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TERMS

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GOD ETERNAL.

From the new work of the Rev. Mr. Todd, entitled *Truth made simple: being the first volume of a system of theology for children.*

A little boy once stood by the side of a small pond. He looked off over it, and thought it a great way across it. He looked into it, and thought it very deep; and he thought it was a very great water. But when he grew up and became a man, and had passed over the great ocean several times, where he sailed many days and nights without coming to any land—that pond seemed to be very small.

Any thing seems great or small to us, according to what we measure it by.

If one of these children were to break his arm, and it became so bad that it must be cut off to save life, the surgeon must come to do it.

As you saw him take out his knives, and saw, and strings, and carefully go to work to take off the arm, it would seem a long, long time, before he got through—though it might not be more than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes seem a great while, when we have to measure them by great and severe pain. But when you measure them by a whole year, they seem very short.

Did you never lie down at night in health, and go to sleep, and when you awoke in the morning, have the night seem very short? But if you were shipwrecked on the great ocean, and had to hang all night by a rope, wet and cold, and expecting that the very next wave would wash you into eternity, you would feel that one night is a great while, and that the morning sun had not yet risen.

Or if you lay upon your bed, sick, full of pain, and sleepless, with friends treading softly around you, and hearing nothing but the slow ticking of the clock; or, how long would the night seem. It would seem as if the day would never return. This is because you measure the night by the pangs of pain which you feel.

A year seems a great while to a child; but to the old man it seems a very little time.

We think the grey-headed man who has lived seventy years, an old man; but if you measure life by the lives of men who lived before the flood, what are seventy years? Measure seventy years by the whole time since the world was made, and what are they?

How old is that little boy in that front pew? Ten? Well, go back ten years, and there was no such boy. Go back fifty years, and his parents were not created. Go back, over the graves of men for two thousand years, and you come to Jesus Christ. Go back, four thousand years more, and you come to the time when this world was created. The hills, and valleys, and rivers, were not made. The sun, and moon, and stars, were not made. Light was not made. There was nothing. Out of this nothing, the world must come.—the sun and moon, and heavens, must come. Now what can makethem come? Can they come themselves? No.

But some pretend to say, that there was ground and water, and wind to move the water and the dust.

Suppose there was; could dust and water, and air, make themselves into birds and fish, and cattle, into fields and trees, into an arm and a hand, an eye and a tongue—and above all, into the mind which is within us?

No! no! There are too many marks of mind, and we say that mind must have been there—a way off in that dark place[?]*which we call Eternity* before this world was made! That mind, so wise, so great, so contriving, so powerful, we call God. This is what I mean when I say, that "God is eternal." "I am the first."

A child can look into a great, deep gulf, and see as far into it as a man, but he cannot see the bottom. Let me tell you what I mean by the gulf.

This world and these heavens have been made but a few thousand years; but God was living before them. What was he doing? Where was he during that long eternity, before he created any thing which we see? Can I tell? No.—Can an angel tell? No.—Was he making other worlds, and letting millions of creatures live, and go on to the judgment?—and then was he burning up these worlds and making new ones, as he will one day burn up this world? Perhaps he was. Perhaps he did this to millions of worlds, and for millions of ages. Perhaps millions of thinking beings passed into eternity.—Yes—yes—but before this, before he even made any thing—for ages and ages before—what was God doing?

Ah! I do not know. "Who by searching can find out God?" Who can measure an ocean which has no bottom? Who can go back, and back, and back, and say,—"Here eternity began?"

Did you ever hear such a word used as mystery? It is a hard word, but it means something which we believe, but which we do not understand. Thus we believe that God is eternal,

though we cannot explain what eternity is.

Some people talk as if they would not believe any thing which they cannot understand, and thus they say that they will have no mysteries in their religion! I do not know what such people think. If there be a God who has lived for ever, there must be about that God a greatness and an awfulness before which the angels in heaven cover their faces with their wings, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, He is God."

We see things begin. We know when that great oak on the hill was an acorn, and which perhaps, was carried up to the hill by a child as his plaything. We know when the oldest man was born. We know when they began to build the great city.

