

THE LIVING PULPIT,

OR

EIGHTEEN SERMONS

BY EMINENT LIVING DIVINES

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE EDITOR,

BY GEO. W. BETHUNE, D. D.

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## THE HOUSE OF GOD.

BY

W. A. SCOTT, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

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One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the House of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.—PSALM xxvii. 4.

THE sentiment of the royal Psalmist in this verse, is one of devoted attachment to the service of God. Many are the passages of holy Scripture that express the great delight which the pious have found in the ordinances of the sanctuary. Those who have long been accustomed to the blessings of Christian worship, and those who, like Gallio, *care for none of these things*, may not readily appreciate the value of the Christian Church, neither in a temporal nor spiritual point of view. Because the *kingdom of God cometh not with observation*, they see it not at all. Because its heavenly influences are noiseless as the dew, men acknowledge them not, although every day enjoying them. It is our purpose to consider some of the ADVANTAGES WHICH THE HOUSE OF GOD CONFERS UPON SOCIETY.

THE HOUSE OF GOD IS THE FORERUNNER, ALLY, AND SUPPORTER OF THE BEST FORMS OF CIVILIZATION.

Civilization, whatever it is, in modern times owes its best estate to Christianity.\* It is true that some ancient nations, as the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Etrurians and Romans, attained to considerable eminence in refinement, in elegance of manners, and to honourable distinction in arts and arms without the Gospel. But it is also true that historians are agreed—*first*, that much of their knowledge, their philosophy, and of course their refinement, was handed down to them from their ancestors, that is, by tradition from the sons of Noah; from whom are descended the whole human race, and who were doubtless instructed in the religion of the Bible by their pious father. This opinion is supported by the analogy that is to be found in their respective systems of worship, of astronomy and of mythology, and by their own united testimony down to Aristotle—that *all knowledge was derived from tradition*. Hence, to become learned in ancient times, it was necessary to travel, not only because there were then no *printed* books, and but few MSS, and literary institutions were scarce, but chiefly that the traditions of all lands might be picked up. Their knowledge, and even their philosophy, was to be found in the songs of the Rhapsodists and the proverbs of their wise men. But, *secondly*, historians are agreed that even

\*“*I know that the civilization of the age is derived from Christianity, that the institutions of this country are instinct with the same spirit, and that it pervades the laws of the State, as it does the manners, and, I trust, the hearts of the people.*”—*Gov. Hammond, of South Carolina, in his letter of the 4th Nov. 1844, to the Israelites of Charleston.*

Phœnicia, Egypt and Greece, as also Persia and Rome, were not civilized without religion. Lord Woodhouselee expressly declares that Greece could not be civilized until the religion of the Titans was incorporated with that of the Aborigines.\* It was not until the Pelasgi and the other tribes of Greece were taught to be *religious*, that laws were established among them. And *thirdly*, I ask any candid man whether the highest refinement ever known in Greece or Rome, even with all the light that glimmered upon them by tradition from the temple of the true God at Jerusalem, can be compared with that of the Gospel. I have not the time, nor is it necessary, for it has often been done by able hands, to draw a contrast between the morals of the purest systems of heathen ethics and the precepts of Christianity. But I leave it to the honesty and intelligence of any well read community to say whether Socrates is to be compared with Jesus Christ. Nay, Rousseau, Jefferson, and Paine himself, have already acknowledged that Christianity, in the sublimity of its doctrines, and the purity of its precepts, is immeasurably superior to any thing known to heathen philosophy. In a barbarous or savage state, passion predominates over reason, and lust over conscience. The *animal* is gratified at the expense of the *intellectual* nature of man. But when this order is reversed, when men are governed by an enlightened

\* "It is universally allowed that from the period of those strangers settling among them, the Greeks assumed a new character, and exhibited in some respects the manners of a civilized nation. The dawning of a national religion began to appear, for the Titans were a *religious* people."—*Tytler's Universal History*; vol. i. book i. chap. vi. p. 52.



conscience, then civilization in its best form exists. But no such a state as this is found without the Gospel. The missionaries sent to Greenland laboured *ten years* without success, in attempting to civilize its inhabitants without the Gospel. Then they exhibited, with all the eloquence of fervid feeling, the doctrine of a Saviour crucified, with an effect that more than realized their most sanguine expectations. The attention of the people was arrested, they received the *faith that purifies the heart, and works by love*; and this laid the foundation for civilization. Schools among our own Indians have always failed, except when they have been established under the influence of the Gospel.

It is the testimony of travellers and of missionaries to foreign lands, that savages cannot be civilized by systems of mere education. It is true religion, and true religion only, that changes the heart; and, until the heart is changed, there can be no real elevation of character, for out of the heart are the issues of life; and, until it is changed by the grace of God, it is the *hole of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird*. How can sweetness of manners mark the intercourse of society so long as ferocious passion is permitted to rage and brutify the human mind, and put out the light of truth, and hush the voice of conscience? Why has not infidelity supported missionaries in heathen lands? Why have infidels not civilized some island of the sea, or some spot of the globe? Why, if the Gospel is not necessary as the forerunner and ally of civilization? Let them point to a single spot of earth in Europe, Asia, Africa, or

America, or to a single island of sea or ocean that infidelity has civilized, refined, and blest. Let them point to a single family, neighbourhood, town or individual that has been made better, that has been educated, that has been made more useful and happy by infidelity. The infidels of England and the United States waited until Christian missionaries had partially civilized India, and then they sent thither their own books. The cross first civilized the poor Hindoo—taught him to read—then the infidel goes and endeavours to turn his reading to wormwood. Christianity opens the fountain of knowledge, then infidelity attempts to turn it all to poison. The only way to civilize and to refine, and to give permanent elevation to any community, is to give it the Gospel. Erect the pulpit, and around it schools and benevolent institutions will spring up, as the thousand lesser stars follow the evening star.

