

COMBINED SERIES,

VOL. XXI, No. 11.

THE  
**Reformed Presbyterian**

AND

**Covenanter.**

NOVEMBER,

80 Wylie  
636 N 17th st

1883.

J. W. SPROULL,

D. B. WILLSON,

EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

EDITORS' ADDRESS,

- - ALLEGHENY, PA.

"Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

*Phil. 3: 16.*

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

*Jude 3.*

TERMS: { \$1.00 per annum in the U. S. and Canada.  
          { \$1.24 per annum in Great Britain.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY MYERS, SHINELE & Co., 145 WOOD STREET.

| ORIGINAL—                                                                                                                       | PAGE.   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Christ Crucified the theme of Gospel Preaching.....                                                                             | 375     |
| Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.....                                                                                     | 384     |
| The Mode of Baptism.....                                                                                                        | 390     |
| MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE—                                                                                                        |         |
| The Provinces,.....                                                                                                             | 395     |
| EDITORIAL NOTES—.....                                                                                                           | 395     |
| BIBLE LESSONS—.....                                                                                                             | 396-402 |
| MARRIAGES—.....                                                                                                                 | 402     |
| OBITUARIES—                                                                                                                     |         |
| Rev. Samuel O. Wylie, D. D., Mr. Thomas Barr, Dr. S. A. Sterrett,<br>Andrew Freemont, Mr. Matthew McConnell, Mrs. Rachel Young, | 402-406 |

DR. S. R. COREY, of the Craftsbury congregation, died July 4, aged 59.

THE North Cedar, Kansas, church building was wrecked by a storm a month ago.

THE Wahoo congregation has unanimously called Rev. H. P. McClurkin, at a salary of \$800.

T. Z. McCLURKIN has been called to Staunton congregation Illinois; Thomas Patton to Central Branch, Nebraska.

THE 10th of this month is the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth, and the event will be widely celebrated here and abroad.

COLLECTION.—Oct. 3d Sab./Seminary Library, \$1,000; Nov. 1st Sab., Domestic Mission, \$5,000. Remit to Mr. McKee, treasurer, 173 Wood street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

WE CALL attention to the reduced price of the British Quarterlies and Blackwood. They are but ten dollars a year, and contain articles of the highest order. Address, Leonard Scott Publishing Company, No. 41 Barclay street, New York.

THE receipts for Students' Fund, (see 4th page cover,) is \$175. Owing to the increase of theological students, the balance of the \$500 asked for is urgently needed. Will not brethren respond?

J. R. McKEE, Treasurer,  
173 Wood St., Pittsburgh.

COMMUNIONS AND ASSISTANTS.—October 2d Sabbath—Northwood, J. J. McClurkin and R. Reed; Olathe, J. Dodds, Pleasant Ridge, J. M. Faris; Union, J. R. Wylie. 3d Sabbath—Allegheny, A. Kilpatrick; Princeton, W. W. Carithers; Cedarville, J. Lynd. 4th Sabbath—Craftsbury, J. W. Shaw; Brush Creek, R. Clyde. November 1st Sabbath—Wilkinsburg, J. C. Smith.

DEAR SIR:—I have arrangements whereby I can furnish any of the readers of your magazine that might desire, with Spurgeon's Sermons, at \$2.00 per annum, postage prepaid, to any address. They are published in London, in monthly parts. Also the well known magazine, "*The Sword and Trowel*," edited and conducted by C. H. Spurgeon, and printed monthly at \$1.25 per annum, postage prepaid.

Respectfully, R. J. Housron, 62 William St., New York.

# Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanters.

Vol. XXI.

NOVEMBER, 1883.

No. 11.