We know when the great sun first shed his rising beams upon the earth. But we cannot thus go back, and say, that "here God began to live." We go back till we get to the beginning of all things, and there we find God—in eternity—alone, unchanging, unsearchable, eternal!

Thus we know that God has lived for ever, because he made every thing at first.

GOODNESS OF GOD.

I will now tell you of two things which shew God to be good.

1. His goodness is to be seen in his creating what he has.

Suppose you had a jewel, the brightest and the costliest ever worn by a king, would you not wish a suitable box to put it in? Ought it not to have such a box?

Suppose you were going to build a palace for a king, would you not wish to make one of great beauty and convenience?

The soul is such a jewel, and God built the body in which to keep it! And is it not a wonderful and a beautiful cabinet?

The soul is king over all creatures on earth, and is not the body the palace in which the king lives? And how good was God to make it just as he has! With just such servants as we need; such as feet to carry it about. Does the inhabitant within wish to communicate thro't? The tongue is the servant to do it.

Does it wish to receive information? The ear is the servant to bring it. Does it wish to examine for itself? The eye will wait upon it, and shew it all it wishes to see. And all this body so curiously made, was built of a little dust of the ground. Half way between angels and animals, it is like that of an angel, and his body a tabernacle of clay. Wonderful goodness indeed!

But just go within the house! What an inhabitant is there! Ah! there is a spirit in the house of clay, that is able to govern, and manage, and give names to all the cattle; that can manage the ship, that can measure the heavens, that can build up or destroy cities and kingdoms,—a spirit that can glance in an instant from here to India, or from here to the highest heavens. Other parts of God's works shew great goodness; but nowhere has he written it in lines so clear and deep as on the soul of man.

All things that we see around us will perish and be no more; but God made the soul of man in his own image and likeness,—stamping his image upon it as a seal is stamped on wax, and therefore the soul will live for ever.

This world was made for men. Angels do not live here, and have no inheritance here. What a wonderful inheritance has man! The grass and the flower of the field, the tree and the fruits, the tame cattle and the wild, are all his, and God has delivered them all into his hand. When he blessed Jacob for his piety, he blessed his cattle for his sake; and when he spared the dwellers in Nineveh because they repented of their sins, he had pity on their cattle also.

What a joyous morning was that when all the beasts and the birds came round Adam, their master, to receive their names! The bird hears her name, and claps her wings for joy, and hastens to the tree to pour out her song. The horse receives his name, and bounds away in his strength. The lion hears his, and away he bounds not to howl out his anger, but to respect and obey Adam, his king.

The earth is the home, the habitation of man; and how curiously is the great house furnished! The sun hangs up for ever, to give his light.—The moon, to take her turn. The bright and spangled heavens, to look down in their glory and beauty; the green carpet which is spread over the earth, to be pleasant and delightful to the eye.

Does man want wood or water? They are all ready for him. Does he want tools? Let him go to the mountain and take the iron and make them. Does he want silver or gold? Let him go to the mine, and he shall find it safely laid up in the bowels of the earth. Does he want food? The valleys will give him grain, the air will give him birds, and the great waters are all his fishing-places. Does he want clothing?—The sheep bears it on her back, or the cotton-plant will raise it, or the little silk-worm is all ready to spin it for him. Does he want music? The sweet birds will sing for him. Does he want sweet smells? The flowers shall open their sweets for him. Does he want beauty?—The rose shall blush for him. Sweets does he want? The little bee shall toil for him from the dawn to the evening. Warmth does he want? The beaver and the seal will yield up their lives to supply him. Light does he need? The great whales in the far-off ocean will lay down their lives for his service. Luxuries does he want? The ocean and the tides and the winds shall all wait on him, and the ship shall go and return in safety. Say, can you think of any thing which this great house,—the world,—is not furnished with?

