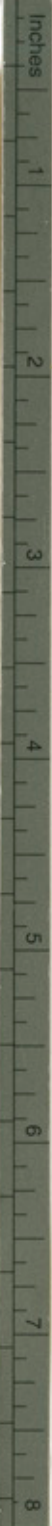


Address
delivered before the
California Bible Society

? ?

No 16

Subject:
The Word of the Divine Word



of the
Bureau of the
California State
Department of
Agriculture

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California State
Department of
Agriculture

Ben Howard address
New Cal Bible Society

(Page 1.)

The uses of the Divine Word.

Apologies are dangerous. They are always weak and often are but a make-weight for your adversary. Yet every man desires so much credit with his fellow men that he will offer them as a sort of note of hand in lieu of cash.

Now, I never came to fulfill a promise given and sealed, with so much reluctance as my engagement to help in this Bible Society Service.

1. Apology.

First ^{it} is because of a pervading consciousness of being unprepared with substance equivalent to the demand of such an occasion.

I know this is weak, because with a genial smile, my adversary, if he should happen to be present, will ask the pertinent question, "Why not? Why are you not prepared?"

Then I must add in explanation, that one's mind and heart should be filled with this subject; should be familiar with the doings of the Society, and with the pressing wants which the Secretaries and Missionaries so clearly and so ardently present. There is in me a sort of an undercurrent of longing that the Bible might go out to every house, to every man and woman, and be carefully read and conformed to; but my mind and my heart are engrossed with the daily calls of my official ^{social} duties and responsibilities, so that I halt with the desire.

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(Page 2.)

2.

Apology Second: that a curious shadowy kind of skepticism creeps into my head-a skepticism touching our methods-and our results. "Good, Good!" whispers my adversary. "Now we have you! you are making weight for the other side of the scales. You are over on our side. For we the Bible enemies, are only skeptical as to the Bible Society methods, and the Bible Society's work."

See then my friends what a fog our two apologies have led us into. Apology one is weakness born of unfitness. Apology 2, is opposition to a good work born of unaccountable ignorance.

Still, oh, adversaries, I have much respect for your shrewdness and have learned attentively to regard the checking, restraining and training power of your prompt hostility.

Your shrewdness spiced with just a little malignity, and your hostility to every good cause being a little too prompt, like the hidden spring-dirk in the hands of the highwayman, make you unfair.

It is most unfair to judge a cause by the weakness of its defenders. It is most unfair and preposterous to condemn a cause on the ignorance of a weak advocate.

3

If now, my friends, you will look upon what I have said in the light of a locomotive getting up steam, puffing and blowing and shooting out and coming back to the starting point, I will be obli-

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If now, my friends, you will look upon what I have said in the light of a locomotive getting up steam, puffing and blowing and shooting out and coming back to the starting point, I will be obli-

(Page 3.)

ged to you.

We will start from the Depot, even though we have to go up the Mountain of difficulties as slowly as the Allegheny camel-back^{locomotives,} or as weakly as the ^{Engines} "Buro" of the Narrow guage.

There is — A hindrance to confusion.

Our Depot contains the Bible. In it are plain and unmistakable declarations, a great many of them it is true, and declarations that would be abundantly confusing, but for the fact clear as the daylight, that there is a common germ^{or root} to them all. They fit into their place like the quarters of an apple just cut. There is a wholeness about them when put together that delights the ear and the heart.

For example, how glad it makes the Christian to hear it read in Church: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Just think of it ! the whole Bible, all the laws of Moses, all the proverbs of Solomon, all the sweet precepts of David, all the clear visions of Daniel and all the glorious items of good news announced and sent down the ages to us by our Lord and his Apostles, all these, condensed into one double sided silver tablet with shi-

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(Page 4.)

ning letters of Gold upon each face- "Love God" on one side "Love Man" on the other. Or if this does not suit the taste of the artist-make a single tablet and, as Moses did when he said: "in the image of God created He him," let us combine God with man or better man with God and write before them, or above them, or after them, or under them in shining letters the word LOVE.