## ORIGINAL.

### CHRIST CRUCIFIED THE THEME OF GOSPEL PREACHING.\*

The inquiry has for some time occupied the attention of the religious community: Why is it that preaching is so ineffectual in producing the results that as a divine institution it warrants us to expect? That this is the case is scarcely to be questioned, for while preachers are multiplied and churches are increasing, the religious and moral condition of society fails to show corresponding improvement. Spirituality in the churches is on the decline, and the tone of public virtue is lowering. The engrossment of the minds of men by the world in pursuit of its pleasures, riches and honors, leaves little opportunity and less inclination to attend to the interests that concern their well-being in the present life and their preparation for the life to come.

To the philanthropist, the moralist and especially the Christian, this state of social life presents a subject of earnest and serious consideration. There are causes that produce these results, and there are remedies by which they can be counteracted. As to what these are there is far from agreement. Mistakes in regard to the causes lead to mistakes in the remedies applied; and the efforts that are made to benefit and elevate society in most cases end in disappointment. The prediction by our Lord is strikingly verified in these times: "And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." Matt. 24: 12.

To you, candidates for the ministry, the question before us is one of the deepest interest and should be of no difficult solution. The voice of scripture is clear and distinct, and its decision must be final. The apostle of the Gentiles is an example that, next after the Master himself, you are

\*Introductory Lecture of the session of the R. P. Seminary, delivered in Central Church, Allegheny, September 18th, 1883, by Prof. T. Sproull.

to follow and from whom you are to learn. Hear his emphatic language: "We preach Christ crucified—to those that are called the power of God and the wisdom of God," I. Cor. 1: 23, 24. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." I. Cor. 2: 2. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world," Gal. 6: 14. The preaching of Jesus Christ crucified is the divinely constituted agency to reform and save the world. "God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John 3: 17.

How is Christ crucified to be preached so as to accomplish this important end? The answer to this inquiry will be the subject of this lecture. Christ crucified must be preached *Doctrinally*, *Practically* and *Experimentally*.

I. DOCTRINALLY. In preaching Christ crucified the doctrinal truths taught in the scriptures respecting him must be exhibited. I will group these under five heads:

1. His eternal Sonship. This cardinal doctrine lies at the foundation of the whole system of the Christian religion. Son of God was announced as the personal designation of the Saviour at his baptism, by the voice of his Father from heaven. "This is my beloved Son." Matt. 3: 17. It was repeated at the transfiguration, accompanied by the command, "Hear ye him." In this doctrine, Peter, for himself and in the name of the other disciples, declared his belief: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16: 16. As the Son he is set forth as the object of faith. "God sent his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Vs. 36. "He that hath the Son hath life." I. John 5: 12.

This being a doctrine wholly of divine revelation all attempts to bring it within the scope of reason are utterly vain and arrogant. "Who can declare his generation?" Is. 53: 8. Our minds can apprehend it as a truth revealed in scripture, our faith receives and rests on it, and reason gives its full assent to it. But the conception of it in its nature and import lies outside of the range of our mental operations. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job 11: 7. "The things of God none knoweth but the Spirit of God." I. Cor. 2: 11. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Matt. 11: 27.

The attacks made on this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith demand that it be defended by weapons from the armory of the word of God. He to whom the preaching of Christ crucified is committed must set forth pre-eminently this truth as a firm foundation for the believers' faith.

2. His incarnation. This is also a mystery to be received by

faith, not comprehended by reason. The Son of God became man. In the designation, "the seed of the woman" his humanity was revealed immediately after the fall. His incarnation was made known to the Old Testament church. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel." Is. 8: 10. Of his conception and birth Luke gives the record, Chap. 1: 35 and 2: 6, 7. It is set forth prominently in the teachings of the apostles, "The Word was made flesh." John 1: 14. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Rom. 8: 3. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh." I. Tim. 3: 16.

