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A CHRISTLESS BIBLE.*

WHAT IS THE BIBLE WITHOUT CHRIST?

BY REV. HENRY VAN DYKE, D. D., NEW YORK CITY.

The thing that I want to try to do this morning will seem very strange to you; I want to take Christ out of the Bible. Of course, that is impossible. You cannot take Christ out of the Bible without destroying it, any more than you can take the mortar out of a building without having it fall down. But there are a great many men in the world who think that they can do the impossible; and there are some men in the world who think that they have done this very thing. They think that they have taken the divine Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer, out of the Bible, and yet left us a book which is worth reading and studying. I want to let these men speak out clearly and distinctly, with no prejudice. I want you to understand what it means to take the divine Christ out of the Bible. I want you to get some idea of what the Bible and religion would be worth to us without Him; what inspiration, hope, instruction, or comfort we could get from this book without Christ.

Let us begin with the Old Testament. Go back to that picture of human origins which is given in the book of Genesis. It is a picture of human sin and suffering, divine wrath and retribution, which corresponds to what we know about human nature and life from other sources.

Was there a fall? I believe that there was. Unruly appetite, lustful passion, envy, discord, guilt, and terror, are written in every history of the human tribes as well as in the book of Genesis. Towards such a race, a pure, wise, and holy God must feel righteous anger and repulsion. They spoil His world. They mock the divine image just as a loathsome ape in his cage seems

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GOD'S PLANS AND MAN'S PLANS.*

BY REV. A. F. SCHAUFFLER, D. D., NEW YORK CITY.

All of us have plans. Some may be doubtful as to whether their plans are wisest and best. Others have plans which are not settled as yet, and they are looking for guidance that their life-plans may be determined. Before you go further, mark this truth: *He who coincides with God's plan, succeeds; he who does not is crushed.* Every once in a while in the Word of God we are privileged to have given to us God's definite plan concerning certain events, and man's definite plans concerning those same events. The curtain of revelation is lifted for a while, so that we see the divine working, and the human working; sometimes seeing them coöperate and sometimes seeing them collide. Notice four cases of collision.

Israel is in Egypt, and the fullness of God's time has come, and God's plan concerning Israel now is, "They shall go out." The sovereign of Egypt has also a plan concerning that same people, and his plan is, "They shall *not* go out." The divine and the human plans collide. The result of that we know very well. Moses, who coöperated with the divine plan, was successful; and Pharaoh, who rebelled against the divine plan, was crushed. It took, as it were, ten great turns of the divine screw to crush resistance out of Pharaoh. Miracle after miracle was wrought by divine power until, with the tenth turn of the screw, Egypt lay prostrate, and Pharaoh cried for mercy.



A. F. SCHAUFFLER.

*Sunday evening, July 4, 1897.

God had a plan concerning Elijah. His plan was that Elijah should have revelation on revelation; should complete his earth work, and should never die. Jezebel had also a plan concerning Elijah, and her plan was briefly expressed in these words: "The Lord do so to me and more also, if I make not thy life like the life of one of them by to-morrow at this time." She had no conception that she was talking to the only man in all the world whom God was to translate with a chariot of fire to glory when He got ready. There was Jezebel's plan, and she a queen. There was God's plan concerning that one man, and Jezebel was crushed, and God's plan went forward triumphant.

There was a babe in Bethlehem. God's plan concerning that Bethlehem babe was that He should be the Redeemer of the world; the salvation of Israel, and a light to lighten the Gentiles. But Herod had a plan—again, mark you, a sovereign, an earthly sovereign. God's plan concerning that babe in Bethlehem is, "That babe shall live." Herod's plan concerning that babe was, "That babe shall die." The issue of that conflict between the divine and human plans we all know, The babe lived and Herod's plans were crushed, as a giant might crush an empty egg shell in his hand.

