

OUR BANNER.

"FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT."

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

J. C. K. MILLIGAN,

J. H. BOGGS,

DAVID GREGG,

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners."—PSALM xx: 5.

VOLUME V.

—
1878.

NEW YORK:
PRESS OF ROGERS & SHERWOOD,
21 AND 23 BARCLAY STREET.

OUR BANNER.

VOL. V.

JANUARY 15, 1878.

NO. I.

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

OUR SPIRITUAL SENSES.—No. I.

BY THE REV. JAMES KENNEDY, N. Y.

Who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.—Heb. v : 14.

A question, at present exciting considerable interest in scientific circles, is, Has man any element in his nature, such as is wont to be called soul or spirit, in addition to his bodily organization ; and if so, what relation do his bodily organs bear to this impalpable and invisible part of his being? A discussion of this question lately, through the press, in England, in which many leading men took part, and which was published under the name of a Symposium, has brought out the fact that at least three distinct and different views are now held with regard to the mental and spiritual nature, wherewith it has been usual hitherto to credit our race.

Mr. Harrison, who opens the discussion with papers on "The Soul and Future Life," maintains that we really possess a spiritual nature, distinct from our corporeal organs, which, however, he admits never acts apart from the physical system, but that every mental act, whether of judgment, will, passion or moral powers, is always accompanied by corresponding physical changes. Whilst, however, he argues strongly for the reality of a spiritual nature in man, and vigorously attacks the materialists, he does not suppose that the soul actively exists after the body has lost its sentient powers, and consequently his "future life" is only a modified immortality. He thinks that our immortality will solely consist in the influence for good or evil on society of our life and actions for all time to come. And this immortality of effects and consequences on posterity, he thinks far more noble and unselfish than the perennial psalm-singing and indolent rest in heaven, dreamed of by Christians.

This theory Professor Huxley assails with great severity, and characterizes it as a sort of half-breed betwixt science and theology, sarcastically remarking that, "like many other half-breeds, it is endowed with the faults of both parents and with the virtues of neither." His own views, though not directly formulated, can easily be gathered from the following statements: "I understand and respect the meaning of the word soul, as used by Christian philosophers for what they believe to be the imperishable seat of human personality, bearing throughout eternity its burden of woe or its capacity for adoration and love. And if I am not satisfied with the evidence that is offered me that such a soul and such a future life exist, I am content to take what is to be had, and to make the best of the brief span of existence that is within my reach, without reviling those

whose faith is more robust, and whose hopes are richer and fuller." In other words, he believes that what we call acts of mind, whether intellectual, emotional or moral, are only certain molecular states of the matter of the brain, and merely the effects of physical organization, beyond which he holds it to be impossible to attain to any certain knowledge of mental phenomena.

To the above views of Harrison on the one hand and of Huxley on the other, there are different replies from the Christian standpoint, but more notably one by Lord Blachford, who puts the matter thus: "My positive experience informs me of one thing percipient—myself, and of a number of things perceptible. Myself as a percipient I know by consciousness, but the perceptible by way of impressions through the channels and organs of sensation. These things thus perceptible, constitute to me the material world. Now, my own habits of mind and logical methods certainly require me to believe that I am something—something percipient, and I have reason to believe myself to be surrounded by other things also percipient. But of them *as percipients* I can have no knowledge as I know myself. I can only infer that they are percipients from their perceptible appendages. Them, their very selves, I certainly cannot perceive. I can detect in them no quality, or capacity for any quality, like that of percipiency, which, with its homogeneous faculties, intellect, affections, and so on, are the basis of my own nature. And physical science, whilst it develops the relations, seems absolutely to emphasize the ineradicable difference betwixt the motions of a material and the sensations of a living being. Of the attributes of a percipient we have each for himself profound and immediate experience, and of the attributes of the perceptible we can have distinct scientific conceptions, but these must always belong to a distinct order of being." He thus concludes: "Perception must be an attribute of something, and that something always imperceptible, except by itself. This is what I mean when I say that I have, or rather that I am, a soul or spirit." From all this it is plain that the existence of mind in us is not only, in the highest degree, reasonable and credible, but that it cannot be detected by scientific research, and that the materialists make a gross blunder when they deny that there is any spiritual nature in man, because they have never reached it by any of their modes of investigation. We know it each in his own case by consciousness, but in the case of others we infer it from perceived facts. And how many other things we only know and believe in the same way. What scientist ever saw the law of gravitation? It is in itself invisible and impalpable, and its existence only inferred from perceived facts. Now, there are more numerous and plain facts from which to infer the existence of a soul in man than from which to infer the existence of a law of gravitation.