2. The goodness of God is seen in his redeeming us.

When God told the grass to grow, and the waters to hasten away, that the dry land might appear, these did not feel unwilling to obey. But when he speaks to us, and tells us to be good, we feel unwilling, and his word does not make us obey. He can speak and call to the light, and it will come to him; but it cost the blood of his own dear Son to make any man come to him.

Suppose you knew that a physician lived on the top of a very high and very steep mountain, who can cure almost any sickness. You have a father who is sick, feeble, lame, deaf, and blind, and you have nobody to help you,—could you ever get him up the mountain to the physician? No, never.—And suppose the physician hears that you have such a sick father, and he himself comes down, and in his own arms carries him up carefully, and there takes care of him and cures him. Does he not shew great kindness and goodness?

Just so Christ knew that we never should return to God, and would never want to, and so he came down into this world, and was here put to death, that he might buy us from being punished as we deserved.

If all the angels that live in heaven were to come down to this world, there is not one of them who could say that God has shewn him such goodness as he has shewn to the poorest saint. Christ never died for angels, and so they never cry, "thou hast redeemed us." Could all the wicked spirits in hell, now lift up their voices and tell their hopes; there is not one of them who could hope that his soul will ever be saved. Christ never died for them. They were the first-born creatures of God, and he the younger; yet God sent his Son to save us. Why did he not save them? They had more strength than we, and could serve him better.—They had stronger voices, and could praise him louder. They had greater minds than ours, and could see and feel the greatness of salvation more than we can. They were more beautiful than we were, and yet they were not saved. What goodness in God was this towards us! Ah! God punished the first sinners, who were sons of light, and who stood near his throne, most awfully; but for us, he said, "let him not go down to the pit.—I have found a ransom." "Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to loose the seals, and to open the book"—the book that sealed our ruin for ever, without Christ.

Suppose a man wished to buy the life of a poor prisoner who was condemned to death, and should offer a piece of solid gold as large as a great church, would you not think he pitied the poor prisoner?

But if God had given a piece of gold as large as this world, and a million of such worlds, it would have been nothing to what he did give, to save us. If he had sent the holy and holy angels down to death, it would have been nothing to what he did give; for Christ, his Son, is the creator of angels, and could have made millions more. But when God sent his Son, he sent one who was as old as himself, who was as great as himself, who can do all that he himself can do, and who is as dear as himself. It was God's giving himself to be mocked of men, and cursed by men, and then hung up to die like a guilty slave. Who mourns like him who has lost an only son? Who would not give his property, his character, every thing he had on earth, to save the life of his sons? But God loved his Son more than all things besides,—and yet he was so good, that he sent the blessed Redeemer into this world to save it by shedding his own blood!

And how easy now to find the way of life.—The mere child, only a little more than four years old, has been known to love the Saviour, to rely on him, and to die in peace and joy. I have such cases now in my mind. She was a sweet child; and for some time before she was taken sick, she felt that she was a sinner, and that she needed the Saviour for her friend. Day after day, would she go to her little room, and kneel down and pray with tears that God would forgive her sins, an not take her out of the world "before her new heart had come to her." When she was taken sick, she was soon told that she must die. She begged her father not to weep, for she was going to her dear Saviour. She heard the Scriptures read, she heard her father pray, and with a sweet smile, stretched out her little hands to bid her father and mother farewell, and closed her bright eyes in death while repeating that beautiful hymn,—

"Jesus can make a dying bed,
As soft as downy pillows are!"

Her poor, pale body was left, but her glorious spirit went up to God! Ah! is not God very good, who has given us the Gospel so plain, that such a babe could thus be ripened for heaven?—Rev. John Todd.

CAUTIONS CONCERNING ENTHUSIASM.

So many and so melancholy are the effects of mistaken and excessive enthusiasm, recorded in the annals of mankind, that wise men are justly alarmed at every appearance of it, and little inclined to give it indulgence.

Whatever there has been of savage cruelty; whatever of public violence, and tumult, and confusion, the utmost extremes of all these evils, in all their consequences, have been equalled by the frantic extravagance of false enthusiasm. It has exhibited, in some tempers, all the symptoms of a malignant disease, and terminated, at least, in real and most deplorable insanity.

