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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 his writings have had
an influence on the religious
thinking of all men who
see in them a leave 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
prophet's mode of expression is more full of the
Gospel than our text. There are in it two thoughts.

Note: 1. 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
calling for an argument. Let the Church, before it
hears, notice here, but it is "not to be come,
condemned," or "come to be acquitted," but
"come, let us reason together" about your sins;
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
decree was that the one seeking the Lord
"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
work of destruction and sinfulness, 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," even 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 having
been 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 Christ's fashion it is no longer
the question of 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 in 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
bathing, feeding, and 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;
"Come now, let us Reason together;" and God the
injured one, and to you He says, "Come now, let
us Reason together." Note:
1. 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 impos-
sible. Only 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
Gospel was logical and rational, and wished to
be so; but He did not try to prove to the
believer by philosophy. He did not say, "you
are not so to proceed" and He made no
attempt to 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 it is better for you if
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 has given a command to us also, and
through all the Scripture. Isaiah says "come,"
Jesu 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
don't God cannot do for you. But God said 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
carried off with more than usual satisfaction. The illus-
trated 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 an half. The school certainly maintained unusual order
and quietness.
In the vestry the children witnessed a brilli-
iant spectacle. The whole room was ablaze
with electric light and a bustle of excitement
festooned graceful evergreens with wreaths of
holly here and there. Between two gaily deco-
rated Christmas trees, laden with presents for
the Primary Department, and hanging high
on the wall a large gilded lamp, with 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 Monu-
ment. The climax of brilliancy was reached
upon the completion of the ceremony. The lamp,
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 air,
the 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.