The accompaniments of the sanctuary are the living ministry, the preached gospel, the Sabbath, the ordinances of religion, and the blessings of education. Schools, academies, and colleges owe their very existence to the House of God. Ministers of religion are entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of knowledge, not to exercise despotism over the minds of men, but to impart truth for their redemption from ignorance and vice. As a class, the clergy have ever been the first great leaders in the work of education. Harvard University owes its foundation to the dying munificence of an humble minister of the Gospel, who landed on the shores of America, but to lay his bones in its dust.\* The

\* Everett's Orations.

great reform in our prisons, which has accomplished wonders of philanthropy and mercy, and made the penitentiaries of America the model of the penal institutions of the world, had its origin in the visit of a minister of the Gospel, with his Bible in his hand, to the convict's cell. The missionary enterprise, the glory of our age, is an offspring of the house of God. From the sanctuary the champions of truth have gone forth to the heathen, conquering and to conquer, beneath

“The great ensign of the Messiah  
Aloft by angels borne, their sign  
In heaven.”——

A large portion of the literary institutions of the world are under the influence of the clergy. This is not strange. They are in fact, and by profession, the friends of knowledge and of intellectual improvement. Their religion is a system of light. *In it is no darkness at all.* It is their daily office to pour the light of mind and of the glorious Gospel upon the chaos of human intellect. Upon them, therefore, chiefly rests the responsibility of directing the education of youth. As a class, they create and circulate a larger portion of our literature than any other profession.\* In judging of the literary excel-

\* No disparagement of the other learned professions is intended here. There are learned and good men in all professions and in all denominations. There are literary men, and friends of general education, who are not even pious men. But, as a class of men, clergymen are the educators of our country. In nine cases out of ten, those that are eminent as teachers and as friends of education, who are not in the ministry, are the sons or the pupils of clergymen. It is too rarely the case that men qualified to be the

lence of the performances of clergymen, it ought to be remembered that they appear before the public much oftener, and with less time to prepare their discourses, than any other class of public speakers. Who but clergymen come before an intelligent audience two or three times a week, from year to year, with original discourses? and that, too, usually without any change of circumstances, without any relief from the arduous duties of pastoral charges, and without the rivalry of the bar, or the excitement of the halls of legislation. No one performance of any clergyman should be regarded as a test of his abilities, or of his literary attainments. It is a curious, but a truly philosophical fact, that the more a clergyman feeds his people with knowledge, the more they require of him. Sometimes, indeed, the people are like Pharaoh's *task masters*; they require the full tale of bricks, without furnishing straw. They require him to make great intellectual efforts every Sabbath, without allowing him either books to read, or time to study. After all due allowance is made for prosing sermons and quackery in the pulpit, the clergy as a profession, are men of mind, of intelligence, and learning. The ablest constitutional lawyer of America has recently pronounced their eulogy in the celebrated Girard case, and professor Vethak has given them and the learned professions their proper place in the productive capital of the nation. Their lips keep knowledge; works of cha-

instructors of youth, are willing to make the sacrifices required of the successful teacher. Learned men of the secular professions generally prefer the pleasures of literature, or the pursuits of wealth or ambition.



rity are their robes of state; mind is their empire; the pen is their sceptre; eternal truth is their throne.

The Gospel is not only the forerunner and ally of civilization, but its chief SUPPORTER.

Without the House of God, we shall go back to the skins, and acorns, and idols of our ancestors. Some two thousand years ago our forefathers were painted savages, wandering on the shores of the German ocean, drinking their beer out of human skulls, and worshipping Wodin and Thor. And what makes the Anglo Saxon of the nineteenth century to differ from the ancient Briton? The same that makes Christian nations differ from Heathen nations—that makes Tahiti *with* the Gospel, to differ from Tahiti *without* the Gospel. Christianity poured its light into the minds of Alfred and Charlemagne, and thence the civilization of Europe. The Bible has incorporated itself into the laws, languages, institutions, and philosophy of Christendom. Arts and sciences, jurisprudence, commerce, and national politics, owe their present advanced state to the Bible. Hume has ascribed the civil liberty of England to the Puritans. McIntosh says that the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, the preaching of which by Luther produced the great reformation from Popery, lies at the foundation of all civil and religious liberty.\* So emphatically is man's existence and happiness summed up in his religion, that the history of the religions of various nations is the history of their manners, literature, government and philoso-

\* History of England, Henry VIII. ch. ix. "A principle which is the basis of all pure ethics, the cement of the eternal alliance between morality and religion," &c. p. 218.

phy. The *philosophy* of literature and of history is nothing more—can be nothing less—than the *philosophy* of the various systems of religious worship that have quickened and formed, or degraded and fettered the inhabitants of the world.

Without the House of God—without the Sabbath and a regular living ministry of the Word of God, we shall go back to heathenism. We cannot stand still. Motion is the law of our nature. The amount of knowledge does not seem at any time to be greatly augmented. It changes places, and passes from one generation to another, but does not seem to be greatly increased. Its progress is rather that of a door on hinges, backwards and forwards, now in the East, now in the West, and anon to the East. Territories once republican are now sunk into the most degraded despotism. Territories once traversed by the feet of the blessed Saviour and his Apostles, have run back to heathenism, and why? Because their CANDLESTICKS, in the language of Holy Writ, their Churches, have been removed out of their places. When the sanctuary declines, all that pertains to the ennobling of man declines. Pull down all our houses of worship, and let the church going bell utter no more hints of salvation through the Cross, and there will follow a train of litigations, and bankruptcies, and imprisonments, and frauds, and divorces, and murders, that no human power can control. A palpable darkness will come over the land, and gross darkness fall upon the people. Refinement will become sensuality—low and vulgar vices, clownishness of manners, coarseness of attire, and depravity of mind and morals, will complete the history. Sepa-

rate civilization from the Gospel, and it will degenerate into heathenism. Separate institutions of learning and benevolence from the higher institutions of religion, and they will perish, sure as the frosts of autumn strip the forests of their foliage. Religion, science, and benevolence, are inseparably connected with the sanctuary.

