

## Sunday Reading.

### WHY WICKED MEN OPPOSE THE GOSPEL.

The reason of the opposition of worldly men to the Gospel of Christ, is stated in general language in the Scriptures to be, the enmity of the carnal mind against God. Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. The person who is conscious of guilt feels uneasy in the presence of God, or of religious people. He naturally hates and fears those whom he has injured.

But in addition to the above, some special reasons have been given, why the Gospel is opposed by so large a portion of worldly men.

Some oppose it, because it interferes with their unlawful gains. They are engaged in some business, or traffic, which the civil law, perhaps, sanctions, but which the law of God clearly condemns. It may be the sale of intoxicating liquors. They know that God and Christian men cannot look with approbation on their conduct. They know also, that with the spread of the Gospel, temperance, and virtue will prevail, and thus their customers will be diminished. Hence, at the very first approach of the missionary, or at the prospect of organizing a Christian Church, in a place where they have long held their sway, an outcry is raised. Men of like craft assemble, and take counsel together, and like Demetrius of old, they address one another, saying, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth," and if the spread of the Gospel is not checked, the source whence our gain is derived will be dried up. To them it seems a small matter to jeopardize their own souls, and those of their fellow men, provided they can only increase their wealth. These are truly the enemies of their race, preying upon their fellow-men.

Others are engaged in a business, perhaps which is perfectly honorable; but they pursue it as if it were their life and soul. The "mighty dollar" has complete control over them. They know that the Gospel is a system of benevolence, and they fear that laud and repeated calls will be made upon their purse. They look upon it therefore with jealousy, as something that is likely to diminish their wealth. This is, however, a short-sighted policy, for all honest and useful occupations and every kind of useful property, especially real estate, is greatly enhanced in value by the spread of the Gospel.

Others oppose it, because they fear it will diminish their worldly pleasure. They see no pleasure in religion, nor in the society of religious people. And they fear, lest their friends being converted should refuse to mingle with them in sinful pleasures of world, and join in the giddy dance. They seem to be totally unconscious of the fact, that religion can give more real and solid enjoyment in one hour than all the pleasures of the world during this short life.

But notwithstanding the opposition of Satan, and wicked men, there is a divine agency in the Gospel which insures its success. And this is one of the strongest proofs of the divine origin of the Christian religion. Its professors, when compared with the multitudes of the world are few, and as regards their external circumstances weak. Satan, wicked men, and the mightiest powers of earth, have, for thousands of years been arrayed against the church to crush it, but to weapon formed against it has prospered. Not only wit, sophistry, and ridicule, but even the most cruel persecutions have failed to accomplish their design. And upon the supposition that the Christian Religion is not of divine origin, its very existence under the circumstances, is a greater miracle than any recorded in the Scriptures. It is the kingdom which the God of heaven has set up, which is represented as the stone cut out without hands, and which is to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Reader, are you a subject of this king, or arrayed against it? Remember, there can be no neutrality here, for the King himself has said, "he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

**SOCIALIBILITY IN THE CHURCH.**

In a sermon on this subject, Rev. W. J. Taylor says:

"May it not add as another serious cause of the debility of our churches, the want of a living, practical, warm-hearted Christian union?" There should be nothing to chill, or repel from such a place as this; nothing to awaken the feelings once expressed by one who gave as a reason why he did not unite with a certain congregation.

"Why I should be frozen to death there!"

One article of our creed is this: "I believe in the communion of saints." And while the rules of all respectable societies have their bounds, yet let us be reminded that Christians are brothers and sisters in the Lord, and that the house of God has its laws of courtesy and kindness, which always repay the observance. But sometimes there is an apparent coldness, which is more the effect of indifference, arising from the want of personal acquaintance, than of anything else, which chills our fellow-membership. Working contributes more powerfully to the prosperity of the church, than this common union of all its hearts and hands in the service and kingdom of our Lord; for this is an answer of our Redeemer's prayer to his Father, "That they may all be one, even we are one." And I doubt not that this warm-hearted cordiality is one great reason why many of the churches which are attended by what are called the middle classes of society, are as constantly thronged and blessed. The poor and the stranger are made to feel at home in the house of God. On the other hand, if you want to go into a spiritual ice-palace, you need only visit what are commonly known as fashionable churches; and there also you see a type of that unity which consists of being frozen together. There you will see the ark substituted for God; a heartless formalism for the glowing gospel, and the "truth as it is in Jesus;" the means of grace for grace itself; the shadow for the substance—the form of godliness in those who deny its power.