And when we turn to the Scriptures these are precisely the views which they present of our complex nature. The body is only an "earthly house" with a spiritual tenant. In this house the senses are like doors and windows, through which the mind can not only look and take cognizance of external things, but by which it can go out and travel far abroad, as well as hold fellowship with other beings with percipient appendages like its own. The senses are like amazingly extended feelers or tentacula, and can reach away in some cases many millions of miles, and lay hold, by perception, of facts of which the mind through them is made cognizant. And thus the spirit not only uses the body as a home, but employs

its marvellously constructed organs as media through which to get acquainted with the universe, and admirable instruments by which to perform its operations.

Now, with that wondrous facility with which the Spirit of God lays hold of every natural fact familiar to our minds, that can supply figurative language in which to express divine things, he seizes upon this marvellous system of organized percipiency in man, and transferring its terms to higher subjects, and using them in a higher application, he speaks of the "new man" as not only possessing senses, but as having them by "reason of use exercised to discern both good and evil." In this expression, as Alford well observes, there is a mingling of the figure and the thing signified, as by the senses here we can only understand the inner organs of our spiritual nature. And just as nothing contributes so much to man's comfort, safety, power and pre-eminence as having all his organs in the most effective condition and devoted to the noblest uses; so the comfort, power and pre-eminence of one subject of grace when compared with another, will be found in a great measure to depend upon the greater and more skillful use of his spiritual inner senses in apprehending, realizing and making his own of divine things. It is with the view of helping God's people to a more comfortable and profitable use of these, their spiritual powers, that we propose to make our spiritual senses, both in general and in detail, the subject of a few Scripture illustrations. And in general we remark :

1. That when the term senses is employed in a spiritual application it implies that the new man *has powers of spiritual discernment implanted in his regenerate nature, which belong only to those born of God.* The word rendered senses (*αισθητηρια*) in the passage referred to above, being formed from the verb to perceive (*αιθανομαι*), literally signifies powers of perception, which exactly expresses what the senses in our bodies are. In nothing are we more wonderfully made than in the complete outfit of sensor organs in the body, through which the mind, which inhabits it, can take cognizance of the material universe. In these organs there is a system of nerve mechanism so admirably adapted to the purpose to be served, that each sense in its own sphere can become acquainted with a wide range of material objects. On this nerve mechanism the properties of matter have the power of making impressions, and thus produce sensations—the primary form of all our thoughts and mental activities. The nerve mechanism which constitutes a sensor organ includes principally three things, namely: the nerve centre in the brain, a nerve wire betwixt the brain and the point of impression, and the end of the nerve in the organ of sense, spread out over a considerable extent of space, in amazingly comminuted ramifications, and so sensitive as to feel the power of the most delicate touch of the element in matter which the particular sense is formed to perceive. This arrangement becomes percipient by the highly sensitive extremity being struck by the property in matter which it is adapted to feel, thus receiving an impression. This impression is passed through the nerve wire to the centre in the brain, which thereby becomes affected and undergoes changes which physiologists can trace. By means of the brain undergoing these changes from impressions received at the extremity of the nerve the mind becomes conscious of a sensation, which in one case may be a message, in another a feeling of pleasure or of pain, an addition to its knowledge or a stimulus to action. This power of perceiving through the bodily organs is regarded as the point of

union betwixt mind and matter, betwixt body and soul, although the nature of the nexus must perhaps ever remain an inexplicable mystery.