II. THE HOUSE OF GOD INCREASES THE VALUE OF ALL USEFUL PROPERTY. This may be a novel proposition, but it does not follow that it is either fanciful or incapable of proof. It is a proposition sustained by the preceding, thus: civilization is necessary to give property its greatest value: the Gospel is the forerunner, pre-requisite, ally, and supporter of civilization: ergo, &c. The proposition is not only capable of demonstration, but is sustained by numerous facts. Time allows, however, of reference to but a few. Men are so prone to think of religion not at all, or to think of it as a mere abstraction, a thing altogether spiritual, and as having to do altogether with the next world, that they forget its influence upon the present. They remember not the words of an Apostle who has told us that *godliness with contentment is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Men, too, are so apt to regard what they give to the support of religious institutions, as either thrown away or bestowed in charity, that they do not seem to consider for a moment that for the value of their property they are greatly indebted to the Bible. This, however, is a proposition so clearly established by facts, that the dullest apprehension must admit it when it is properly considered. Let any one ac-

quainted with the history of the Jews reflect, and see if property was not worth more when David and Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, than during the reign of the unprincipled Ahab. The reason is obvious enough. In the reign of David and Solomon, religious institutions were honoured, and moral influence restrained the depravity of men, so that their rights, persons, and property were held sacred.—While in the reign of Ahab, a false religion was substituted for the true, and thus moral restraint was generally removed from the public mind. The vineyard of Naboth was not worth half so much under Ahab, as when Solomon was on the throne of Israel. Ahab was a wicked, avaricious, and cruel prince; under his administration every thing was in confusion, uncertainty, and peril. Solomon feared God, and his reign was just, and good, and prosperous. What was the value of Lot's house in Sodom, though it was, perhaps, built of the most costly materials, decorated with all the art, and furnished with all the elegancies of his age, yet subject to the invasion of a most depraved and licentious community, compared with the humble tent of Abraham under the oak in the plains of Mamre. Lot's neighbours were not under the influence of religion. Abraham's people were. *A sense of insecurity depreciates the value of property.* Thus in the time of war, when our coasts are ravaged, our cities plundered, our houses burned, and our fields laid waste, real estate falls far below its intrinsic value. During the invasion of Louisiana in 1814–15, land and houses were worth scarcely a tithe of what they were after the treaty of peace. In France, during the Reign of Terror,



property sunk far below its ordinary value. And why was this? Because during the reign of terror, there was no security afforded by the government to life and property. And there was no security to life and property, because all religious institutions had been annihilated, and infidelity, cruel and licentious, had been set up in their stead, and as a necessary consequence, religious restraints were taken from the minds of the people. Men *fearing* not God, *regarded* not their fellow men. Not being *devout* towards God, they were not *just* and *merciful* towards their neighbours, nor did the public mind become settled, and property and life secure, till the re-establishment of the forms of religion, and of law. Let a false religion be substituted among us for the true, let rampant and licentious infidelity prevail, let all the hallowed influences of the sanctuary be withdrawn from off the public mind, and how much would your houses and lands decline in value! Take away all the restraints of our religious institutions, and what stability would remain? Who would be willing to risk his life and property in a community void of all moral restraints?

It is said that the intrinsic value of the soil of Turkey is greater than that of America; and yet the poorest acre of these United States is worth more than five of the richest land in Turkey. And why? because here you are protected in your rights by a vigorous conscience in the body politic; while in Turkey, you are constantly exposed to lawless rapacity, your property liable to be confiscated at any moment, and you yourself to perish by the hand of violence. Remove the House of God and its in-

stitutions from the United States, and we shall become as ferocious as the Turk. It is admitted that the Mahomedan faith has destroyed the agriculture of Persia; and Chardin thinks that if the Turks were to inhabit that country, it would soon be more impoverished than it is. Persia was once renowned for its fertility; but EVEN THE TEMPORAL PROSPERITY OF A NATION DEPENDS UPON THE PRINCIPLES OF ITS RELIGION.\*

It is a remarkable fact, that nowhere, except where Christianity prevails, do we find those partnerships in trade and commerce; so indispensable to give property its greatest value. Travellers and missionaries inform us, that in pagan countries there are no associations for commerce and trade, for exchange, for banking, and for benevolent purposes. To use the language of another: "Why cannot heathens, as well as Christians, combine their wealth, so as to give it greater value, by giving it greater power of accumulation? It is because their religion, or rather the want of true religion, forbids the exercise of mutual confidence, creating universal distrust, and making every man an *iceberg* to his neighbour. Hence the reason why their resources are crippled, and the public mind is stagnant. But let the Christian Pulpit be planted there, and the truth, as it is in Jesus, pervade the hearts and minds of the people, and the now dead mass would at once exhibit signs of life, and put on such an aspect of enterprise and prosperity as Heathenism never saw, and can never produce." So true is this connection, that a distinguished instructor was accustomed to say to his pupils, "Give me the *religion*

\* Ancient History, Vol. III. p. 32.

of a country, and I will tell you all the rest;”—the kind of religion chiefly determines the language, literature and characteristics of the people—whether they are torpid or active—ignorant or enlightened—bond or free. An instance is cited in a discourse by the Rev. Mr. Clarke, of Stockbridge, Mass., which will illustrate the point in hand. I give it in his own words: “In one of the towns in a neighbouring county, the people voluntarily deprived themselves of a preached Gospel for several years, till the difference between them and the adjoining towns, in want of thrift and prosperity, became proverbial, and till they themselves were convinced, that, in forsaking the Pulpit, they had forsaken their own mercies. At length, they repaired their weather-beaten and almost ruined church, and settled a devoted minister of the Gospel, with an effect so marked on the enterprise of the people, that one of their most intelligent men remarked, but a few weeks since, that their farms had increased fifty per cent. in value, and that an entirely new aspect had been put on the dwellings, as well as on the spirit of the people.”\*