Sell the tablet. Make presents of it. Make copies of it. Put it up everywhere, in the front halls, up stairs, in the parlors & in the sleeping rooms, in the stores and on the steamers and railway carriages. Let ^{it} burn itself into the memory of childhood, and be furnished in raised letters to the blindmen. Teach it to the heathen before he comes and after; and let the ^{deaf} dumb compass its beauty and its sweetness with their increased vision. Aye, Aye, my smiling adversary, let the infidels and the skeptics see it written in innumerable tablets with all sorts of hieroglyphics, that they may be pleased to decipher; in all sorts of languages that they may be minded to translate; and particularly in the faces of purified men, women and children, in the faces that beam with the joy and gladness that its vivifying truth produces and entails: Oh, yes, let the cold, dead eyes of Atheism rest upon it in colors as bright and scorching as the Sun, and be warmed, be resurrected, be brought back to the clear visions of its own believing innocent childhood.

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(Page 5.)

Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful! All the Scriptures, all the universe of truth, written in the Earth, in the Sun, in the Stars, all epitomized in one phrase: "Deo et Homini Caritas." ^{to} Love God and Man! It is the epigrammatic translation of God's Holy Bible, and who shall be able to suppress it? Who shall dare to question it?

4

Let us take this torch-light nay, the Sun-light of this glorious, omnipotent truth of Love (God-ward and Man-ward) and go back ^{our} to the Grand Depot, the Holy Scriptures, and take a new start.

We find the door to one apartment labeled SALVATION IN NO OTHER.

Open the door and the apartment is filled with leaves, and on each leaf is found: "Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 1V, 12."

You ask with a start what name is that? Turn over a single leaf and look at the other side and spell it out: the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! That is the name.

My adversary says: "I don't believe that, that's not God's truth, that's not love!" What would he think of ^{the following} this announcement for the body, ————— Human life depends on air, there is

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for the body. Human life depends on air, there is

no life to the lungs that breathe other ethereal substances.

(Page 6.)

A man will die without air. Oh, I do not believe that; that is 'nt God's truth, that is 'nt love! The Scientist will laugh at such a foolish denial. That the air is essential to life, and the pure air to health are most welcome truths. God provided a way to live here below, and are we not glad that He made such abundant provision?

Shall we skulk into caves and dens, into infected mines and cellars, and cry out against our Maker because He has not provided earth-born gasses and steaming putrefactions, or a hundred and more other contrivances with which to inflate the lungs, purify the blood and sustain the human frame work?

Oh, my adversary the provision is single, but it is abundant.

So with Salvation that the Lord our God has provided; it is single but it is more abundant than the air—yes, for the Master's ^{one} Spirit which gives what we call salvation is freer than the air to all men. It can reach the prisoner in his impure cell, the miner thousands of feet under the surface of the earth, the slave in the suffocating hold of the ship, or the crowds burrowing in the poisonous cellars of the city. It can grow stronger and more helpful as the lungs grow weaker and weaker, and continue beyond the last puff of air, the last sigh of pain, the last throb of human suffering. One Name, One Way. Thank God that he has not

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(Page 7.)

confused poor weak thoughtless human beings with a half a dozen ways, and a half dozen names. Yes, thank Him that he has not endangered ^{men} ~~his~~ uncertain steps by the perplexing troubles of two unagreeing Guides. One unerring guide will surely bring a man through the wilderness-or across the sea. Try Him!

V

THE ONLY SON.

Now open another apartment at our Depot, and try another set of leaves, for example: "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH? BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."

Who is this Son? this only begotten Son, who is it? Turn over the leaf and read if you can the words of the Christian Martyr Stephen just before he breathed out his precious life under the stonings of a ^{mad} gnashing mob: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into Heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

It is He. It is the same that was born in Bethlehem-that went to Egypt-that spent his childhood in Nazareth-that dwelt in Capernaum by the sea-that traveled over Galilee and taught. It is the same that was transfigured in the garden, that was tried at Jerusalem-that perished on the Cross-that rose from the dead-that walk-

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(Page 8.)

ed the Earth and met a host of witnesses—that ascended into the heavens—and then, and since, has from Heaven's battlements watched & heard and helped his earthly friends, ^{and this} in unison with the Father, through that wonderful divine messenger who buoyed up the soul of Stephen in the hour of his last agony, and filled his mouth with those majestic words that I have given. It is He, the Messiah, the Christ of God, the Saviour of the World, the the express image of the Father—the most wonderful and yet the most simple expression of the Almighty.