As already hinted, some scientists freely state that, in their opinion, the changes which take place in the nerve and nerve centre constitute all the mind or soul which we possess, and they base their views on the fact that all forms of thought and feeling, intellectual, emotional or moral, are known to produce waste of brain tissue. But it never can be shown that thought proper can belong to matter *in itself*, however highly organized, or that any force inherent in matter can possibly originate consciousness, moral feeling or devotional frames. Consequently we are compelled to suppose that there is an intelligent power behind the action of the organ, and that what we call mind or soul uses the organs in its operations as a workman uses his tools, which, however well adapted to the work to be accomplished, are of no power without the skill and agency of the artisan. As to the fact that molecular changes and waste of brain tissue always follow our processes of thought, that is nothing more than we would expect. The workman wears away his tools as he daily employs them, and there is always a waste of water and heat in driving machinery by steam. But neither of these facts proves that in accomplishing any work there is need of nothing but edge tools and steam, as neither can perform the task without the intelligent agent behind them. And just so with the agency of mind through the organs of the body. It employs them as instruments in performing its operations, and in their united action mind and matter are in closest contact, and act and react on each other in the most intimate fellowship. It is mind that gives sensor power to matter, and as it uses this power matter returns back to mind impressions of external things, which become invaluable materials of knowledge or exhaustless springs of enjoyment.

Now, corresponding to these powers of perception with which God has endowed us naturally, there must be, according to the language of the apostle, faculties which perform similar functions in the "new man." That it is in the spiritual application that he uses the word "senses" is obvious, from the fact that the things discerned are not material objects, but doctrinal truths and moral good and evil, of which the bodily organs could have no knowledge. Moreover, our Lord, quoting Jeremiah, says to his disciples: "Having eyes see ye not, and having ears hear ye not?" It is obvious that the seeing and hearing they needed were spiritual and not physical. In this sense, too, Paul speaks of not "discerning the Lord's body" in the Supper, which can only be understood of spiritual discernment. The subject of regeneration, therefore, has spiritual senses performing spiritual functions necessary to spiritual life.

And it might not be out of place here to observe that the fact that we can discern spiritual things, and be the subjects of spiritual thoughts and experiences, militates strongly against the theory of our having become what we are by the force of evolution from matter alone. Not only on such a theory is it utterly impossible to account for spiritual phenomena of any class, but the very existence of spiritual perception and the thoughts to which it gives birth necessarily destroy such a theory. It is obvious that if evolution has made us whatever we have become, then if it has brought us up to spiritual notions, such as a belief in a Creator, that we have a spiritual nature and a future life, it has developed us into opinions and a belief that destroys itself. The man who believes that God made him, and that his soul will exist after death, has had his powers raised to

a point at which he rejects with abhorrence the theory in question ; and therefore, if material evolution alone has brought us to what we are, the very existence of spiritual experiences destroys in our judgment and belief the author of their existence, and we have the old fable reversed—instead of Saturn devouring his offspring, his offspring devour Saturn.

2. Our spiritual powers of perception so correspond in their functions to the senses in our bodies *that they are represented as the same in number and designated by the same names.*

There is something curious as well as interesting in the manner in which the senses in the body are endowed with power to apprehend the different properties residing in surrounding objects. Each sense is made for a distinct sphere of its own, and in that sphere alone has it any power of discernment. Outside of that it is utterly helpless and inoperative. Consequently if any one of the senses has never been possessed by any individual, his mind will be to the whole corresponding department of the physical universe an utter blank. Each sense being designed and adapted to reach only one department, we require the senses in their entirety to a perfect man. The eye takes in the whole department of light and color, the ear all the distinctions of sounds, the smell discerns effluvia of every description, the taste the sapid particles in bodies, and the touch form, power of resistance, and distance. But the eye cannot discern sound, nor the ear color, nor the touch effluvia, so that if we strike out a sense we thereby shut out from our active knowledge a whole department of the kingdom of nature.