The proposition is, that the HOUSE OF GOD INCREASES THE VALUE OF USEFUL PROPERTY. The proof is thus: First, security of life and property is necessary to give property its highest value: moral restraints are necessary to give security to life and property: and moral restraints are produced and maintained only by the Gospel. And, secondly, it is in Christendom alone that trade and commerce are carried on with the enterprise of combined wealth and mutual confidence. Almost the only government known among

\* Clarke, in National Preacher.

men without the Gospel is tyranny. The ability of heathen statesmen consists in knowing how to deceive others by hypocrisy, fraud, perfidy, and perjury. Where the House of God is not, there is no bond of union between man and man. True honour, humanity, justice and commercial enterprise are promoted by the principles of the Bible. The English government supports missions partly for the sake of extending her commerce. Even the vicinity of houses of Christian worship, in several well known instances in some of our largest cities, has greatly enhanced the value of property—first, because of the convenience of being near the House of the Lord, and secondly, because a church-going people are good tenants, and thirdly, because the influence of the House of God changes the character of the population in its neighbourhood. Corrupt, licentious, profane, Sabbath-breaking communities have become, through the preaching of the Gospel, decent, sober, intelligent, industrious, pious and well-to-do in the world.

III. THE HOUSE OF GOD IS NOT SO EXPENSIVE AS THE SYNAGOGUES OF SATAN. This is a plain proposition, and like the two preceding, it addresses itself to men's temporal interests. It is simply this:—That *vice costs more than virtue*. It costs more to support a drunkard than a sober man; more to sustain the licentious than the chaste; more to secure and convict a criminal than it would have cost to have prevented him from becoming a criminal by placing him under religious influence. Sabbath-breaking is an expensive vice. One Sabbath spent in idleness and dissipation—in neglecting the sanc-



tuary, costs more than five days spent in the discharge of their appropriate duties. Which costs the most, to lounge at the corner of the streets, bet on elections, ride to the country, attend the military parade or the horse race on the Sabbath, drink at the Exchange, and then to the theatre at night, or to worship God in his Holy Temple? Which costs the most, livery stable bills, Sunday dinners, oyster suppers, opera tickets, masquerade balls and coffee house indulgences, or attendance upon the sanctuary? Which is best, to spend the Sabbath in idleness or in dissipation, and resume business Monday morning, with an empty purse, and languid spirits, and a heart aching under the remorse of conscience? or to lay aside business affairs at a proper hour Saturday evening, close the ledger and lock the desk, and shut the world up in the counting room, and relax the energies of the week in the social endearments of the family—

“The only bliss that has survived the fall?”

Rise early Sabbath morn, and begin the day with its appropriate duties, and then to the Sabbath school, to swim in the smiles and glad faces of earth's brightest similitudes of Heaven—*little children*—and then mingle with the people of God, who keep holy time, and send up the voice of supplication and the shout of praise to the Most High—and then melted, softened, awed, refined, better fitted for society and for social and civil duties, return home to the Sabbath collation—and Monday, with health repaired, spirits refreshed, and the bright sunshine of the soul, a good conscience, which is a “continual feast,” be-

gin the labours of the week? *I speak as unto wise men, judge ye.*

IV. THE HOUSE OF GOD WIELDS THE ONLY POWER TO REFORM THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF MEN. Christianity is the only preventive of crime. We are aware that we live in an age of excitement and of bold experiments. The spirit of the day is restless, innovating. We have numberless forced systems of economy, of politics, of morals and of education. One cries, lo here! another, lo there! Each cries out, *I have found it—I have found it*, and a long line of Esqrs., Gens., D. D's, L. L. D's, and learned professors echo the lying sound. But, in a few days, like their predecessors, they in their turn give place to seven other ill favoured and lean kine, that "eat up the fat fleshed and well flavoured." And, like the flies in the fable, each succeeding swarm of quacks, strolling lecturers and reckless innovators, is more greedy than the first—more impudent and more ignorant. But with all the nostrums which have in their turn been promulgated as certain specifics for all our civil and moral diseases—such as those efficacious Protean balsams, cordials, pills and sudorifics, which are infallible cures, (or if no cure, no pay,) for the hepatitis, consumption, fever, and gout, for old men, young men, maidens, and children—is it not true of us, as Pope said, turning from his doctor: "Alas! dear sir, I am dying every day of the most favourable symptoms."

Our state pharmacopolists, each one like a *scribe well instructed*, can tell why the currency was deranged, why commercial credit depreciated, and why the times are hard, and show the errors of all past

administrations, and if the people would only put him and his party in power, he would turn the very stones into gold. On the one hand, some *savans* have asserted that nature has endowed all the tribes of the earth with precisely the same dispositions, and fitted them in their turn for the same sort of institutions, and that there is no reformation to be expected—no elevation to be hoped for. That all our inventions and discoveries in government and in science, are but the recovery of what we have lost—and that, in short, we are doomed to float about in eddies, and fly round in circles—but that there is no progress, no elevation, no redemption for our race.\*

*Others* teach that crime is owing entirely to the vagueness of accident—that vice and virtue are essentially nothing but the result of chance—the “rouge et noir” of life; and consequently, there is no redemption from the bondage of vice, but to wait the “fortunate concurrence of fortuitous atoms.”

*Others* say law is the sole cause of crime—that the very fact that there are laws, which are intended to debar men from crime, begets a disposition to violate them—that *by the law is the knowledge of sin*; that is to say, because there are balustrades around the pit, to keep men from falling into it, men will plunge into it for the mere pleasure of getting over the obstructions put in their way for their good. “The danger’s self is lure alone,” and that, consequently, the only way to prevent crime is to annul all the existing laws of society, remove all restraints, reduce all to a common chaos, to a community of *rights*, and of *wives*, and of *goods*. But the history

\* M. Fournier de Dejon, author of the Phalansterian sect.

of mankind abundantly proves that man is the creature of laws; that no society can exist without laws, not even a community of robbers, they must have a common bond of union—a code of rules. Laws are essential to our individual and social existence, and if we have *no other*, we must submit to the dominion of passion; and then we should see again the bloody days of Caligula, and of Nero, and of Robespierre.

