

was supernatural, pure and simple in its working. The things that are growing and advancing today are a revived and advanced form of Paganism, the Naturalism and Rationalism which prevailed at the beginning of Christianity, the Secularism, Commercialism and the Present-worldism into which all previous civilizations have had their culmination. What is coming to the front and taking the reins of guidance now is the philosophy of the Orient and the civilization of Greece and Rome.

Of course, in the midst of all this is the "river of God" and it is "very full." There are faithful men of God, redeemed by blood, quickened by the very life of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Ghost and standing on redemption ground, who preach amongst the Gentiles the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Wherever this "gospel of the grace of God" is believed, men obtain this life of Christ in their own hearts and live out its principles in their lives, and this reproduction of the Christ-life is constantly advancing in the world. No man or devil, no progress or regress in the tide of civilization, no advance or recession in learning and literature, no wars nor catastrophes can prevent the onward flow of this life until the Body of Christ is completed. True Christianity—the Christianity of Christ—has always advanced, is advancing now, and will advance to the end.

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AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY. Recently Prof. Euting of Strasburg exhibited a large fac-simile of a papyrus recently discovered. "It is actually a dated letter addressed to king Darius in the first year of his reign and contains several names mentioned in the Book of Daniel. Prof. Oppert, of Paris, places the date in the papyrus itself, as at least 500 B.C. It is akin to the letters in Ezra and Nehemiah in form, language, style, titles, etc." Dr. Bullinger continues:—"This discovery was a rude shock to the assumption of the so-called modern higher Biblical criticism, which says that those letters are of quite a recent date, and not contemporary with the books in which they appear. We hope to give further information in our next issue.

### BOLDNESS IN TESTIMONY.

PASTOR A. J. GORDON.

“**E**SAIAS is very bold and saith.” His boldness consisted in the fact that he said what was true. The bravo that dares to make reckless statements for the sake of popular applause is not boldness. An unpalatable truth will make men gnash their teeth; a palatable falsehood will make them smack their lips. It costs much often to utter the former; it brings much selfish gain often to declare the latter. So the boldness in testimony belongs to the clear utterance of the truth, when all the world is going hot haste after a lie.

Now it seems to be the course of things that the best theology, the best politics and the best morality, are generally the most distasteful to the mass of people.

What is called *evangelical theology* will never be popular as long as this age lasts, for the simple reason that it discounts human nature, and marks down all the goods the moralist displays in the shop windows of his profession at fifty per cent. below the advertised value.

Indeed worse than this. Just when you were beginning to think well of yourself and say, "I am rich and increased in goods, I have need of nothing," it thrusts a writ of ejection into your face and bids you come out of self into Christ, to take the poor debtor's oath, and declare that all your "righteousness is as filthy rags," in order that you may accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And what an ungracious task it is for the preacher to go about this world, writing people down, when there are so many who are willing to write them up.

Yet, if the fall of Adam took place, as we teach, and our fall in him, we have to write people down before we can write them up; we have to convict them of their fall before we can show them how to rise in Christ to newness of life.

It is the same in politics and morals. When, by the gravitation of custom, good men get into complicity with bad, and the children of light come to vote for laws which have been drafted by the

prince of darkness, it gives a terrible shock to their sensibilities to hear their real position pointed out.

An old prophet tells of a consultation which he had with the Lord at one time.

And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what seest thou?" I said, "A plumb-line." Then said the Lord, "Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel." A plumb-line! What a harmless thing it is! No blade in it to draw blood! No sharp point to cut to the quick! Yet the man with a plumb-line in his hand will arouse more antipathy and invoke more curses than though he carried a drawn sword. And this is the instrument which God puts into the hand of his servants and ministers. A plumb-line for testing that which is crooked and for condemning that which is out of joint. "I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel."

There is a man living in the *house of tradition* which his father and grandfather occupied before him. All that they believed he believes, and does not ask for anything better. But the man of God comes along and puts the plummet of Scripture against that house and says, My dear sir, did you know that your edifice is altogether out of perpendicular with the word of God? You had better reconstruct it or come out of it, for it is not safe to live in." And how angry he is! Angry for what? You have not touched a hair of his head; you have not jostled a brick in his wall. You have simply dropped a plumb-line down the corner of his house.

There is one living in the *house of custom*. His politics is that of the dominant party. He is perfectly satisfied, because he thinks and votes and acts just as the most respectable part of the community thinks and votes and acts. But the best edifice will settle, as everybody knows. And so one day the inspector comes along and lays his plumb-line to this building, when lo, it appears that while perfectly *true to the times*, it is out of plumb with righteousness. And the inspector checks it "unsafe." What a tumult this raises about his ears!

Now this is the Christian's business in the world, as a witness for God. Not to tear down or overturn, but simply *test*

and *then warn* when the test reveals error or divergence from the truth.

The life of Christ was the true plummet of God let down into an evil and adulterous generation. "For this cause was I born," he says, "and to this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." And what an outcry his testimony called forth! What anger his life stirred up! "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin," he says; "but now they have hated both me and my Father." And what were the works that he did? Works of unselfish beneficence. Why then did men hate him? Because his works revealed the selfishness of theirs, as the straight line reveals the crooked, as the white hand reveals the black one when it touches it.

The only way to avoid criticism in the world is to bend to the world; to conform to every crook in its politics; to yield to every deviation in its religion.

When, after the French revolution, an eminent man was asked how he managed to escape the guillotine, he replied, "By making myself of no reputation and keeping still." That is the way to escape the guillotine of public opinion. And the temptation is great. But what saith the Scripture? "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye." The greatest temptation out of heaven is to be without temptation; and the greatest reproach under the sun is to be without reproach. "Esaias was very bold and saith."

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#### YOU WILL NEVER BE SORRY

- For asking pardon when in error.
- For bridling a slanderous tongue.
- For taking time to study the Bible.
- For having a quiet hour for thought.
- For being square in business dealings.
- For giving an unfortunate person a lift.
- For promptness in keeping your promises.
- For being constant in attendance at church service.
- For putting the best constructions on the acts of others.