### SECRET PRAYER.

Men never take so deep a hold on God as is secret. Remember Jacob. Thou shouldst pray alone, for thou hast sinned alone, and thou art to die alone, and be judged alone. Alone thou wilt have to appear before the judgment seat. Why not go alone to the mercy seat? In the great transaction between thee and God, thou canst have no human helper. You are not going to tell him thy secret. You may be sure he will not betray your confidence. Whatever reasons there may be for any species of devotion, there are more and stronger reasons for secret devotion. Nothing is more embarrass-

ing and disturbing in secret prayer than unpropitious circumstances. Great attention ought always to be paid to this point—"Enter into thy closet," says Christ. He says not a closet, nor the closet, but *thy* closet. The habit of secret communion is supposed to be formed. The man is supposed to have a closet—some place in which he is accustomed to retire for prayer—some spot consecrated by many a meeting there with God—some place that has often been to him Bethel. The Saviour uses the word to mean any place where, with embarrassment either from the fear or pride of observation, we can freely pour out our hearts in prayer to God. No matter what the dimensions of the place, what its flooring or canopy. Christ's closet was a mountain, Isaac's a field, Peter's the house-top.—*Artemis.*

## Agricultural.



### ON THE ADVANTAGES OF STIRRING THE SOIL IN DRY WEATHER.

We find the following experience in the Georgia Farmer, an old and staunch friend, by the way, that takes occasion to call and give us good advice each month. Read it.

"I have known instances where a narrow strip has been left unbroken in a summer-fallow during a dry summer, and after harvest was it all plowed together. The unbroken strip would appear almost destitute of moisture, while that which was plowed and frequently stirred with the harrow or cultivator exhibited quite a contrast.

It is the common experience of farmers, that wheat sown in a dry fall, upon fallow ground is much more liable to come up well, than when sown on stubble.

Again, in having corn in very hot weather, you could fairly see the corn grow, upon leaving the field at night. I have measured some hills that were hoed and some that were not, and the next night compared their growth, during the twenty-four hours. The result was that the hoed had made about twice the growth of the unhoed.

Two years ago last summer I planted rather late in the season a small piece to cabbages for pickles. The soil was dry, sandy loam, with a warm, southern exposure to the sun. I determined to stir the soil often. We all felt the effects of that unusually severe drought. The piece yielding a fine lot of pickles, the vines remaining green and bearing, until destroyed by frost; while vines in the neighborhood treated in the ordinary way, were dried up and bare.

So much for facts. Now, how are these results to be accounted for?

We have seen that the soil frequently stirred had gathered moisture, and had also received from some source nutrition. From what source and by what powers were these supplies of moisture and nutrition derived?

It is a well known fact that the dry atmosphere contains vapor, which is usually deposited in the night upon any substance that is sufficiently cool to condense it into water in the form of dew. At the close of a hot day, when the air is calm and the sky clear, vegetation soon radiates sufficient heat to reduce its temperature to the dew point. The naked earth does not possess this power; hence we often find dew upon vegetation, when the bare ground is dry, not having cooled enough to condense the vapor in the proximate atmosphere. But if the ground is mellow, the air will penetrate its surface, carrying its vapor until it reaches a cooler soil, where it condensed into dew, which diffuses itself through the mellowed earth.

Again, in having corn in the proximate atmosphere, the bare ground is dry, not having cooled enough to condense the vapor in the proximate atmosphere. But if the ground is mellow, the air will penetrate its surface, carrying its vapor until it reaches a cooler soil, where it condensed into dew, which diffuses itself through the mellowed earth.

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