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→*SERMONS*←

VENERABLE AGE: ITS TRIALS AND CONSOLATIONS.

BY WILLIAM F. MORGAN, D.D., RECTOR OF ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK.

And Barsillai said unto the king, How long have I to live? I am this day fourscore years old.—II. SAMUEL xix., 34.

TO THE Christian pastor, there is no loss so affecting and absolute as that which is realized in the departure of those who, by manifold tokens, have long been ripening and making ready for death—who, for years, have been far on the way, and waiting for the end. Whether he looks forth upon the gathered assembly of his people from the desk, or altar, or pulpit, his search for devout interest and for reverent sympathy is largely among the aged, who here and there are crowned with the almond blossoms of life's appointed term. Or whether he goes forth in pastoral visitation to meet the members of his charge in their homes or on their daily round of life-work, it is most frequently from the well advanced and venerable that his heart finds its cheer, and his work its appreciation. And when these disappear, entering the Paradise of God, while others may grieve over the sundering of a closer tie, the pastor of the flock, as I have said, very often sustains an irreparable loss, and carries deep in his soul a sense of heavy bereavement. I can most easily revive their wonted aspects, their devout engagedness in holy worship, and their respectful attention to the discourse. How is this place repeopled with the dead! The elders of a past generation—the faithful, and the excellent, who earned a good report and entered the world of light, how do they return in the remi-

— LEADING THOUGHTS OF SERMONS —

God's Institutions Man's Best Gifts.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), NEW YORK.

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.—JOB. xxxiii., 4.

The speaker has in mind Genesis ii. The breath of the Almighty created man and gave him the spirit and image of God, which is knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Though the distance between God and man is infinite it does not preclude comparison. Man has all the attributes of God in a limited degree. His soul resembles the Supreme who made it. How then came the unlikeness between God and man? We can learn this only from the Bible. Be not led away by speculations. One is that man developed from barbarism. There is no single scientific fact to prove this. Species do not pass into species. The faculties are from God, not a development. The busy bee cannot derive its working powers from the drone or queen. God gave this faculty to the bee. Science compares man with what is beneath. We quarrel not with science, but we connect man with those things above him, angels and the Supreme Being. This comparison is supremely practical. Thus we can understand fellowship with God, the wonders of Heaven, the terrors of hell. The essence of hell includes the soul's abandonment of God and the abandonment of the soul by God.

Biographies of great men give the influences that shaped their lives. What were the institutions, influences, and surroundings under which God placed the spirit which He had made? He first gave it a day of rest. When God blessed the Sabbath day He gave it perpetuity. It was for man's happiness and welfare, and God meant it for the race. Preachers and teachers did not make the Sabbath. They only carry out the will of the Creator. To-day some men pose as friends of the working classes and make this a day licentiousness. I say, without hesitation,

that the believers of the Bible are the true friends of the so-called working classes. Keep the Sabbath on Bible lines. Be not betrayed into Sunday riding, visiting and receiving. These are good in their time; wrong out of time. We appeal to the Sabbath of the Bible, as God gave it for the good of the race.

God's second provision was for man's body. Man's body came out of the ground, so must that which sustains it. That is the foundation of the working classes. It must be by honest labor. There is provision enough, but it must come from industry. One of the weaknesses of our land is that men are rushing from the farm to the city. Most of our great men have come from the farm. The intercommunication of the city might be for good, but alas, it is turned to evil. Some men try to prepare a living for their children. Is that kindness to them? Should they not labor for themselves? God intended us to work; idleness is dishonor, industry is honor. It is not labor that curses. It is the sin that man puts into labor that curses.

The third institution God gave in Eden was the means of developing conscience. It is not pertinent why He gave a tree or how it worked. It was all a training for conscience. God made man name the beasts, because they were for his use. But to keep in mind his dependence on God the tree was given as food for the conscience. Many of you have been prosperous. Please do not say, "My hand has done it all." God gave it to you.

God put affections in man and provided for them by creating woman. She was to be trusted, to be respected, to be provided for by man. So God founded the family, man's greatest happiness. This has been dishonored by asceticism and celibacy. The family is attacked among us by silly imitations of the social life of the great capitals. But the family must be vindicted. Thus the Sabbath, labor, conscience, and the family were the

great institutions given by God for the training of the race. Christ has set His seal on every one of these institutions and history vindicates their potency. They are what our society needs, what our Government needs, what the race needs. And a better education in these institutions given in the first Paradise would be a greater preparation for the other Paradise, that Eden in the skies.

The Busy Age.

BY PRESIDENT E. D. EATON, D.D.,
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They had no leisure so much as to eat.—MARK, vi., 31.

Every age of the world, has its own peculiar character, and one might almost say its own face, just as every human being has. The distinctive feature of one age is faith, of another corruption, of one conquest, and of the other doubt. But what epithet can be better employed to describe the present period of the world's growth than the busy age? The merchant, who once conducted his business on a small scale, reaching out cautiously and content with a small profit, now has the markets of the world to compete with, and is not satisfied with less than large profits, though covering a wider and more extensive field. The teacher, who formerly included in his curriculum a limited number of text-books, must now keep abreast with all the multitude of new methods and tax his mental energies to comprehend the doubly abstruse and difficult. The editor in early days got out a slow quarterly or a weekly. To-day the presses are kept hot with hundreds of thousands of imprints of the great daily journals, and the editorial sanctum is no longer an easy retreat, but a seething beehive. So, also, with the clergyman, who must now know the currents of his congregation's thoughts and preach to the times; the farmer, who from tilling a few acres and reaping it with the sickle and cradle, now tills a hundred acres in a field and reaps to the music of the self-binder; and the physician, who no longer jogs behind the slow nag and prescribes a few stock remedies, but must follow closely the many intricate

developments of science and familiarize himself with medical progress.

The subdivision of business is one of the reasons of this busy age, and one of the reasons for its crowding home, the family relations, and the moral and intellectual development of mankind. There is very much that is noble in a busy life, but there are some drawbacks to it. God said that man should labor six days, and the business men of this hurrying age establishes another standard of work, and stimulates other men as the racer inspires the cart-horse. Yet it carries dangers with it. As a matter of health, subtle evils lurk menacingly in the busy man's path. He who lives at high pressure long continued, without varying the excess of mental and physical activity with mental and physical rest and repose, soon finds that his energies flag, his pillow no longer brings rest and pleasant slumber, the bright sky of his brain and thought becomes clouded and finally there comes to the overwrought system what it had long needed—profound rest, but enforced and not voluntary—the rest beyond the vale.

There is also danger that this busy age will impart a superficial character to life. Men who are immersed so completely in temporal business find time only to read the newspapers, from which they unconsciously imbibe a shallow method of thought. They find, as a consequence, no equipoise and repose, and no depth of thought is possible. If they escape this danger, they become one-sided and morbid and men of one idea, and like the mountain torrent which cuts a limited groove and never overflows it. Such men find no breadth and richness in existence, but merely the compressed satisfaction of hoarding money.

A busy life also imperils home ties. Men not only go away early in the morning but return late at night, and too often with clouded brow and preoccupied mind. They have no time to console and sympathize with the wife nor to consult with and advise the children. Gladstone's father talked politics with his son when the late premier was only twelve years of age, and many men's greatness dates from the impression of their youth for which