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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THOUGHTS ON SOME PRACTICAL USES OF THE RELATION OF THE NATURAL TO THE SPIRITUAL.

BY PRINCIPAL SIR WILLIAM DAWSON, LL.D., MONTREAL, CANADA.

THE treatment, within the compass of a few pages, of a subject which embraces all earth and heaven, must necessarily be merely suggestive. But for this kind of treatment we have ample warrant in the teaching of Him of whom it was said, "Never man spake as this man," and who suggests all things, but expands and elaborates nothing. Paul assures us that if there is a natural body there must also be a correlative spiritual; and in like manner the most eminent physicists of our time are convinced that the laws of conservation and dissipation of energy require us to believe in the existence of an unseen universe corresponding to that which is visible to us. The greatest of English poets, whose insight was more profound than that of ordinary men, puts the same truth in the form of a question: "What if earth be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein, each to the other like, more than on earth is thought?"

But our knowledge of the natural comes to us mainly by observation and experiment, and is based on the evidence of our senses, on which we are accustomed implicitly to rely. Our knowledge of the spiritual comes to us chiefly by divine revelation, and therefore in some sense at second-hand, though it can appeal as evidence first to our intuitive conceptions, with which it is in harmony, and secondly, to the natural facts which corroborate that testimony. It is instructive to note that our Savior fully acknowledges this in His teaching, and in His appeals to those who disbelieved His divine mission. For instance, in John vi: 45, He quotes a sentiment, more than once ex-

Was it ever an imperfect or infantile thing? On its divine side we read of it: "Forever, O God, thy word is settled in heaven." (Ps. cxix: 89.)

3. But the text shows us God's word on the human side, applied through human agencies to human needs. Thus understood, it states a glorious fact; it calls attention to the Gospel as the great force of human progress; it shows us the Church in a condition of wonderful and genuine progress.

I. This progress—growth and multiplication of God's word—was displayed in the men of that period: 1. The spirit of every age or movement of history is reflected in its leading characters. The Elizabethan age; our own Revolution; the age of Pericles. 2. Displayed in its leaders or exponents: (a) Philip, the lay evangelist, (b) Peter, the true conservative, on his best side, attached to the old but willing to take the new that came from God; (c) Paul, in whose conversion was, germinally, the history of Christianity as a new dispensation—a world-faith. 3. Displayed in the man *vs.* whom it arrayed itself. The affair of Simon Magus shows the power and reality of a faith that could spurn all temptations to increase the outward success of a persecuted cause by unworthy and worldly means.

II. This progress was displayed in the march of events: 1. "Happy is a land when it has no history," is true only of the old and false conceptions of history. 2. God's word did not return unto Him void. (a) Gentile Christianity was launched on the stream of ages; (b) thus the policy of Christianity, of the Church as a missionary, world-evangelizing movement, was fixed by whatever force lies in the example of the primitive Church.

III. This progress was displayed in the advance of ideas. 1. Pentecost did not end, but only began, the enlargement of mind to take in God's thoughts. That it was that that fitted a Peter for the vision of "a great sheet," and the startling event that grew out of it. 2. The minds of the disciples gained that flexibility as to method and inflexibility

as to principle by which they could go "to every creature." "All things to all men, so that I might by all means save some." "We must obey God rather than men." 3. The New Testament itself—especially all of it except the four Gospels—shows how the minds of men were enlarged and inspired to apply the "word of God" to human wants; and here, in an almost literal sense, it "grew and multiplied."

Finally, thus it appears there is a sense in which the phrases, "new theology," "advanced thought," etc., *may* represent a state of things thoroughly satisfactory, upon which the Church and the world are to be congratulated. 2. It equally appears that all true progress in religious thought and action is made by men whose instrument is the Word of God, and whose power and guidance are supplied by the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST THE HEALER.

By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D., IN LAFAYETTE AVE. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

Thy faith hath made thee whole.—Mark v: 34.