*But again*, others assert that all crime is the result of education, that men are vicious because they have been improperly instructed; and that, therefore, all that we have to do is to reform our system of education, for that education is competent to heal all our maladies, and to exhibit man

“ Full orb'd in his round of rays complete.”

This system is called the Hylopathian, or the Anaximandrian, from its author, Anaximander, one of the earliest Greek Atheists. He taught that education is the creator of all things; that all things, even life and understanding, are *educated out* of matter, and are to be considered as nothing more than the passions and affections of matter; that all life and understanding are the products of these qualified atoms, hot and cold, moist and dry. Anaxagoras taught, at a later period, the same system, with this exception: he held to an uncreated mind.\* This system, in substance, has been frequently advanced, and has even now its warm advocates. But all these systems fail to give life to man's moral powers. They all fall short of reforming his heart and regulating his life. They do not give the true cause of

\* Cudworth's Int. Sys. Vol. I. p. 41.



crime, and consequently they fail to afford any adequate remedy. They undertake to build without a foundation. *They daub with untempered mortar.* The spring-head of all crime is that black spot which the Arabs say is in every man's heart by nature, which is very little at first, but at last spreads all over him—original sin—corruption of nature—a heart deceitful above *all things*, and desperately wicked. And as is the heart, so also is the life. Out of the heart proceed *evil thoughts, adulteries, murders and seditions.* The heart is the fountain of influences. Out of it are the issues of life. The only effectual remedy for the disorders of society is to change the heart—to make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good. It can be proved most conclusively, but for the want of time the proof is here omitted, from the history of Prussia and France, that intelligence, mere education, does not prevent crime; “that knowledge is power” indeed, but that it may be power to do evil as well as good. The more intelligence, the more power to serve the passions and the appetites. Knowledge awakens new desires and develops new and strong passions, and must then of necessity become the instrument of their gratification.

The history of Italy in the dark ages proves this fact. Italy was then the centre of civilization, the only illumined spot on the globe, and Italy was then, also, the scene of the darkest crimes on the catalogue of the human race. The same may be truly said of England at this moment. The most enlightened and greatest nation under heaven; yet, considering her moral and religious institutions, without a ques-

tion the most haughty, ambitious, and wicked nation on earth. Education, as it is used, is a saviour of life unto life, or of death unto death. The sources of power and pleasure, of dignity and wealth, may also become the sources of crime and vice, degradation and poverty. We practically acknowledge this when we make laws to keep our servants in ignorance, lest they should be wise to do evil. The stream of civilization too nearly resembles that mysterious river, whose waves both fold the crocodile and carry the fertilizing loam to the same shore. Let an evangelical pulpit sanctify our literature, and education will be the handmaid and supporter of morals. An appeal to criminal statistics—to figures that cannot lie—shows most conclusively, that while mere science does not prevent crime, but rather increases misdemeanors and felons; that, on the other hand, religious knowledge, education on Christian principles, literature sanctified by the pulpit, does prevent crime. The experiment made by the Prussian Government—the history of Sabbath schools—the statistics of the United States and of Scotland, compared with England and Ireland, all show that RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IS A PREVENTIVE OF CRIME.

There is no country on the face of the earth so much affected by the facts here alluded to as our own. In our government the people are the *sovereign*. They rule—they make our legislators and our rulers. Consequently, if we should have wise and virtuous statesmen, we must have wise and virtuous citizens. Let the Bible, through the pulpit, and the school-room, and the press, give tone to

public sentiment, and we shall not have legislators, and senators, and public functionaries, that can profane the day and the name of God. Let public sentiment be purified and elevated, and our cities would be rid of those hundreds of high-ways to hell that are to be found along our streets, and at almost every corner. Let the influence of the pulpit be felt, and our land would have a Sabbath, and vice would be put to shame and confusion. The fearful responsibility of our national sins is to be resolved back upon the sovereign people. Why has not the United States, why has not England, produced a Handel, a Haydn, a Weber, or a Beethoven? Because the public have little taste for music. Their ear is only for the sound of the hammer and the thundering of the steam engine; while in Germany every man is a musician, and every family is an orchestra. Why did England produce, in the seventeenth century, her Walton, Castell, Usher, Selden, Lightfoot, and Pococke? Then England was pervaded with the spirit of biblical inquiry and theological investigation. Why has France produced La Place, La Land, and La Grange? France honours and rewards science. Her scholars are her peers. It is true that ever and anon a mighty spirit arises, who leads captivity captive—who inspires and leads the people; such were Luther, Calvin, Knox, Newton and others. They may be said to have created their own age—to have marked out their own era. Still, to some extent, even they were the embodyings forth of the people. The people gave the response when they called, or they had never been heard. Columbus, the bold and adventurous, was but the

crucible in which the traditions and the floating knowledge of the public, its hopes and conjectures, were reduced to a form, and breathed into action. Very much the same may be said of Dante, Ariosto, and Milton; Bacon, Washington, and Napoleon.

To a very great extent, public men are the mirrors of the morals and knowledge of the great public, *the omnific people*. Why have we pettifoggers, quack doctors, and ignorant preachers? because the people not only tolerate, but patronize them. Tolerated they should be, not patronized. *Tolerated*, because we allow liberty of conscience, and declare life and the pursuit of happiness an inalienable right; but *patronized* they should not be, because thereby an evil is inflicted upon the body politic and moral, which no man has a right to do, do what he may with or to himself. And least of all, should an ignorant, unsound preacher, be countenanced. It is better to have ignorance at the bar, or in the senate, or in medicine, than in the pulpit. *Let me lose my property through the negligence, or ignorance, or unskilfulness of my attorney; let me be murdered by a quack, rather than that my soul perish, eternally perish, through the error, or ignorance, or unfaithfulness of my spiritual guide.*

“If the people are industrious and virtuous, their representatives will be men of like spirit. But if ignorance, licentiousness, and a disregard of all religious obligation prevail in the community, then reckless demagogues, and loud disunionists, and abandoned profligates, will sit in the sacred halls of legislation, and ambition, and self-aggrandizement, and love of power, will take the place of patriotism



and public spirit, and an unshaken attachment to the best interests of the nation. In such a state of society, the elective franchise, which is the peculiar glory of America, will become one of its deadliest scourges."

