

How could they be? Their primary choice is wrong. They have chosen sin and self-gratification of their sensibilities as the end of their being, and the employment of their life. And therefore they have spurned God and holiness, and separated themselves from the saints, and all who live and walk with God.

At last they are withered and blasted and worthless. "Like the chaff which the wind driveth away." "Whose end is destruction" (Phil. 3:18-19).

We are all sweeping on to judgment, as fast as time can carry us, to give account for the deeds done in the body, good or bad. "The wicked shall not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." "The wages of sin [depravity] is death" (Rom. 6:23). Oh, how foolish is the man who seeks either present or final blessedness by turning away from God!

Be wise! O be wise! and seek God now while it is the accepted time and the day of salvation!

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## **09 -- DANGER POINTS IN CHURCH LIFE -- By Roy L. Hollenback**

**At no time in the life of a church is it free from danger of disruptions and divisions among its constituents. We are not sure that this is less true of spiritual churches than those which are commonly classed as formal and unspiritual; for Satan majors his attacks upon the centers of opposition to his kingdom. It may be that holiness churches are even more susceptible to jolts and disruptions than others; which, if true, does not argue the incorrectness of the doctrine of holiness, nor yet does it prove that a major portion of those who profess to be sanctified are not in the experience. It has been our misfortune to look in upon a few of these unpleasant (to say the least) affairs; and we are convinced that most of them do not arise out of a carnal condition, but out of true sincerity and zeal for righteousness wrongly applied. Holiness people have stronger convictions of right and wrong than any other people upon the earth, and draw harder lines of discrimination between sin and righteousness. This, I think, is one of our greatest assets, if kept in the bond of love; but otherwise it may become one of our most dangerous liabilities. The danger is that these convictions will be transferred from things which are positively sinful to things which are only trifling matters of individual conscience. And when an effort is made to apply strong convictions to matters of personal conscience there will always trouble ensue. We think our legislative body has done very wisely in basing the membership rules of our church upon those things which are essentially right and wrong, according to the Bible and the general conscience of our people, and refusing to inject into them matters upon which the conscience of our people is so widely varied.**

**But it is not our purpose to account for all the numerous church troubles, for each of them stands upon its own merits, with the devil and carnality doubtless sponsoring not a few of them. But we wish to designate three dangerous periods in church life which we consider among the greatest. These present a real problem to the pastor.**

**I. One of the great danger points in a church is when it constructs a new building. That this is true may be seen from the fact that only a few preachers succeed in remaining with a church longer than the next District Assembly after the church has been constructed. To erect a building, it seems usually necessary for the pastor to cross so many people's opinions, and offend so many's tastes that when the time arrives for the recall he has invited for himself a few negative votes. Occasionally a pastor erects a building and remains for a long pastorate afterward, but the greater majority find it expedient to "move on."**

**Perhaps another factor enters into this besides the giving of offense, and that is the heavy financial pressure which a building program brings. It is hard to launch a building program, and carry it through, without some of the leading members of the church becoming weary of the heavy burden, and all but wishing it had never**

been undertaken. Those who are directly responsible for the building will be criticized for the way it is constructed, for the unnecessary expenditures, for the person to whom they let the contract, etc. And the poor pastor, who has toiled day and night, worried over the details, solicited funds, signed notes to meet the emergencies, and overseen the job will likely be paid for his service by the church with a heavy plurality of negative votes; and will pass on, leaving to his successor the "feathered nest." But such is church life, it seems!

II. A time that is scarcely less dangerous in the life of the church is the Christmas season. If a pastor passes safely through the holiday season, and his church has no scars to show for it, he may count himself fortunate.

It sounds quite inconsistent, but three or four of the worst breaches this writer has ever seen in churches were attributable to the Christmas season. While under our own ministry we have never had anything more than a tight tension, we have seen some churches which had actual disruptions and splits over the matter of Christmas programs.

Almost any church has a great variety of notions as to how Christmas should be celebrated. There are usually some who do not think there should be any sort of program in the church at all. Then there are others who think a simple program of recitations is acceptable, providing there is no Christmas tree. And yet still others believe that there is nothing wrong with a Christmas tree, a few decorations, or a beautiful pageant. And so it goes. How is a pastor to adjust the program to fit all of these opinions? If he caters to the more liberal element, and has a pageant or a tree, some of the elderly members of the church will be greatly hurt; and if he does not, some of the younger folks, who have given in to the elder from year to year, will balk on doing so this year. Now what is the pastor to do? This often becomes one of his most difficult problems in the church. However, if he can succeed in doing one thing he will come through all right. He must avoid a crisis. To do this he would better be neutral himself, put the responsibility upon the church for decision, be loyal to that decision, and yet carefully exercise the utmost charity toward both the pros and the cons. It is always safe for the preacher to urge that such programs, of whatever sort they are, be kept strictly spiritual; and his zeal and active determination to keep them spiritual will go far toward counteracting any prejudice that may exist against the form of the programs.

III. Another important crisis in the life of a church is the time of changing pastors. Not a few churches have gone to pieces upon this rock, and we think most unnecessarily. Sometimes the churches have been at fault, and sometimes the blame belongs to the preacher. But no matter who is most at fault, the rift could no doubt have been avoided if all concerned had possessed that perfect love which "seeketh not her own." If the pastor who was the bone of contention had this love he would be willing to "endure all things for the elect's sake"; and if the church possessed it, there would be a ready surrender of the minority to the voice of the majority.

**As a rule, the voice of the majority, in a holiness church, is right; and it is wise to let this control our decisions. If the pastor finds that the opposition is strong to his remaining, love for the body of Christ will impel him to go, without creating any friction, if he can avoid it. We have known some to discredit the voice of the majority, and try to stay against strong opposition; but they seldom succeed, and usually injure the church before the next year is, out.**

**When the time comes to vote, all members have a right to register their convictions; and the magnanimous pastor will not discredit the spirituality of those who vote against him, and will feel like at least commending their intelligence for doing so. He will also seek in every way to preserve the unity of the church, leave the church gracefully, and turn it over to his successor in as unified and happy condition as possible. He, more than any layman in the church, can pave the way for the success of the one who follows him.**

**In closing, permit me to say that most crises in the church can be avoided by a strong program of prayer. When things seems to be coming to a head, and the tension becomes tight at any point, try to enlist the entire church in fasting and prayer for a revival, or something worthy, and usually the atmosphere will clear, and the cloud which threatened will pass without incident. "**

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#### **10 -- SIX DEADLY SINS -- From The Western Christian Advocate**

**We hesitate to mention them because some are so commonplace we would not recognize them, neither would we classify them as deadly. Nevertheless, let us mention six deadly sins that particularly make their habitat in the vicinity of the neighborhood where the minister lives: They are fiddling, dabbling, fidgeting, intriguing, procrastinating and loafing. We discover these playing like young lion cubs in the life of the young preacher.**

**There is another group of six also that lies at the other extreme that must be guarded against just as much as these passive negative sins. The other set of six deadly sins against which the minister should be warned are: bustle, justle, rustle, drivel, ramble, rattle. These are the sins that linger around the minister's life in middle age -- in the fussy period when he is doing big things, and is on the go all the time, administering his parish with perspiration on his brow. This is a brood we all have to watch. They come under the cover of a busy life and eat into the soul, leaving it empty and worthless.**

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**THE END**