And it may not be amiss here to notice that these facts concerning our bodily senses supply an insuperable objection to one part of the theory of evolution. According to that theory, animals in attaining their powers are subject to acceleration or retardation. Now, according to an authority on the subject, acceleration is principally promoted by the volition of the animal. When, from the necessities of its environments, it feels the want of any new organ, it begins to desire and wish for it. Under this influence, the next generation will probably be produced with the rudiments of the organ, which, under the constant pressure of this longing desire, will in a few generations come to be fully developed. Now, the facts before us show how fallacious such a theory is. It is obvious that if at one time a power, such as that of one of the senses, was entirely wanting in an animal, it could have no idea of its nature or desirableness. For example, if a class of animals never possessed eyes, then these animals would be utterly without any idea of light or color or vision, and could not possibly desire or wish for a power of the value and very existence of which they never had, or could have, an idea at all. The only way the volition of an animal could accelerate its progress would be in improving and perfecting powers already possessed, whereas to originate any new power it could not possibly have any influence.

Now, corresponding to the senses in our bodies are our powers of spiritual perception, and so closely do the latter resemble in their functions the former that they are called by the same names. Thus we have the spiritual eye, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see ;" and the ear, "And your ears, for they hear." "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Smell also is reckoned a spiritual sense, "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia." So is taste, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good." Touch also, "Somebody hath touched me." And thus as the mind is furnished, in our bodily organs, with many open doors, through which a knowledge of external objects, often clothed in beauty and

sweetness, may enter, so through not one but many inlets the knowledge and glory of divine things pour in upon the understanding and heart of the spiritual man, bringing often a feeling of happiness and enjoyment greater than that connected with any bodily sensation, of which we are conscious.

3. These spiritual powers of discernment are *found, in different individuals, in different degrees of perfection.* In the passage on which we have founded our illustration, the apostle distinguishes "babes" from those "who are of full age," or rather full grown. The special point of difference is that, from the condition of their organs, the one class can only use "milk," whilst the other can use "strong meat," or, as Alford renders it, solid food. Though reference in the first case is evidently to the organs of nutrition rather than those of perception, yet he no doubt intends by the term "senses" to include all our sentient powers, especially as the taste, one of our perceptive faculties, is exercised in our use of food. The distinction, therefore, is not between those who are entirely destitute of spiritual powers and those who possess them; but betwixt different degrees of strength and effectiveness which these powers have attained in different classes of true living members in the Church. Some have them in a low and weak degree of power, whilst others have them in a high degree of perfection. And this weakness or strength in the spiritual senses is, just as in the body, weakness or strength to the whole man. If the eye or the ear or the appetite be in a very low and weakly condition it is weakness to the whole system, whereas strength and effectiveness of our sentient organs is power to the whole, in all the functions of life. So weakness or strength in our spiritual perceptions is practically weak or strong knowledge, faith, love, fear of God, spirituality, joy, hope and all other gracious affections. Therefore, in writing to the Romans, the same apostle speaks of some who had fuller and more perfect perception of the nature of the gospel dispensation, and so strong in consequence, that they could "eat all things;" others so weak in this respect that they could "eat only herbs." In the same way the Corinthians had to be treated as nurslings because from their weak powers of perception they were "not able to bear" a higher treatment. "Howbeit," he declares, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect" (*τελειοις*, full grown). In the infant the power of mastication is entirely wanting, and the whole digestive apparatus is in keeping with this fact; it can neither therefore bear nor profit by what would be enjoyed by one full grown. And so of the other organs: the same object will not make the same impression upon or convey the same knowledge or pleasure to the senses of an infant as to those of an educated adult. And so it is spiritually. It is safe to say that very often the highest style of preaching and the best written books fail to be of almost any use to many infantile Christians from the low state of their powers of perception. Even the apostles had at one time to be addressed, "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand?" Many, even when the gospel may be most powerfully exhibited, not only fail to understand "the deep things of God," but even those practical truths which are intended to promote their spiritual comfort and practical usefulness in life. If, therefore, we would "leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection" (*τελειοτητα*, full growth), we must assiduously cultivate our spiritual senses that they may be able, in the most perfect manner, to "discern both good and evil."