If then it be wisdom to obviate the approaches of distemper, those men have evinced themselves wise, and have labored to discourage, by all the arts of ridicule and argument, the earliest tendencies among the people to religious frenzy. There are innocent follies, and there is a madness, which is only the object of compassion; but the folly and madness of the bigot are detestable, because they are destructive as a pestilence. Against such an enemy to human happiness, philosophy has urged her best reason, justice has unsheathed her sword, and the stage to complete the triumph, has played all the batteries of decision.

But argumentation, coercive force, and even ridicule, have been found ineffectual. All these are classed, by the bigot, under the term perse-

cutution, and persecution, like a current of air, adds violence to fire.—The gentler, the kinder, the more Christian mode of expostulation and rational concession, wherever concession can be made, may, like a balsamic vulnerary, heal the sore which opposition would cause to rankle.

I therefore do not deny the justice of the enthusiast's pretensions who professes himself actuated by a belief that the Holy Spirit condescends to assist him in virtuous endeavors, by a sacred influence from heaven. But I caution him against entertaining for a moment, the presumptuous idea, that the same Spirit which assists him, does not, with equal readiness and efficacy, assist his pious neighbor also, and all sincere believers, throughout Christendom, however distinguished by sect, church, or persuasion.

I urge him to try his Spirit by the infallible touchstone of Scripture. Is it pure, is it peaceable, is it gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy? If it should be deficient in any of these amiable qualities, let him be cautious of indulging it; lest the Spirit should be of a diabolical, and not of a heavenly nature.

And in what manner is he to form a judgment of himself, since the heart is deceitful, and to know oneself is the most difficult of sciences? If his high pretensions are accompanied with a bad life; if he be disposed to contend with rancor and violence in support of his pretensions; if he be disposed to involve all who think differently from him in perdition; if he decries good works, and if, with every appearance of sanctity, and many external acts of piety and benevolence, he reserves to himself some secret and favorite vice, he may rest assured, that the Spirit which actuates him is not from above.

If he be inclined to neglect, despise, and revile decent and useful ordinances, such as are countenanced by Scripture, and have a direct tendency to preserve peace, benevolence, and piety; if he prefers himself to all regular and learned ministers, whether in the establishment or out of it, and preaches to ignorant and deluded multitudes in the fields, with the air and voice of frenzy, he may have just reason to fear, though he should have ten thousand in his train, that he has carried his pretensions to the Spirit beyond that wisdom, moderation, and love of order, which the author of our religion shews in his writings, he applies the Scriptural language to himself, and assumes the authority of a primitive apostle; if, at the same time, he expresses his ideas in such a manner as to excite the laughter and contempt of men of sense and approved goodness, he may infer that his spiritual pride has hurried him to the verge of insanity; and, as he values his health and happiness, should exert himself to remove the febrile symptoms which are at once contagious and fatal.

When mechanics, of confined education, and not remarkable for natural discernment, or peculiar virtue and goodness, think themselves better able to instruct the people, than a numerous class of their fellow-citizens, who have been separated, from their youth, for sacred offices, instructed in learning of various kinds, versed in the original languages of Scripture, the very idea implies so great a degree of pride and self-conceit, that it cannot come from the gentle, unassuming Spirit of him who was himself meek and lowly, and who everywhere taught his disciples the lesson of humility.

If such persons urge, in defence of their extravagant behaviour, their dereliction of their trades and daily labors, and their assumption of the priest's office, a particular call, from Heaven itself, louder than reaches the ears of others; let them, before they believe themselves, or persuade others, produced as a credential of their commission, a miracle. If they find themselves utterly unable to do this, let them return to the workshop and warehouse, renounce the deceitful spirit, and evince their attainment of the true, by humility, charity, modesty, and obedience to lawful superiors; by a study to be quiet, and an attention to their own business.

