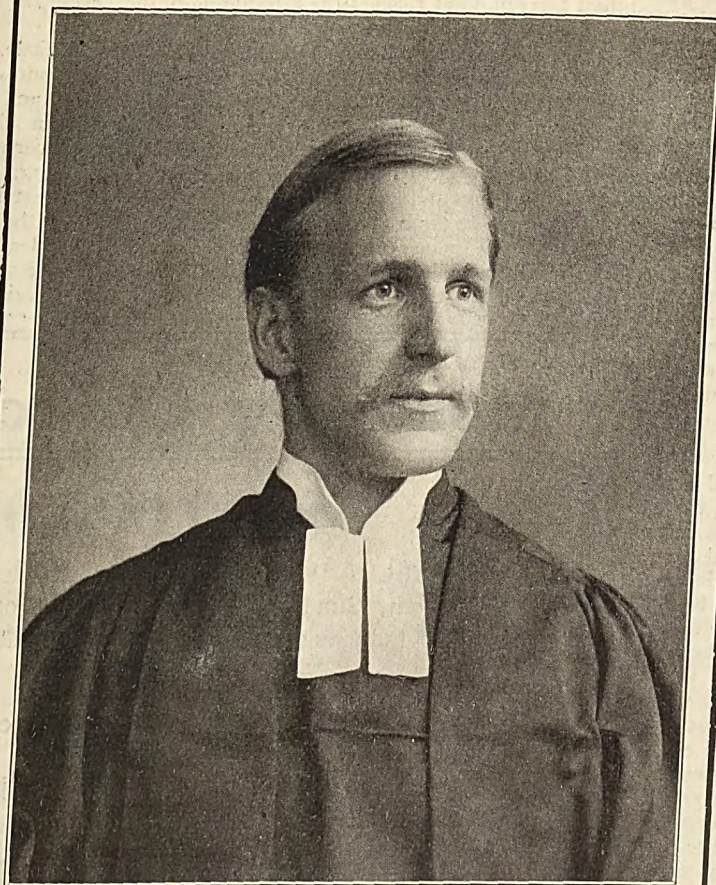


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Re-Opening the Wells.

In Isaac's time the Philistines "stopped and filled with earth" the wells which Abraham, his father, had digged for his own and others' benefit. It was no uncommon thing for a foe to cut off a people's supply of water in olden times. Even in our day instances of this occur, as was lately the case in Somaliland. It is a trying experience to those who have to suffer the consequence and reflects no credit on those who resort to this method of injury.

When Isaac discovered what was done to the wells of water he, upon the first opportunity, re-opened them. He thus performed a noble and worthy act. Individual and communal blessings followed. He is a public benefactor who looks after the temporal needs of man and beast.

What Isaac did in the physical domain, we must do in the spiritual. There is an urgent and growing call to re-open the wells of God's truth and grace. Within recent years rationalists, sceptics and agnostics have engaged in the wretched and wicked work of filling them up with all sorts of stuff. Some go about it in a cool, calculating and persistent spirit. Others enter upon it in a suave, polite and politic manner. Others still are characterized by great bitterness and fury. But howsoever actuated, the effect is most injurious. Thousands through it suffer for time and for eternity. To-day young and old, rich and poor, are by this means losing faith in a supernatural Bible, in a divine Christ, in a miracle-working Saviour, in a crucified and risen Jesus and in a future world of life and glory. About these wells of salvation, from which our fathers drank to their soul's comfort, enrichment and delight, gather so much of human mystification and rubbish that they are closed fountains to multitudes in all the walks of life.

But if we are not to leave them to perish, we must dig away the filthy infilling effected through human spite, malice, and conceit. God is summoning ministers and Christians to this duty as never before. The fundamental verities of our holy religion are attacked in all forms and degrees. We must counteract all such demoralizing and base efforts. We must meet men on the every day level, and show them the abiding foundation upon which the Bible, and the Gospel, and eternal life rest. Much can be done in this way in private conversation as well as in the public arena, in the home as well as in the community, on the week-day as well as on the Sabbath, by the pen as well as by the voice. The enemy of Christianity is alert, wily and resourceful, and its friends must be ever on their guard and ready to circumvent his movements. For our own and others' safety and welfare the old-time wells of a divine Revelation and of a gracious redemption must be kept open to every passerby so that all, who will, may obtain the precious and delightful draughts which may be readily drawn from their exhaustless depths.

A Universal Bible Sabbath.

Great preparations are being made abroad for the celebration of the centenary anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society the first Sabbath in March. The design is to make it a day of universal Bible observance. The co-operation of all churches and nationalities is solicited, and it is expected that both in Europe and in America the sixth of March will be observed for bringing to the fore, by sermon and gift, the value and power, not only of this, but of all similar agencies for the publication and circulation of the Word of God.

At the London observance the King and Queen of Great Britain are to be present at the service at St. Paul, while the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London will attend in State, and the sermon will be preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishops of the Church of England and their clergy have agreed to make a special recognition of the important event. Every Non-Conformist body has signaled its approval of the notable commemoration, and in all Protestant communions it will receive due attention. In Scotland, both the Established Church and the Free Church are arranging to make this Bible day a memorable occasion. From the reports given out, the movement is receiving the hearty co-operation of the Colonies from Rupert's Land to the West Indies, Africa and Australia. It is mentioned as a noteworthy fact that the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa is heartily joining in the celebration. All the Protestant Churches of the Continent are equally interested in it, and the day will be observed by hundreds of congregations representing the Lutheran, the Reformed and Waldensian Churches. Sweden and Denmark will universally keep it as a festival of special thanksgiving and praise, as will the State Church of Saxony and the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches of Hungary. All the great Missionary Societies who, above all others, have reaped most largely the benefits of this wonderful organization will do their part at home and abroad to render the observance of its one hundred years of existence and service an eventful and praiseful occasion.

