



THE
PULPIT TREASURY.
AN EVANGELICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER, 1884.

No. 7.

→*SERMONS*←

RECONCILIATION.

BY CHARLES F. DEEMS, D.D., LL.D., CHURCH OF THE STRANGERS (INDEPENDENT),
NEW YORK.

All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.—II. CORINTHIANS v., 18, 19.

IN the minds of men there are *prejudices* against God.

These prejudices come originally from man's sinfulness and wilful blindness, and unwillingness to examine the evidences of the character of God.

But they are greatly nourished by the false Christianity which has been so largely presented to the world. It is unfortunate that there should be two kinds of Christianity, but that there *are* is obvious to all thoughtful minds.

1. There is what I shall venture to call *Pagan Christianity*, because it is a mythologic representation of the character, deeds, purposes, and relations of the Supreme Being. I shall not now undertake to discover the genesis and trace the development of this perversion of the teaching of Jesus. It exists and it is all the more dangerous because it does not bear its own true warning name, is not set forth *as* a mythology, a system developing preconceived ideas into representative facts, but is assumed, and presented in literature, not palpably, but ordinarily latently. Now, when I strip this system

the poet, the artist, the historian, and the divine. It reflects and perpetuates the mystery of the incarnation. It is the word of Him who proclaimed himself the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. "Men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II. Peter i., 21). Here all is divine and all is human.

No doubt the New Testament is the result of a gradual growth and conflict of different forces, which are included in the original idea of Christianity and were drawn out as it passed from Christ to His disciples, from the Jews to the Gentiles, from Jerusalem to Antioch and Rome,

and as it matured in the mind of the leading apostles. No doubt the Gospels and Epistles were written by certain men, at a certain time, in a certain place, under certain surroundings, and for definite ends; and all these questions are legitimate objects of inquiry and eminently deserving of ever-renewed investigation. Many obscure points have been cleared up, thanks, in part, to these very critics who intended to destroy and helped to build up; other points are still waiting a satisfactory conclusion, which will be reached by and by. Christianity is true, and truth must prevail.

—*Christian Monthly.*

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

BY JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D., PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY, PRINCETON.

In my younger years I tried once and again to solve the problem of the origin of evil. In my later life I have given up the attempt. I have become convinced that no one has cleared up the mystery, which remains as the one dark cloud in our sky.

The great German philosopher, Leibnitz, propounded a grand doctrine of optimism, which asserts that this is the best possible world; and this doctrine was expounded with glowing eloquence by Bolingbroke, and in terse verse by Pope. This style of sentiment prevailed in our literature for more than a century, and people did little to remove the evils in our world or to elevate the great mass of the people, many of whom sank in our great cities to the lowest depths of degradation. But in later times thinkers have been obliged to view the other aspects. Astronomy teaches the generation of worlds out of star dust. Geology tells us that death has reigned over all animated beings from the beginning. In all past ages there has been a struggle for existence.

We have now pessimism, which declares that the world is the worst possible, proclaimed and defended by a few moodish men of genius, and youths are wondering at it, and finding a confirmation of it in the circumstance that they are not meet-

ing with an encouragement suited to their merits and their opinion of themselves.

On two points I have reached assurance: one is, that God is not, and cannot be, the author of evil; and, on the other hand, that those intelligent creatures who commit sin are themselves to blame for it. Carrying those two convictions with me, I leave speculative questions with God, of whose existence and goodness I have such abundant proof.

On one other point I have reached assurance—the existence of pain is not inconsistent with the existence of love. Suffering is one of the most potent means of calling forth love. The shepherd left the ninety-and-nine sheep in the wilderness to go after that which was lost. There was a tenderness in the interest which the father took in his returning prodigal son beyond what he felt in the one always with him, and which led him to run out to meet him and embrace him in his arms. There is joy in heaven among the holy angels over one sinner that repenteth.

"Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Man may feel at times as if he were kept at an infinite distance from God; yet,

if he would but think of it, there is an endearing element in the love of God toward sinful men not found in His love to the holy angels. There is pity. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." That apparent frown which we see at times on the face of God is assumed only because God has to mark His disapprobation of our conduct, His love all the while being ready to burst out. Thus it was that God was led to give up His only begotten Son to suffer and to die for us. It was

this affection which led the Son to leave the bosom of the Father, and suffer and die on earth. The highest exercise of love which the universe discloses is the love of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—toward fallen and suffering man. "Herein indeed is love."

The mystery of darkness is swallowed up in the mystery of light, as we "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE.

BY A. J. F. BEHREND, D.D., CENTRAL CONG'L CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Why I believe the Bible is a question that cannot be evaded and that rightly claims the clearest of answers. And as I have framed the question in the first person, let me answer it in the same way; not, however, as giving a leaf from merely personal experience, but rather as the representative, for the time being, of the great household of faith.

And, as preliminary, let me say that my faith in the Bible is not the product of literary criticism. An entire section of Christian literature is devoted to the authenticity and the integrity of the books composing our Bible. These treatises are a very important part of the defences of Christianity; But I believed in my Bible before I had opened one of these books. Faith in the Bible is older than biblical criticism. Criticism is a modern science, whose history is measured by decades; faith in the Bible as the Word of God counts her age by centuries. However confirmatory the results of modern criticism have been, and may still be, it still remains true that faith in the Bible is more ancient than criticism, and that, therefore, the former is not born of the latter, nor dependent on it. Criticism may be the buttress of faith, but is certainly not its foundation. Faith is also more wide-spread and universal. Only a few are at home in the realm of scientific criticism; but faith in the Bible is the universal life of Christendom. I do not

owe my faith in the Bible to the industry of Christian scholars.

If I trace my faith to its birth, I must say that I believe in the Bible because my mother believed in it. As soon as I could understand anything, I recognized in the Bible something peculiar and divine. I inhaled this faith as I inhaled the air; it was the atmosphere in which I was born and reared. I believed in the Bible as confidently as I believed in my mother's love; yea, I learned to believe in the Bible because it was my mother's treasure. Nor is this explanation sentimental. Nothing in all this world is so jealous of truth and purity as motherhood. No mother wants her child to be deceived or depraved. And when Christian mothers choose the Bible as a parting gift to their sons and daughters and commend it with their dying breath, that testimony is one not to be lightly regarded. I know there is a sneer against young men who are tied to their "mother's aprons." I would there were more such captives. For were we only true to our mothers, we should be better men. I believe with Carlyle, that we need to get back into our long clothes and our cradles. And, therefore, I am not ashamed to say that my faith in the Bible is the heritage of a Christian home.

But that inherited faith has been abundantly confirmed. To the faith rooted in personal confidence, I have added the