THE Bible is full of personal incidents. Every one relishes a story, from the little child up to a Hume or a Macaulay. How soon a comatose audience prick up their ears when a dry argument is enlivened by an anecdote. The evangelists have not given us elaborate doctrinal treatises, but a simple narrative of the life of Christ. They have written neither a eulogy nor a defence. He needed none. They have just told us what Christ did and said. Every act had a lesson. His life was a divinely-appointed order of instructive incidents. It is a beautiful way of truth in which we may walk.

The daughter of Jairus is dying. Jesus is on His way to the ruler's house. A vast throng follow, eager for the next sensation. The crowd is pushing hard, but a poor, nameless, unknown woman hastens to get near the Lord. She needs healing, and she feels that He alone can give it, for she had tried

many physicians without help. She was exhausted by the flow of money, as well as by the flux of blood. "Nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." So one may expect if he employs quacks and ignoramuses. The poor woman's doctors took all that she had and left her worse than ever. So the sinner tries various vain remedies to heal the malady of sin and finds himself no better. He drugs his soul with the opiate of procrastination, as did the trembling Felix who tried to drown his convictions by putting off repentance to some other more convenient season. Opiates are always perilous, but specially those that stupefy and benumb the conscience. The sinner sometimes uses excitants as well as anodynes. Pleasure brings the branded wine of sensual satisfaction. The doses are repeated. Jaded feelings and self-disgust result. The wages of sin is death.

But we must not forget the poor Galilean woman. She had heard of Jesus, and looked to Him for healing. Hospitals there were none. That at Beirut, St. John's, was founded centuries ago, but the only hospital then in Palestine was on foot, migratory, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He cured surely, and He cured gratuitously. Christ draws near. The crowd throng Him, but the woman is determined to reach Him. It is the time for a push. When the plank is about to be drawn ashore from the ship on which you are to sail you push your way to get on board. When caught in the fire you leap forth with haste to a place of safety. This sufferer reasoned: "If I but touch Him I am whole. Now or never!" and she lays her hand on His garment. The hem alone was enough for her. He was a surcharged reservoir of power. You touch your knuckle to a Leyden-jar and feel a thrill through all your nerves. She was a negative; He a positive. Instantly two things occur as her hand touches the dusty robe of the Nazarine: her blood was stannched and the Master speaks. Questions are not always signs of ignorance. Christ designed a cure. He asks, "Who touched me?" but he read the secret in

her heart. He knew her desire and her faith. He wished to exhibit her faith and secure her confession. Afraid, astonished, happy, she drops humbly before Him oppressed with gratitude. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." He who saw in secret rewards her openly. Her faith was after its kind. All experiences are not alike. The Lord does not upbraid her for the clandestine approach, but dismisses her with His benediction. She disappears in the crowd. The wave closes about her, and she is lost to us forever.

In closing, we see here an exhibition of the miraculous power of Jesus Christ. The Great First Cause comes immediately in contact with man. He wills and it is done. We recognize the hand of Deity Himself.

Again, we see the reward of secret, solid faith. Christ's strength and her weakness, Deity and humanity met. By the incarnation He and we meet. We fit into Christ and become sharers of His grace. His omniscience saw this woman's need, and His omnipotence cured her. She speaks to us to-day. Some of you end the year in sorrow, and remember that there is relief in Christ the Healer. He will lift the load. Take all your sins and troubles to Jesus. The nostrums and drugs of skepticism only make you worse. Do what the Galilean woman did—go to Jesus. Take a new departure with the new year, 1885. Not only resolve, but do. Begin your noon-day meal to-day with a blessing. Rear the family altar. Take Christ with you to the counting-room. Delay not, but come to Him at once. Come to Christ though you have to creep. Cry aloud, "Mercy, mercy, MERCY I implore!" God will give you the desire of your heart.

"MEN at the present day will not be converted by philosophy, nor by fine writing, nor by graceful speaking. Ministers must take the naked gospel, and go forth and preach Jesus Christ, the atonement and eternity to busy men, with the same tact and earnestness with which these men preach the world in the heat of a bargain."—DR. GEORGE SHEPARD.