The necessity of the incarnation as a part of the plan of salvation could never have been discovered *a priori* by the human mind; but when revealed to us we can see, *a posteriori*, the wisdom of God in this great mystery. We are taught in the Larger Catechism that "it was requisite that the Mediator who was to reconcile God and man should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us as the works of the whole person." To the convinced sinner seeking salvation this twofold relation of Christ to God and to man presents the strongest encouragement to avail himself of the gracious offers of the gospel and secure eternal life. By becoming man the Son of God is brought near to us and we are raised up to a oneness of nature with him. Knowing that we have a High Priest that can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, we can "come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

3. His suretyship. "Jesus was made Surety of a better testament." Heb. 7: 22. The suretyship of Christ was constituted in the making of the covenant of grace. By it he identified with his people and engaged to fulfil for them all the demands of the covenant of works. In preaching Christ crucified this relation that he sustains to his people is to be kept prominently in view, It is only as their Surety that he could lay down his life for them. This doctrine is clearly taught in both the Old and the New Testament. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Is. 53: 5, 6. "He hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II. Cor. 5: 21.

The suretyship of Christ can be illustrated by analogies taken from transactions among men. When one man becomes security for the payment of the debt of another, the law enforces payment from him if the original debtor fails. The analogy does not hold in criminal cases, because no man can assume the guilt of another. The law takes hold of the person of the criminal and from him alone satisfaction can be received. In this respect the suretyship

of Christ is unique. As God-man he had power over his own life and could assume our guilt. "I have power to lay down my life, and have power to take it again." John 10:18. To Christ as Surety for sinners they should be directed to look for salvation.

4. His work. This includes his obedience to the death on earth and his intercession in heaven. The atonement is the central doctrine of Christian theology. In preaching Christ crucified it must have the chief place. To him as satisfying for the sins of his people by his death on the cross, and as securing the application of the benefits of his death by his intercession in his glorified state, sinners are to be directed. By an Old Testament prophet he uttered the proclamation, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." When he entered on his public work he was heralded by his chosen forerunner: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." His person being divine the satisfaction that he rendered was of infinite value. By his obedience and death he procured for his people a perfect righteousness on account of which they are delivered from the guilt of their sin, and through his intercession their persons are accepted before God, and they are put into the possession of everlasting life. Being "found in him they have not their own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

5. His authority. Having "humbled himself and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth" Phil. 3:8-10. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. In her constitution she became one with him in a spiritual union. As her Head he gives her laws, institutions and officers. He has prescribed her government, and established the order that is necessary to her well being and usefulness. To no power on earth is she subject. Her perfect freedom consists in doing the will of Christ her King.

Moreover he has given to him a dominion co-extensive with the limits of creation. This was secured to him in the covenant made with him in eternity, was received and exercised at his revelation to man after the fall, and renewed to him as the God-man, when he ascended to "the right hand of the Majesty on high." Just before his ascension he claimed it as his and presented it as the basis of the universal commission that he gave to his apostles. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations." All classes of creatures, inanimate—those possessing life without reason—men, and angels fallen and holy, are under his dominion. This headship over all things was given for the good of his people. "Made him to be the Head over all things to the church." Eph. 1:22. This dominion he holds and exercises to bring the world into subjection. When this shall have been

done, and the rebellion forever crushed, and he shall have put down (*abolished*) all rule and all authority and power, he will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father," (I. Cor. 15 : 24) and as the Head of his redeemed people in heaven, remain forever subject to him "that God may be all in all." Vs. 28.

It is not to be expected that in every discourse there will be a presentation of all these doctrines. That would be impracticable. What is meant is that every sermon must have special reference to Christ crucified, in the exhibition of some of the truths that are included in it. It will require a wise discretion to determine in regard to the relative importance to be given to them. In this the conditions and wants of the people are to be considered.