In many other countries the government, by a standing army, by racks, dungeons and spies, and by disarming the people, preserves some kind of public order; but here the people govern themselves, and keep the peace, and go through the most exciting elections without bloodshed and without a police. And why? Because the people of this country are free, and are under the influence of the Bible. The power of the world to come has always exerted an extensive influence on the hearts of the people of this country. They fled from oppression to this wilderness with the Bible in their hand, for "freedom to worship God," and they have made it blossom as the garden of the Lord. The Huguenot and Pilgrim fathers brought the sanctuary to America, and hence its independence, and its prosperity, and its illimitable influence on the destinies of mankind.

V. PUBLIC SENTIMENT IS MAINLY FORMED BY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.—However great the influence of public sentiment may be upon the institutions of other countries, in our country it is greater. *Our government is the people themselves.* Every citizen is a part, it may be an humble part, but still a visible, a living and accountable part of the sovereignty of the nation. Divine Providence has bound us together by the ties of family, of country, and of necessity. We are twined and interwoven into the great web of our political institutions,

like the threads of flax or the locks of wool in a piece of linen or cloth. The beauty and strength of American institutions is, that the fine and the coarse threads are so wonderfully interwoven and twisted together, that it is impossible to part them without tearing the whole to pieces. One cannot distinguish between the threads of a piece of cloth, which are manufactured out of the wool of the lean, from those which are manufactured from the wool of the fat of the flock—no more can a distinction be made between the rich and the poor, learned and ignorant citizen in the *sovereignty* of our country. The great principles of republican representation, and the pure sovereignty of the people, are the inalienable, investible inheritance of every American. And what are the consequences? The consequences are fearfully momentous: namely, that our government and institutions are what public sentiment is. The vices and the virtues of every one form an essential part of our national character. The wickedness of one, the drunkenness of another; the atheism, infidelity, or profligacy of a third; the avarice, cruelty, and deceit of a fourth; the malice, knavery, and idleness of a fifth; the Sabbath breaking, neglect of family education, worship, and government of a sixth—all these make up the gross amount of our national character and guilt, just as a mountain is made up of sands, or as the great and mighty ocean is made up of drops of water. The purity of public sentiment is therefore the *pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night*, which alone can preserve the peace and glory of republican America. BY THIS ONLY SHALL SHE CONQUER. *This is her heaven de-*

*scended banner.* The good order, the intelligence, and the religious influence of the family is the bulwark and strong tower of our defence. Every instance of parental neglect, of ungoverned, disobedient, and wicked children, tends to draw down the curse of God upon our country. Every evil word, every blasphemous oath, every malicious thought, every violation of the holy Sabbath, every species of contempt to the Lord's house, and the institutions and ministers of the everlasting Gospel; every sin, secret or public, against God, is a sin against our country, and is high treason against the State. And on the other hand, every virtuous feeling, every victory over our baser appetites, every benevolent aspiration, every tear of contrition, every groan of repentance, every sacrifice of our will and wishes to the supremacy of law; every holy act, every prayer of faith from the humblest cottage—every such act adds another stone to the spiritual rampart, which for so many years has surrounded and defended us. *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*

The conscience of the body politic, and the maintenance of law, are but developments of public sentiment. The best laws are perverted, misapplied, or neglected, when public opinion is against them. The statutes of departed wisdom, and the legacies of sainted worth, are no better than dead letters, when not in favour with the omnific public.

But what law cannot do, public sentiment can. To the ungodly, public sentiment is law irresistible. The thief and the robber are bound by it. Surround them with purity of sentiment, and you make

them honest; first, because no man can habitually do what all about him disapprove. The most depraved will be perfectly wretched, embosomed in a holy community. They would break from it as from a prison, and seek some mountain glade or wilderness cave, where they might associate with men of their own stamp. Man cannot live without the countenance and sympathy of his fellow man. And, secondly, because where public sentiment is correct, human laws will be executed. Let duelling be regarded by public opinion, as it is in fact, murder, and it will no longer be the mark of a gentleman and the badge of honour. Let suicide be marked with the universal horror and disgrace of public feeling, and men will no longer take their own lives. Let Sabbath breaking, and drunkenness, and vices which are so depraved they may not be named, receive the detestation, and united and overwhelming frown of all who love morality and religion, and they will be abandoned. And for the formation of a correct public opinion, there is no means so powerful as the House of God. Its influence operates not only upon those that attend the public preaching of the Word, moulding and sanctifying their principles, but it goes out into the crowd that never attend the sanctuary. For the men who hear the Gospel, bear out into society, and act out, in their deportment, its principles; and others catch the moralizing influence, and spread it wider and still wider over the surface of the community, till the whole mass is in some degree leavened. "Hence, that portion of society which stand aloof from the House of God, and perhaps gnash



their teeth upon its holy solemnities, are blessed through its influence. It bears obliquely upon them; but it is mighty, like no other law they listen to. It gives them indirectly all their civil privileges, the peaceable possession of their rights, security of life, and exemption from midnight depredations, and from hourly oppressions. It sets a watch about them and places a guard over their goods and persons at the expense of others;”\* a watch and guard, which they should be ashamed to let their fellow citizens sustain alone, but without which society would be a den of thieves.

