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I. LITERARY.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? OR, CHRISTIANITY AS RELATED TO CHRIST AND HUMANITY. *

By Rev. E. H. HARDING, D. D.

CHRISTIANITY is that system of religion of which Christ is the founder. As a system of doctrine, or as a fact, it is the provision of a way by which man may be restored to the favor of God: God reconciled to man by the cross; man reconciled to God by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit changing his heart, bringing him into harmony with God; God reconciled by Christ on the cross; man, by the Spirit in his heart. Objectively, Christianity is a system of facts. Subjectively, it is a new and real life in the soul, the soul answering to the provisions of the gospel made for man, transmuting doctrine into life, realizing this system of facts in its own experience. It is the soul appropriating Christ as set forth in the gospel, as the result of a new power, viz., the Spirit's presence working in that soul to that very end.

Christianity differs from all other religions in the fact that it demands an obedience, and makes claims on the soul which no other ever dreamed of. It demands perfect and complete obedience to a law whose sweep, length and breadth no other religion ever conceived possible: a law which requires not only complete rectitude in all outward moral obligations to one's neighbor, and complete rectitude in all outward duties toward God, but absolute rightness of heart toward God and man,

* A lecture delivered before the students of the Seminary.

READ HISTORY.

REV. ROBERT P. KERR, D. D.

HUMAN history is the resultant of the divine government, and human agency. It is divine because God rules: it is human because man is free.

The study of history is then the study of the two most important questions: What is God? and, What is man? Yes, and another not less momentous: What are the actual, and the ideal, relations between man and God?

The student of history should set out with the belief in God and his government of men. If he does not, and is honest and intelligent, he will arrive at that creed before he has gone far in the annals of humanity. The sublime order and movement forward of the history of civilization, the unvarying sequence of happiness to virtue and of misery to vice, the overruling of evil for good, the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, as well as many other splendid laws written over the face of humanity, proclaim the supreme government of God, and prove his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

On the other hand, the study of the mass composed of individuals, and of individuals composing the mass, best reveals the nature of man. We learn from the men of other days how those of our own time would act under the same influence. The magnificent capabilities of man are seen in history—what he can attain to in knowledge, in art, in power, in character. The study of history is necessary to the right understanding of all of the arts and sciences. Would a man be a soldier? he must know military annals; a poet? he must acquaint himself with the world's poets; a statesman? it is indispensable that he be familiar with the rise, progress, and fall of nations, grasping the causes which have produced these effects; would he be a theologian? the history of doctrine is second only to a knowledge of the Bible. In fact the study of history is the one great fundamental study which furnishes a foundation for acquirements in all other departments of human research.

God's own example leads in this, for the greater part of the book of the revelation of divine truth is history. The character of God, and the nature of man, as well as the relations be-



tween God and man, are clearly set forth in this greatest of all histories. We are not to understand that God was concerned only in those portions of the history of mankind which make up the inspired volume. God had indeed a peculiar purpose in these—the development of his plan of salvation; but God is in all history executing his unchangeable laws, and bringing about his wise designs.

The failure to know history makes men narrow, egotistical, bigoted. Ignorance of history is shown in those who are attracted by the so-called “*new theology*,” which is not new, but old, worn out and exploded long ago. It is doubtful that any thing new in the realm of theological discussion has been brought out during the last two hundred and fifty years. Nearly all of the *novelties* of our time are the old heresies of the earliest days of Christian history.

One of the best things to cultivate in the human soul is patriotism, and this, if it be intelligent and not merely sentimental, is based on a knowledge of history.

One of the strongest incentives to virtue and heroism is the examples of those who have devoted their lives to the welfare of their country, their church, and to the defence of truth, in loyalty to God. The record of their lives is the world's greatest riches. Yes, the world's greatest riches, not excluding the life and work of Jesus, but including it; for all the truly good and great fall into the same catalogue with him. He ever leading because perfect, and infinitely superior because divine. His divinity lifts his life above all others however good, but not to dissociate it from theirs, and the glory of a good man is that he lives in the same cause with the Son of God.

After all, is history a meaningless tangle? Has it no order, no plan? Yes, a sublime one; but often misunderstood because incomplete. When it is finished every intelligent creature shall see what God meant by it all. But he who reads history in the light of revealed truth, can *now* understand its drift, and its ultimate design. What is it? It is the vindication of God's character impugned by Satan in his rebellion against him, which rebellion was first instituted in heaven, and afterwards imparted to earth. This vindication is not of our attribute, but of God in the fulness of his character. His truth and justice are vindicated in the destruction of evil, and his love in the salvation of all who will be saved, at the infinite expense of his incarnation and death.

Read history ; but read it in the light of God ; and ever feel that the story as it is told is penned on the pages of time by the overruling hand of the Infinite.