But it is not enough to preach this grand central truth in teaching the doctrines that cluster around it. A sermon may be thoroughly evangelical, containing these doctrines supported by logical arguments to convince gainsayers, and abounding with apt illustrations to bring them to the capacity of the hearers, and if this is all, still fail to accomplish the end of preaching. Such preaching may serve to enlighten in the knowledge of these doctrines and to strengthen in a belief of them, but if they are exhibited as a beautiful theory merely to be accepted and admired, the duty is not half performed. Knowledge to be useful must be practical. This is true especially of religious knowledge : "If ye know these things," said our Lord to his disciples, "happy are ye if ye do them." I proceed then to show that Christ crucified must be preached,

II. PRACTICALLY. By this is meant the adaptation of doctrinal truths to the religious condition and necessities of the hearers. There must be exhibited :

1. Christ crucified as the source of spiritual illumination. At his advent he was declared to be "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1 : 9. His own statement concerning himself is : "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." John 8 : 12. As the sun is the source of natural light to the world, so Jesus Christ is the Sun of righteousness, the source of all spiritual light.

It is one of the cunning devices of Satan to shut out this light from the minds of men. And it is the sad truth that though the light has come into the world, men love darkness rather than the light. Availing himself of this evil propensity of our nature, the adversary is constant in his efforts to divert the minds of men from the true source of light to substitutes of their own devising. Science puts forward its arrogant claims to invalidate the truths of scripture and to supply its alleged defects. Reason would bring to its standard the mysteries of the sacred oracles and reject those that it cannot comprehend. And men, in their folly, close their eyes to the light that surrounds them, lured away by these *ignes fatui* to their bewilderment and ruin.

For this great and prevalent evil the application of the doctrines of Christ crucified furnishes the remedy. From the cross the clear light shines forth leading the inquirer in the way of duty and of safety. Christ in the exercise of his prophetic office reveals to us, in the sacred scripture, the will of God for our salvation; and having ascended on high he has sent down his Spirit to abide with us as our infallible teacher. Such is his own gracious promise, "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak, and he will show you things to come." John 16: 13. Let Paul be your model in applying the doctrines of the Christian religion to your hearers. "My speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith may not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

2. Christ crucified as the way of salvation. The inquiry that is of the deepest interest to gospel hearers is: How shall they be delivered from the state of condemnation into which they have been brought by sin? There are but few hearers to whom this question has not come with some sense of its importance; and hence it is that various expedients have been devised and employed to satisfy the demands of an awakened conscience.

The first suggestion of the unrenewed heart in such cases is to rely on the general mercy of God. It is assumed that because God is gracious he will not punish men for their deeds. And then the negative plea of a life of freedom from gross outbreakings is used to calm and sooth the troubled feelings. And when there is a conviction that sin is to be punished, men will resort to self inflicted penances, and take into the account the sufferings laid on them by the hand of God, as satisfaction for their wrong doing. A profession of religion and an outward observance of divine institutions are also rested in as having some degree of propitiatory merit.

Under such delusions the great mass of men and multitudes of gospel hearers are living, apprehending no danger, thinking that all will be well with them at last. To break the charm and dispel these delusions is the work of the gospel preacher, to which he is to devote himself with all his skill and energy. Can he witness the sad spectacle of immortal beings indulging in a fatal slumber that must end in eternal death, without arousing them to seek deliverance?

And how is this to be done? The preaching of Christ crucified is the appointed means. Let sinners be made to see the evil nature and the consequences of sin as exhibited in the death of Christ, and the conviction must follow that all human efforts to secure deliverance from the punishment that divine justice demands, are utterly vain and useless. The presentation of the doctrines that are summed up in Christ crucified will clear away the mists that conceal from men their sin and danger, and in which they have recourse to expedients that must end in disappointment. To apply

these doctrines to the understanding and conscience of the hearers the preacher of the gospel should labor with untiring and zealous efforts. Let him ever proclaim that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" but the name of Jesus. How shall sinners escape if they neglect so great salvation?

3. Christ crucified as the restorer of order and rule on earth. Sin is the disturbing element that has made the world the theatre of lawlessness and violence. As expressed in the strong language of sacred song, "All the foundations of the earth are out of course." Might takes the place of law, the weak are oppressed by the strong, and when driven by necessity to form social combinations for mutual safety, these are not based on the eternal principles of right, as laid down in the revealed will of him who is the source of all authority. In some countries rulers hold their power by prescriptive right, and in others by the arbitrary choice of a capricious majority. In all cases human will is enthroned and the will of God is overlooked and disregarded.