VI. THE HOUSE OF GOD FURNISHES THE ONLY TRUE STANDARD OF MORALS.—Without a rule it is not known what is straight or what is crooked. Without some standard of excellence, from which there can be no appeal, it is not known what is right or what is wrong. The Bible is the only rule of life by which to form our creed, and regulate our private and public actions. *Conscience*, although it is not, as McIntosh asserts, “a human generation,” is, nevertheless, very much the creature of education. Set up conscience as the infallible standard, and then it will be right to worship the Grand Lama—to immolate widows upon the funeral piles of their husbands, and to murder our children and our parents. Conscience may be educated to tolerate any thing. It may be reared so as to approve of the most monstrous and cruel rites of Paganism.

*Public opinion*, though worthy of consideration, is not a safe standard. It is wayward and blind, fickle and feeble.

\* Tract No. 223 of the American Tract Society, p. 6.

*The laws of the land are also defective. There are many virtues which they cannot enforce: such as gratitude, fidelity in friendship, charity, proper education of children, and the duties of piety, love to God supremely, and to our neighbour as ourselves. There are, on the other hand, many vices and crimes which the laws of the land and the magistrates cannot prevent; such as luxury, wasting, disrespect to parents, partiality in voting, betting on elections, secret fraud and speculation, and the such like. And besides, the laws of the land and the civil magistrates never reach the heart. They cannot ferret out the motives and secret purposes of the soul, nor can they change and purify the heart. And what is still more, how often are statutes dead letters? The laws are perverted, misapplied, or neglected. Either from ignorance or fear, negligence or partiality, the guilty escape, and the innocent are oppressed.*

If, then, it is desirable that men should live by Gospel precepts, that they should love their country—*fear God and honour the magistrate*; that they should be *fervent in spirit, diligent in business, serving the Lord*—upright in all their dealings with their fellow men, and faithful in all their duties, let them be brought under the influence of an able, evangelical pulpit.

VII. THE HOUSE OF GOD IS THE ONLY PREVENTIVE FROM A FALSE RELIGION—THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE OF POLYTHEISM.—Whenever the Jews left off the worship of Jehovah, they bowed down to idols. Men may and do change their forms of religion, but they cannot abandon all religions. To

what extent some individuals may have succeeded in eradicating religious truth from their minds, it is not for us to determine; but all history, and our own observation, teaches that no nation can exist without some kind of religion. A nation of Atheists is no where to be found; nor can man exist without some religious sentiments, as long as he is in possession of his present faculties, *intellectual* and *moral*. Some kind of religion is as indispensable in order to meet the demands of his intellectual and moral nature, as food is to satisfy the cravings of his appetite. A man without some religious<sup>e</sup> sentiments is just as much deformed and mutilated in his moral nature, as his physical would be without a limb or an eye, or as his intellect would be without the power of reason. The question, then, is not whether we shall have no religion at all, but whether we have a *true* or a *false* religion; whether we will have *Mahomedanism*, or *Judaism*, *Paganism* or *Christianity*; *Mormonism* or any other fanaticism, or the religion which is pure and undefiled in the sight of God the Father.

The religion of the Gospel is not only true and excellent, but it is recommended by *its economy*. SOME SYSTEM OF RELIGION WE WILL HAVE. It is infinitely important, then, that we should have the best. Here we must take it for granted, that you believe the religion of the Bible, which is the religion of Protestants, and is the religion of this great nation, to be the most excellent system known upon earth. The religion of the Bible is also the cheapest religion. Every religion has its priests and altars; Paganism has its thousands of altars and its array of priests to attend on every altar, and its thousand,

thousand victims. The appeal is made to your intelligence, to your knowledge of false religions from history and travellers, to show that they are more expensive than the true. Your reading will also remind you of the evils and expenses of religious establishments supported by the State. Time forbids to notice the struggles of the people of Europe under the patronage law and oppressive tithes, collected at the point of the bayonet, to support a dotard hierarchy, overgrown, corrupt and tyrannical. These are things which we know by the hearing of the ear, and they make our ears to tingle, but they are not parts or parcels of our own glorious history. *The people of the United States are not, and never can be, a tax-ridden people, because they are not, and by the power of truth and the ever-living God, they never shall be a king or priest-ridden people.*

But think you, beloved hearers, if one should sweep, as with the besom of destruction, all Christian temples from our land, that we should not have to erect infidel or heathen ones in their stead; think you that if you do not support the American Protestant evangelical pulpit, that you will escape from all pecuniary contributions to religious institutions? By no means.

“Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd;  
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;  
Where'er down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye see”—

*Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the birds of prey be gathered together.*

Silence the Protestant pulpits of America, and the vultures of a corrupt hierarchy would fatten on the wealth of the land. Look at Mexico, with all the



wealth of nature; poor and ignorant, torn and distracted, wretched indeed—because it has long, even from the beginning, been subject to a wicked, avaricious, blood thirsty priesthood. The same may be said of South America; blest with every climate and every product, from tropical fruits and birds “on starry wings,” to the gold and diamonds of Brazil, and the plumage and furs of colder skies. Let the Anglo Saxon Protestant go to Mexico and South America, and introduce his laws, language and RELIGION, and they will become as the garden of the Lord.

Look at France sixty years ago. Popery, the established religion, with 400,000 ecclesiastics to clothe and feed, who were princes of luxury, rolling in every species of sumptuous living and high debauchery, consuming the labours of the people—and at Spain, superstitious, bloody, unhappy Spain, with 180,000 priests, and you may form some idea of what it would cost to support Popery. The religion of the Bible is not only the true religion, but it is the *cheapest*. It demands fewer ministers, and a simpler dress; requiring a far less expensive apparatus for worship; neither robes, nor sceptres, nor mitres, nor crucifixes, nor gorgeous altars, nor pomp and splendid ceremonial; but a broken heart, a broken and a contrite spirit; a simple, pure formula, the word of God, and a ministry evangelical, of pure hearts and clean hands. *This is the religion of Jesus Christ.*

VIII. THE HOUSE OF GOD IS THE DEPOSITORY OF TRUTH.—The pulpit is the expositor and interpreter of the Bible, which is *truth itself*. If the Bible were

but the ruins of ancient learning; the fragments of remote annals, it would be a venerable document: were it a fiction only, it would be a grand one; then how much more interesting and valuable as it is *truth*, ancient, eternal truth—truth that is indissolubly connected with our very existence and well-being here and hereafter.