God's plan concerning Paul is, that Paul shall preach the gospel in Rome. Just now Paul is in Jerusalem, and forty men have made a plan about his life. The forty of them say, "He shall never leave Jerusalem alive." They bind themselves with a great oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed Paul. But God's plan is, that Paul shall never die in Jerusalem, but shall preach the gospel to them that are in Rome also. The human plan of forty men banded together, and the divine plan collided. The divine plan has always prospered, and the human perished.

So much for collisions of human and divine plans. Of course, you are aware of the many illustrations, in the Word of God and elsewhere, of human successes because the human coincided with the divine. What we need to watch for more than anything else in our lives, is that our plan for our lives lies along the lines of God's plan. When we and He coincide, there we are conquerors. Where He and we collide there we are crushed. The wheels of God roll steadfastly and remorselessly on over the man who rebels against the Almighty. If you have ever seen

one of those vast marine engines, such as are found on the "Lucania" and "Campania"—fifteen thousand horse power in one engine—you have marveled at that power, which comes from seventy-two furnaces, glowing white-hot. The possibilities of such tremendous power fill one with alarm. Yet, so long as all parts of that engine work together, the more power there is, the more success there will be in all its operations. I have sometimes fancied, however, that a little cogwheel in that vast, complicated mechanism, might set itself up and say: "I am weary of going around this way all the time; I want to go around the other way now." The little cogwheel begins to work against this omnipotent power, and what is the result? The mighty engine simply bends itself on that cogwheel to crush it and it certainly will crush it, because it is going against the laws of the mechanism of that giant engine. While the cogwheel coworks, all goes well; when the cogwheel rebels all goes ill, and that cogwheel shall be crushed, for it has broken the law of mechanism.

O my brother, you and I are very small cogwheels in this great divine plan of redemption for this world, but when we are working as God intends us to work there is the divine omnipotence behind us, to push us onward and cause us to succeed. But the moment we set ourselves up against the divine, that moment the whole divine power is bound to crush us out, and it will crush us out as surely as God resists rebellion and puts down sin.

Finally, some one may say: "I wish I knew God's plan concerning me and then I would gladly coöperate. Where shall I find out God's plan?" Ask your friends; use your best judgment; study God's Word; but above all, I think that we find out God's plan for us best on our knees. When I am on my knees God talks to me in a way in which He rarely talks when I am on my two feet. The believer who is in doubt should go on his knees and ask that God's plan for him personally may be revealed to him. God, who is willing to guide us with His eye, will not leave us to cry in vain if we honestly desire to know His plan concerning us. My dear father used to say to me, "My boy, the Holy Spirit can teach you more in one hour, if you are listening, then all men put together can teach you in one year." Bow down before God and ask for His direction in your plans; then

you will go forth with certain leadership and to certain victory. There is our comfort, our joy, our assurance for the uncertain future—that God will make for us a successful future, if our plans chime in with His plans and we become co-workers with Him.

DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN.*

BY REV. HENRY. C. MABIE. D. D., BOSTON, MASS.

These student conferences are of deep import because they have helped many a student to pass safely some real, vital, crisis in his life. I profoundly believe in finding the fundamental clue to life early. I wish to-day to make some comments upon the reality and nature of such crises.

The thought to which my mind has been directed this morning is found in the seventeenth chapter of Luke: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say: Lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you"—or "is among you;" and, "it will some day be gloriously displayed in outward, visible form, so that you will not need hunt for it; for it will be patent to all." Then turning from the Pharisees Jesus said unto the disciples, "The time will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and ye shall not see it." "One of the days of the Son of Man?" There is, then, a *series* of days of the Son of Man. This chapter does not give us the discourse concerning the last things which is promulgated in the twenty-first chapter of this same Gospel. On this occasion these Pharisees gathered about Jesus and demanded in a speculative way when the kingdom of God should come. It is true that in this same connection, later on in the narrative, Jesus speaks of the Son of Man "in His day," and of that great day when "the Son of Man shall be revealed," coming in the clouds of heaven. He here speaks of "*one of the days* of the Son of Man" one of these days that will have its climax its finale, indeed,

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