Nor will the United States be behindhand in making much of it and of our kindred institution, the American Bible Society, which has performed such splendid service for eighty-six years. The two agencies have long operated in happy accord and have been greatly blessed of God as enlightening and saving forces in all lands. The world is indebted to them beyond computation for what they have accomplished in the two-fold lines of translation and circulation. They have not only made it possible to give the Bible, in whole or in part, to the nations of the earth that are accessible to its dissemination, but to print it so cheaply that the poorest may purchase it, or obtain it as a

A Cry of the Unconsoled.

By Rev. Ethelbert D. Warfield, D.D.

"Ave Maria," sweet and clear
The matin bells smite on the ear;
"Ave Maria," softly ring
The vesper chimes as angels sing,
A call to rest from toil and care;
"Sweet Mary Mother, hear my prayer."

Thus day by day, and week by week,
The soaring campanili speak,
From vine-clad slope and sunny plain
To each Italian heart one strain
In pain or pity, hope or cheer;
"Sweet Mother Mary, deign to hear."

I pondered oft the call until
A vision came at midnight still;
Bright heaven itself I seemed to see,
And Mary bending low the knee,
A suppliant at the throne of grace,
Sweet Mary mother sad of face.

"Redeemer mine," she seemed to say,
"Forbid that men on earth should pray
To me who hear not. Spare the pain
That I should think thou diedst in vain,
And sinners turn from thee to me."
(Spake Mary, weeping piteously.)

"Upon my bosom bore I thee,
Upon thy cross didst thou bear me.
The highest human love was mine,
But thine, my Saviour, was divine.
Mine could but cherish, thine dost save."
Sweet mother Mary, wan and grave.

I heard no answer. Fading fast
The heavenly vision paled and past.
Only an echo, faint and far,
Of bells that call, then silent are,
Came to me like a broken sigh—
"Sweet Mary Mother, hear my cry."

Easton, Pa.

President Patton's Third Lecture—The New Christianity.

Dr. Patton introduced his lecture by saying that somehow there has come to our life a change of attitude towards Christianity. The old-fashioned prayer-meeting, monthly-concert-of-prayer-for-missions Christianity is no longer much in vogue. There is a disease prevalent, and all of us are showing some of its symptoms. In medicine a correct diagnosis is the fundamentally important matter. Certain symptoms of the religion of to-day may be mentioned as follows: A.—A neglect, or ignoring, of doctrine. We hear vice talked of, but not sin and guilt and atonement; B.—A tendency to pay special attention to man's social relations, and for the following reasons: (a) The new psychology lays stress upon the relation of the individual to the organism; (b) The pathological conditions of social life have come into prominence. A *modus vivendi* must be established; and then we have a theory of government. Then the categories of jurisprudence are established. Then the great mill of industrialism is set in motion, and we have our science of political economy. Presently we find wealth coming to the few and poverty the portion of the many, and a great pathological condition emerges, and we have to deal with the problems of sickness, degradation, crime. We may adopt the rude surgery of

nature, and let the weakest go to the wall; or we may fall back upon some scheme of paternalism, and accept the propositions of socialism; or we may endeavor to put in practice the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. So it has come to pass that a large part of a minister's time may be engrossed in the effort to teach men how to meet each other in their civic relations. Undoubtedly this is an important part of a minister's duty. We must not forget, however, that it is one thing to try to Christianize society, and quite a different thing to socialize Christianity. In many minds the great duty of the pulpit is simply the preaching of good morals, and we find that in fact even the very doctrines of the Bible are interpreted simply in terms of ethical significance. The atonement becomes only a great example of self-sacrifice, and only a Gospel of service is deduced. Men are not all affected by the disease we are considering in the same way. We need not think of them as having lost their Christianity; but they are putting the emphasis in a new place. We may account for the condition of things either by ascribing it to a new interpretation of the Bible, or to a new attitude with reference to the Holy Book. It appears plain that the current of religious thought is to be explained on the latter supposition. The Bible is not seen from the same point of view as formerly. Men have come, as a result of the scientific study of the Scriptures, to the notion that they will not bear the meaning hitherto currently given to them; and, further, a new philosophy of Christianity has been adopted, and this has forced those who have adopted it to a new view of the Bible. In a word, philosophy and literary criticism have met, and the result is the New Christianity.

Now remember that Christianity is a piece of supernatural information as to salvation through the incarnation and the bloodshedding of the Son of God. Those who hold this view must, if they have normal intellects, be interested in certain things, such as the articles of the deposit of faith. Men cannot build all their hopes for time and eternity upon the teachings of the Bible, and be indifferent when told that the book has been found to be untrustworthy. Here are some saying, "We would believe the Gospels if we only had them, but there is so little in the record of which we can be sure; we know indeed that Paul wrote the epistles; but then we have no confidence in Paul."

Or, take the matter of exegesis. Formerly men were of different opinions as to what the Bible taught; but, in their discussions, they all proceeded on the principle that what the Bible said was true; and the effort was to prove from the Bible that their positions were correct. All this is changed now in current thought. Our view is that Christianity is information as defined above and couched in the language of the Old and New Testaments. Modern thought denies this, and defines Christianity as a stage in a great cosmic process traced from primeval fire-mist, uncondensed nebulae, condensed nebulae, a globe of liquid fire, a habitable world, a gradation of animal life up to mammals, and man, but man without morals or laws; in whose experience, however, customs gradually crystallize into laws until finally the human animal somehow lights upon the ten commandments. The various religions of earth are developed in turn, including