^{the immannel, the Christ.} It is the soul with enlarged powers, that takes fast hold ^{on infinity} ~~in fin-~~ ~~itude~~, vast, shadowy, unutterable, indescribable, unapproachable infinity, and yet ^s binding to it by the indissoluble tie of all penetrating and all pervading love any other willing soul; and insur^sing to it a peace and joy that pass the bounds of human expression.

God in Christ—Christ in Man—sweetly cemented by the ^{great} Spirit into the Eternal Heaven. Can anybody bring us a better hope than this? Can men scatter better news?

But my adversary, with his eyes a little moist, and his heart a little softened says: "That is all very nice, if it were only true! These old fables lead us into a self mystification, and by the help of a lively imagination we leave the terra-firma. Now I think it would be much more practical to be engaged in relieving the pres-

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(Page 9.)

-ent earthly sufferings of the people! " Well, well my adversary, my friend. We can only ask you to apply practical tests to what we call the truth.

VI.

Look down.

Our method, in its purity, raises the fallen, cares for the sick, provides for the orphan, speaks comfort to the sorrowing, makes the well better, forbids lying and license, establishes and maintains the home and the family, enlightens the ignorant without repressing the learned, in brief, is stoutly against all wrong and earnestly in favor of the absolute right. So much for the effort here! So much for the purification and order and happiness of human beings on the earth.

VII.

Look up.

Now if our out-reaching and up-reaching visions should happen to be a little cloudy-it will not do to take from us the hope of immortality. There is no persistent living-force in the hopeless, despairing soul. Shew me and convince me that there is no God, no Spirit, no Saviour, and that when I come to die I shall be blown out like a candle-then, you will have succeeded in crushing my

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endeavor. Right and wrong then have no foundations, and the soul itself is a myth. But the very consciousness of existence; the very linking powers that bind me to other souls; the very up-reaching instincts and aspirations of my heart; the bitter sorrow over mistakes and wrongs which I have done; the great peace that comes in like a flood at the sense of forgiveness, after repentance and promise and pleading; the very sweet pervasive joy that is given or comes in after the yearning of prayer in the midst of the greatest of human trials; ^{these} all internal evidences make me cry out against this wisdom that is wiser than the Almighty; this serene Atheism that would tear down and grind to powder all the glorious edifice of human hopes, and has nothing, absolutely nothing to offer to our hungering hearts in place of them.

VIII.

Cling to the Bible.

We must cling to the Old Bible. Leave it and we have no anchorage. We go out into the darkness where there is gnashing of teeth and call up the spirits that require us to be more credulous than fools, and blinder than bats, or we wander off into the search for the philosopher's stone, or we are expecting to unveil the goddess of perpetual joy by adopting some strange and idiotic

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theory which will not account for a fraction of the problems that trouble us. Oh, the foolishness of this wisdom above what is written! We must cling to the Old Bible. Then what? Why study it-think it over-ponder its sacred words-pray God for more light.

Then what? We are back again to our Depot; open the apartments and send the leaves broadcast over the world.

1X.

Glad Tidings.

Let the glad tidings of great joy be to all people-let them go to all people. They will make Earth with all its sickness, sorrow, pain and death, tolerable. They will make society, with all its travailing burdens, with all its piercing cries and agonizing groans-ever heaving upward into better air and better light and better health; and these tidings well heeded will finally gather its votaries into that city where "there shall be no more curse: X X X And there shall be no night there; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever. Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the City. "

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(Page 12.)

The heart-cheering news let the earth echo round:
How free to the faithful He offers Salvation;
How His people with joy everlasting are crown'd."
Shout the glad tidings, exultingly sing;
Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah is king!

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For Mr. Wm. Abbott