And the church, the body of Christ, has not escaped the effects of this ruthless disorganizer. The claim to be her only Head is denied to him whose right it is, and a human head is thrust into his place. She is made subordinate to the state, a mere vassal of ambitious rulers. And even when his authority is acknowledged, in how many instances are merely human devices elevated to a place among divine institutions?

For all these evils the certain remedy is the faithful preaching of Christ crucified. Let men be instructed in the doctrines of his person, work and authority, and they will discover the disorder that prevails in all departments of society, and be prepared to apply the prescribed remedy. As members of the church they will not submit to the usurpation of the authority of Christ whether by one or by many. Taught by the history of the past they will contend at all hazards that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, from whom she has received her laws and government, and to whom alone she is accountable.

On the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and particularly on her ministers, the duty of maintaining the authority of Christ over nations as their King, rests with special weight and obligation. She is the witnessing church, so designated because she is to bear testimony for this important truth. Placed in the forefront of the Lord's host she must not faint nor waver, neither be seduced by flattery nor intimidated by fear to desert his cause or to capitulate with the enemy. Nor must she allow the power lodged in her for the great end of bringing the world into subjection to her Head to be transferred to any merely human association over which she has not entire jurisdiction and control. To do so would be faithlessness to an important trust and hazardous in the extreme to the accomplishment of the great end of her distinctive organization.

To sum up this part of the subject let me exhort you in all your preaching to apply the doctrines of the gospel in giving prominence to the prophetic, priestly and regal offices of Christ so that your labors may be crowned with success.

I proceed to the third point: Christ crucified must be preached,

III. **EXPERIMENTALLY.** By the use of this term I mean that the truths of the gospel must be brought to the hearts of the hearers individually, for their personal salvation.

1. To impress on them a sense of their need. Here the work of conversion must begin, for until a sinner is convinced of his need he will never apply for relief. Until this is done the preaching of the gospel will be but as an idle tale or an empty sound, it will be seed sown by the wayside, carried away and fruitless.

The preaching of Christ crucified is singularly adapted and fitted to this end. When sinners are told that the Son of God took on him their nature that he might offer himself a sacrifice for their sin and reconcile them to God, the conviction naturally should follow that sin must be a fearful evil, and that they as sinners are in danger of eternal death. And then the greatness of the love of the Father that moved him to send his Son, and of the Son to come and lay down his life for them, should lead them to hearken to his call and embrace him as their Saviour. And though preaching, so far as it is a human work, possesses no efficiency to change the heart, it has nevertheless the promise of the application of the truth by the Holy Spirit, to awake to a sense of the evil and danger of sin, and to seek deliverance through the atoning death of Christ. To hearers of the gospel the most urgent appeals should be made, warning them of their danger and exhorting them to flee to Christ crucified for salvation. Such preaching, in reliance on divine grace to make it effectual, will not be in vain. As on the day of Pentecost at the preaching of Peter, sinners will be pierced to the heart, and ready to cry out, "What shall we do?"

2. To stir them up to receive Christ by faith for salvation. To the inquiry of the convinced sinner, "What shall I do to be saved?" the one answer is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." To point out the danger without presenting the remedy, would be to trifle with the most precious interests of the immortal soul. Christ crucified is the effectual panacea of this greatest of all ills, that never fails of effecting a thorough cure. And this remedy is not to be presented in any hypothetical or doubtful form; you are not to say, "if you believe you may be saved," but "Believe and you shall be saved." In offering Christ thus to sinners and commanding them to accept him, you have ground of confidence that faith to receive him shall be given. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Doubts on your part are damaging to your success. Christ will honor his own institution of preaching, and verify the truth that the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of those that believe.