4. The difference in the degree of perfection with which we employ our spiritual powers is due to greater use and exercise. "Who by reason of use have their senses exercised." The organs of the babe are at first only irritated a little by the properties in matter that affect them. The eye has to learn to see and the ear to hear. In fact the senses have to be educated and trained for their work, and until by use and exercise we attain the knowledge how to employ them it is questionable whether impressions on them convey any intelligible idea to the mind at all. At first seeing is only a glare of light on the retina, and hearing only a noise beating against the drum of the ear. Of color, form or distance the eye has little, if any, knowledge at first, and of distinction or direction of sound the ear has just as little; and so of the other senses. But a process of training soon commences, and according to the progress and perfection, by use and exercise, of that training, will they be efficient in discerning good and evil. We may wonder to see the child toss about and place in every conceivable position its toys and playthings, and even by rough handling break up and destroy them, and feel amazed that it cannot be a moment at rest, but be getting continually into postures and positions neither desirable nor expected; or we may marvel to see a boy go through as many tricks, as a monkey, and under some kind of uncontrollable instinct be often attempting performances that sometimes amuse and sometimes shock us; but in both cases the senses are being educated, and though they may not themselves be conscious at the time of the object to be attained, they are really learning, by all this endlessly diversified exercise, lessons without which they would be ill prepared for the duties and labors of life. Therefore the word rendered "exercised" in the passage literally signifies having performed gymnastic exercises. And the trained hand, eye, ear, voice, all so important in the arts, sciences and details of life, are all the result of such exercise, and in fact have to be worked for as hard as the gymnast works to attain the poise, dexterity and skill in movement which he is anxious to realize. Ail cunning of the hand, skill, art, education, reading, writing, music, painting, sculpture are thus reached. Now, what is necessary to our bodily organs to prepare them for the high pursuits of life is equally required by our inner and spiritual senses, and our great Teacher employs many a method to improve them and give them the power they require. He puts us to many a school and employs many an instructor. The influence of the Spirit, the study of the Word, the discipline of Providence, our experience of men and things as we pass through the world, the assaults of the devil and the diligent practice of the daily duties of religion, all these educate and make our spiritual powers keener and sharper in discerning the things of God.

5. The importance and advantage of having well-trained spiritual senses is that they may more perfectly "discern both good and evil."

"To discern both good and evil," not *betwixt* good and evil, as some quote the expression, but both "good and evil," that we may avoid the one and secure the other. The bodily senses have evil to meet in many a form as well as good; shocking sights as well as lovely scenes; discordant noises as well as musical sounds; foul smells as well as sweet odors; poisonous plants as well as luscious fruits; and for our personal safety we require, in such a world, to be able to discern the evil as well as the good. And in the elaborate training which the senses sometimes receive this is the professed object. It may not always be true, real good that