There is in the human mind a native love for truth. It is agreeable to our natural constitution, or, as Lord Shaftsbury has somewhere expressed it, "Truth is so congenial to our minds that we love the very *shadow* of it." Hence, truth is much easier than falsehood, and hypocrisy itself is but the *homage of vice to virtue*. And, on the same principle, Horace, in his rules for the construction of an epic poem, advises that "fictions in poetry should resemble truth." Then, as the Bible is the word of God, and the pulpit is its authorized interpreter, how necessary is the pulpit to our present and eternal well-being. As the eye was formed for light, and the ear for sound, so the mind is constituted for the reception and enjoyment of truth. As the limbs of youth resist confinement, so the mind abhors darkness. The eyes of the soul are formed to gaze on the light of truth, and to revel in its *ever new* and yet unchanging beauties. Must not the heart be educated as well as the head? and what but the enlightening, saving and purifying truth of the Bible as the Holy Ghost presents it, can form man's heart to holiness? Is it not the pulpit that explains, defends and brings home to the conscience and the heart, the truths of Revelation? Is it not from the pulpit religious instruction is to be chiefly sought?

Then, if school houses, universities and state houses are worth the expense of their erection, how much more are temples to the living God?

The HOUSE OF GOD ever has been, and ever must be, the grand receptacle of light from heaven, whence it issues to restrain the passions and mould the manners of men, and repair the ruins of the apostacy. Where the House of God is not erected, false religions eat up the people like a pestilence. Falsehood, fraud and theft, and rapine and murder so prevail, that no man sees another in whom he places confidence. Domestic happiness and conjugal fidelity, and parental and filial regard, are things unknown, and for which many heathen languages have not even a name. And every where, where the Gospel is not, there prevails a government that rules with a sceptre of iron. The hardest despotism is rendered necessary by the absence of moral restraint. The Church is both the *light and salt of the earth*. It was the blessed Saviour's prayer for the heirs of salvation: "Sanctify them through thy truth." It is by the truth we are to be saved. And it is ordinarily by the truth from the lips of a living ministry, waiting on the courts of the Lord's House, that men are convicted of sin, and converted to God. "By the foolishness of preaching it pleases God to save them that believe." The subjects of divine grace are taken usually from those that are in the habit of attending Church, and hearing the truth preached from Sabbath to Sabbath. In revivals of religion, those families are generally the most blest who are Church-going families. And far the greatest proportion of youth who unite with the Church are

such as have been baptised in infancy. The Lord is faithful in all his promises. "His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Prostrate the sanctuary, and we shall have neither creed, nor covenant, nor communion, nor revival, nor liberty of conscience, nor toleration of opinion, nor Bible in our houses nor in our schools, nor the voice of supplication and praise; and our children would soon be without God, and without Christ, and without hope in the world.

FINALLY.—THE HOUSE OF GOD IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIGHT, LIFE, AND JOY TO THE WORLD. It is the altar of prayer. It is the presence chamber of the Great King, "whose sceptre pardon gives." It is there His honour dwells, and there he hath recorded his name—A GOD THAT HEARETH PRAYER. Better give up every other privilege than to have no share in the prayers of God's people. "I would," says one, "be without the means of self-defence, without the protection of law, and without a shelter for my head at night, but should not dare to cut myself off from an interest in the prayers of the sanctuary. Let no shower or dew fall on my field, or breezes fan my habitation, or genial sun warm me; but let me not be excluded from the health beaming influence of the House of Prayer. I would do without a roof to cover my head, and have my lodging in the clefts of the rock; but I must go to the House of the Lord, and fix my dying grasp upon the horns of his altar." It is in the House of God that law



and conscience speak out; that a future state of existence, and a day of judgment and final retribution are held up before the intellectual vision; that life and immortality are brought to light; that the Gospel of the free grace of the ever blessed God is preached, glad tidings of great joy to all people, *peace* on earth, and good will to men. The House of God instructs our ignorance, enlightens our understandings, corrects our judgments, renews our wills, and reforms our lives. It imparts knowledge to the poor, it gives the orphan a parent, the stranger a friend, the sailor a brother, the prisoner a companion, and the *young man from home* a guide. The Lord of the Sabbath and the God of the sanctuary hath said: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In the House of God we learn how to live usefully and happily, and how to die gloriously. Here, parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants, magistrates and people, are taught their duties, and to enjoy their privileges. Here they are taught how to live so as to gain everlasting life in glory; how to live that they may meet again, after death, in the heavenly world, where there is no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor sin, nor separation, nor death. The House of God enlightens, soothes, comforts, cheers, elevates, sanctifies, and saves. It imparts salvation to the sin sick soul, and seals it with pardon and heir of grace. It hushes into a calm the tempest raised in the bosom by conscious guilt, for it proclaims THERE IS BALM IN GILEAD, THERE IS A PHYSICIAN THERE—THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH GOD THAT HE MAY BE FEARED. THE

BLOOD OF HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN. It melts the most obdurate into tenderness and contrition. It cheers the broken hearted, and brings the tear of gladness into eyes swollen with grief. It maintains serenity under calamities that drive the worldling mad. It reconciles the sufferer to his cross, and raises songs of praise from lips quivering with agony. It teaches the fading eye to brighten at the sweet promises of Jesus, and brings a foretaste of heaven down to the "chamber where the good man meets his fate."

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

BLESSED IS THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND: THEY SHALL WALK, O LORD, IN THE LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE.

BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD.  
BLESSED BE THE LORD FOR EVERMORE **AMEN AND  
AMEN.**