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### Extracts from Dr. Gordon's Sermon of Nov. 24.

ISAIAH 1: 18.

REPORTED BY MISS CAREY DIMOCK.

Isaiah has been called the evangelical prophet, and we find passages in his writings that verily seem to be leaves of the Gospel transferred to the law, snatches of Christ's teachings brought back and inserted into the declaration of the old covenant. In all the writings of the prophets, no passage is more full of the Gospel than our text. There are in it two thoughts.

Note:

I. *The Lord's surprising invitation.* "Come, now, let us reason together." It is not the province of justice to reason with the man who is condemned; it refuses to hold argument with him. But notice here, it is not "come to be condemned," or "come to be acquitted," but "come, let us reason together" about your sin; and we cannot but observe how this corresponds with all that we have in the Gospel when Christ refers to the attitude of God toward the sinner.

Let us notice the difference between the law and the Gospel. Under the law the command was to seek the Lord; under the Gospel the declaration is that the Lord is seeking all men. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" was the voice of God in the old covenant; but there were none who understood, not one who would seek after God; and He, looking over all this weary, suffering sinful race, could not find one who would truly satisfy Him. Under grace all this is reversed; for we read in the Gospel "God is a Spirit, and seeketh such to worship Him," "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Take the parable of the Prodigal Son. Had we been writing it, we would have represented the wanderer returning late at night, and knocking and praying at the door for admittance, and after long waiting being let in by the porter; but how different is the story of the father seeing him while yet a great way off, and running to meet him. It only proves the truth of that word "Before they call, I will answer." Mercy outruns our swift-

est thought, and so it is we find under grace God seeking man.

Under the law the command was "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., but after waiting centuries God found no one who would love him with heart, soul, mind and strength, so He completely inverted the law; and under the Gospel this commandment reads "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life," as if God said "If I cannot find any one who loves me with all their heart, I will love the world with all my heart"; and that is why we see Christ upon the cross—God poured out His love in such unstinted measure.

The law said "do and thou shalt live;" the Gospel says "live that thou mayest do." Think of God taking a sinner into His confidence; you the wrongdoer, and God the injured one, and to you He says, "Come now, let us reason together." Note:

II. *The Lord's surprising argument.* "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as wool." These were fast colors, and when this word was spoken, no process was known by which that color could be washed out; so He declared a thing that was simply impossible, that the blood of Christ should cleanse from all sin.

There it is again, "to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness." The Greek was logical and rational, and wished to prove everything by philosophy. But this cannot so be proven, and yet, multitudes can testify to the work of grace through the blood of Christ.

The record of sins is not merely blotted out, but also the recollection. There are scores of things you wish had not been done, but they have been, and, you say, cannot cease to be; but in the light of this text I say I believe these sins so washed by the accepted blood of Christ are no more—*now and forever no more.* But, while this is true of God, you must not forget that He says "Come." That word runs all through all the Scripture. Isaiah says "come," Jesus says "come," and the last word of Revelation is "Whosoever will let him come." You must say "I will"; that is left for you to do; that God cannot do for you. His word to all is "Come." Let your answer be "I will."

### Our Christmas Festival.

Those who have been present at the Christmas Festivals of the past say that the exercises in the church and vestry Christmas afternoon passed off with more than usual satisfaction. The illustrated lecture on the Holy Land, by Rev. C. L. Goodell of the First Methodist Church, held the attention of the school and friends for nearly an hour, and was full of profit and helpfulness. The school certainly maintained unusual order and quietness.

In the vestry the children witnessed a brilliant spectacle. The whole room was ablaze with colored electric lights, from which were festooned graceful evergreens with wreaths of holly here and there. Between two gaily decorated Christmas trees, laden with presents for the Primary Department, and hanging high above the head, shaded in delicate green, was a brilliant electric lamp of extra candle power, and directly under this were piled the boxes of gifts in the form of a miniature Bunker Hill Monument. The climax of brilliancy was reached when an electric key was turned and the lamps hidden in the trees shed forth their light and revealed the trees in all their splendor.

Following a happy little speech to the children from the Pastor, the presents were called out, and then, to the strains of an inspiring march, a procession was formed, every one receiving a gift, until the little monument melted to the carpet and the last child had passed on and out, thus closing another year's Christmas exercises.