men propose to realize by the training of the eye, ear, voice or hand. It may be something morally wrong, or at best only trifling and unworthy; but it is always some supposed good, and in many ways our perceptive powers discern this good and the opposite evil. They discern good and evil *first* in their likes and dislikes. What is esteemed good they love to contemplate, to linger over and enjoy, whilst they revolt against discerning at all, and turn away from with loathing or horror, what they regard as evil. There are sights and sounds and smells and tastes our senses abhor, whilst others are universally agreeable and pleasing. And this suggests a *second* way in which our senses discern good and evil—namely, they attract us to the one and warn us against the other. In the choice of food not only the eye and the ear, but also smell and taste warn us against the noxious, and render attractive the good and wholesome. As the bright, gorgeous colors of the flower attract the bee to its stores of honey, so our senses are instinctively attracted to the good, except they have been perverted and abused by indulgence in the evil. Both seeing and hearing also often warn against dangers to be avoided, or invite us to scenes of enjoyment; whilst touch often examines more closely and forms a judgment more accurately than even the other senses of what is good or evil. A *third* way in which our senses discern good and evil, is to be found in the fact that it is the trained and exercised sense which alone can fully appreciate and enjoy the good and refuse the evil. It depends, in a great measure, upon the amount of training and culture a sense has received how far it can judge of or enjoy the excellence of anything. Present before a child the finest painting or other work of art, and it will likely make a plaything of it; offer it a jewel, and it will likely put it into its mouth to help forward dentition. Even one adult will see beauty and grandeur that fill him with rapture and ecstasy, where another will be unmoved. One will be thrilled with enjoyment by a musical performance which perhaps another can only bear with a sense of weariness and fatigue. The value of the trained eye, ear, voice, or hand in the arts and sciences and details of life is well known, and it is almost incredible to what extent and minuteness of power the senses, when thus trained, can reach in discriminating the properties of one thing from those of another. In a report submitted to the British Commissioners to the Vienna Universal Exhibition of 1873, published under the title the "Wines of the World," it is stated that "twenty thousand specimens of fermented drinks came in response to the Emperor's invitation. The tasting, comparing and judging these samples taxed incessantly the palates, heads and stomachs of thirty jurors and experts, divided into four separate groups, for a period of nearly two months." Yet so well trained and accurate was the taste of the jurors that they could distinguish one specimen from all the rest. So minute is the power in our senses, when trained for their work, in distinguishing the properties of matter and discerning both, at least supposed, good and evil.

Now, since the day when Eve was beguiled, we have, in the moral and spiritual sense of the term, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil growing in our world, and we require to have implanted in our new nature powers to discern the good and the evil, lest we be liable to conclude that a thing must be "good for food" because it is "pleasant to the eyes." Without such powers we would ever be falling into fatal mistakes, just like Eve, or like the Israelites in Isaiah's time, of whom it

is said, "that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter"—mistakes made by thousands every day continually. It is no uncommon thing to hear men and women who have been reared and have lived amid scenes of cultured refinement, if perchance in the hovels of the poor they should witness human beings living in filth and dirt, surrounded with fetid gases and foulest smells, and by personal uncleanness and filthy habits of intemperate indulgence awakening in the spectator feelings of disgust, asking how can rational creatures, with any capacities for enjoyment, possibly exist amidst such surroundings! Ah! they like it; and, while wallowing in the mire and groveling in material and moral filth, they are satisfied. Why? Because they have never had their taste and sense of the real, true good of life educated so as to discern anything better. If their powers—physical, social and moral—were trained and educated, such a condition of life would be simply intolerable. Now, morally and spiritually, it is just so. How many are steeped in sin and moral pollution daily, giving up their whole affections, energies and pursuits to the world, pleasure, profligacy, and even to profanity and crime, echoing the words of Satan:

"Of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight!"

"How can they?" the spiritual man exclaims. Ah! "they have no understanding;" no discernment of spiritual good and evil; therefore can never emerge from their sad condition until God enables them by knowledge and experience to form some correct judgment of spiritual realities. Then, and only then, will the spiritual powers trained of God, manifest by their likes and dislikes, by being attracted by good and repelled by evil, and by the power to appreciate and enjoy true good, that they belong to a higher order of being, and perform, to our present and everlasting welfare, higher and nobler functions than even that wondrous organization with which God has endowed our earthly house. How all this is realized in the experience of the spiritual man can only be explained by considering each spiritual sense in its operations separately, and the different functions which the eye, ear, taste, smell and touch, spiritually considered, are ever performing for his safety and good.

This we propose to attempt in subsequent papers.

CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS.

BY THE REV. J. O. BAYLES, KORTRIGHT, N. Y.

WHAT is Christian forgiveness, and when is it to be exercised?

I. The radical idea of the words employed in the Hebrew and Greek to express forgiveness is, *to cover, to expiate, to let go, to send away, to dismiss*. The idea is to put sin out of sight, and to regard the individual as not having sinned. Hence, David says in Psalm li: 9, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities"; and Jeremiah xxxi: 34, "I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sins no more"; and Peter in Acts iii: 19, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

Some claim that the giving up of vindictive and malevolent feelings