3. To impart to them the confidence and joy of salvation. To produce this in the hearts of the hearers should be your aim and object. It is sad to hear believers in Christ expressing their doubts and fears in regard to the reality of their faith. Assurance is attainable. Peter exhorts "to give all diligence to make our calling and our election sure." Paul says in behalf of believers: "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

If believers to whom the gospel is preached are not rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, the fault is in a good measure with those who preach. They have failed to preach Christ crucified experimentally. They have not told their hearers that it is as really their duty to know that they have believed in Christ as it is to receive and live on him by faith. And the preaching of Christ crucified has a tendency to produce the one result as well as the other. The preacher has not done his whole duty until he has pressed on his hearers the necessity of knowing that they are in Christ and rejoicing in the possession of that knowledge.

4. To promote their growth in grace and preparation for glory. Watering as well as planting is required of him who has the charge of God's husbandry. He should not be satisfied with bringing sinners to Christ. He must labor to have them grow up in conformity to him. The Christian life is a warfare in which there is many a conflict before the final victory is won. There are temptations to be resisted and graces to be developed. The preaching of Christ crucified has a direct tendency to aid in this life service. The eye of faith directed to the Saviour as suffering and as glorified brings to the heart comfort and nerves the arm with strength. By looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith we are encouraged to run with patience the race set before us. It is thus that believers are enabled to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In preaching Christ crucified experimentally you are to aim to produce conviction of sin, to stir up to receive Christ by faith, to impart confidence and joy in believing, and to promote growth in grace and fitness for heaven.

I close with a threefold exhortation :

1. Make it sure to yourselves that you have received Christ by faith as your own Saviour. I emphasize this. It is indispensable to fitness for the work and to success in it. If in any case this has not been done, and there is the want of a determination to do it, let the design to enter the ministry be abandoned, and some other calling sought. I trust, however, that you are all in Christ, and have made your calling and election sure.

2. Go to the work of preaching the gospel with the utmost confidence of success. It is dishonor to Christ and damaging to

his cause to doubt. His word is pledged to be with you in obeying his command, "Go preach the gospel," "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

3. Be encouraged by assurance of reward. Having used faithfully the talents entrusted to you, when you report your success to your Lord you will receive the commendation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." To each of you I now address the words of Paul to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee."

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### MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

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We find the following in the *New York Weekly Witness* of Sept. 27th:

There has been a general synodical meeting of the Episcopal Church of Canada going on in Montreal for a week or more, in which the wife's sister question was debated with much heat and strong language by those who regard marriage with a deceased wife's sister as adulterous. Of course they could find no ground in Scripture for such an opinion, but one speaker declared that the Church was the authoritative interpreter of Scripture; but this was clearly disproved by the Thirty-nine Articles. After a very long debate a motion to appoint a committee to frame a canon condemning such marriages was defeated after several proposed amendments to it had been voted down, and the matter was left as before. One speaker took the sensible view that it was difficult enough to keep the express commandments of God without adding any constructive commandments by human authority.

This excellent newspaper has a circulation of over 100,000 copies, and is doing good service for religion, and for moral reforms, and we have often commended it, but such notes as that above, which appear now and then on this subject, we consider incorrect, by the Bible standard, and as that is our mutual standard, we wish to remark upon the subject. The writer cannot mean in a broad way that only absolute commands are binding and a moral rule deducible by fair argument, is not to bind us. This position would sweep away too much of the accepted moral legislation of to-day. What of the first day Sabbath? Again, the position is taken in the statement above, that only the parties *expressly* mentioned in the laws prohibiting intermarriage are forbidden to marry, see Leviticus 18. Look to what a conclusion this leads us. The *niece*, whether by blood or marriage, is not mentioned and who would defend marriage with a brother's or sister's child?

There is need for some words upon this subject. Persistent efforts are making in Parliament to break down the law of England forbidding marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The religious bodies are growing lax upon this matter. The Northern Presbyterian church does not now deal with this as an offence, the Southern Presbyterian church lately refrained from discipline, and a United