From such practices, and such persons as I have alluded to, has arisen much of the disgrace which has fallen on true and laudable enthusiasm, or that wisdom which is infused into the pure, gentle, and charitable heart from above.—False enthusiasm should be discouraged, that true religion may grow and flourish; as the weed should be plucked up, to give room for the wholesome plant to strike root, and expand itself in foliage and blossoms, and produce good fruit in abundance.

* James iii. 17.
Knox's Christian Philosophy.

ON SELF-DECEPTION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm cxxxix, 23, 24.

It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that cometh the judgment. What an awful moment that will be when I stand before my Judge! I owed him supreme affection, unbounded gratitude, and devoted service: all my time, faculties, property, and influence, were his: and all ought to have been used to his glory. I ought to have vindicated his honor, maintained the authority of his law, and promoted his cause throughout my life. And he has seen how I have withheld from him his due. He can mistake nothing, for he knows my thoughts and motives; and he can forget nothing. He will call my whole life into judgment with the state of my heart throughout it. I can conceal nothing, modify nothing. All

must be then brought out and judged, according to truth. No fancies of mine will be the rule of judgment; nor shall I be judged by the maxims of the world; but the word of God will try all. And by that word I am condemned. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.—As many as are of the law are under the curse. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." None, therefore, but believers in Christ are saved; "He that believeth in the Son, hath life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." But, I do believe? A mere acknowledgement of the truth of Christianity is no influential knowledge of Christian doctrine. A conviction of the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world, is no reception of Christ as a Saviour. To believe in him to the saving of the soul, operates such a change as makes man a new creature. And therefore Jesus Christ said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." Have I experienced this change, without which I am under the curse, and must remain under it forever? Dreadful possibility! God forbid that I should be deceived in this matter! Should I find out now that I am no Christian, painful as the discovery might be, there would be time to seek for pardon and salvation through Jesus Christ, but should I die in false security, and find myself to be no Christian, just when the sentence is about to be pronounced which will fix my irrevocable doom, what time will there be then for prayer, or what hope then for mercy? Now, now is the time to know my state, whatever it may be. Scripture is the only rule of judgment, because the only revelation of the will of God.—If I judge myself now by it, I may not be judged hereafter. By God's help I will find out the whole truth. Am I a Christian? Am I pardoned? Am I safe? Am I a child of God? Am I an heir of heaven? I will settle these questions, if it be possible. Away from me, all flattery, whether of books or friends. There is poison in the honey. I do not want to be lulled by a syren song into hell. I must know the truth.—Welcome the books which most penetrate the conscience, and which most discriminate between true and false religion. Welcome the friends (best worth that name) who will be most faithful to me. Is there pain in the examination of my sinfulness? Is there humiliation in the acknowledgment of it? Welcome both the humiliation and the pain, if they may lead to solid peace, and conduct me eventually to glory. I will diligently compare my state with the declarations of the Scripture. I will search for the marks of genuine piety laid down there, and see whether I can find them in myself. I will ask the most experienced and pious persons among my friends, to assist me to judge. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. Show me my state. Make me to know whether I am a Christian or not. Any pain, any depression, any mental conflict, is better than to be deceived. Make me to know my true state. If I am a Christian, Oh, make it more clear and certain, that I may have the comfort of faith and hope. But if not, then let me know it, that with humiliation and contrition of heart I may, through grace, come to thee in simple reliance on the Lord Jesus, to be pardoned, renewed and saved by thy mercy.

Grant it, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Saviour.—Bap. IV: No. 1.

From the Vermont Telegraph.

"THE RIGHTEOUS ARE BLESSED IN THEIR DEATH."

Among the earliest recollections of my boyhood, one scene is most vividly risen upon my memory. I was at that age, when noisy sports are the theme of youthful thoughts, and nothing seems important but the pleasure of the moment. My aunt, who had endeared herself to me by her peculiar familiarity and sweetness of manner, was lying upon her death-bed, waiting with patience the hour of her release. I approached her bed-side to receive her farewell blessing: she feebly clasped my hand in her cold, pale fingers, and looked earnestly in my face. She could not speak. Warm emotion was burning within the ethereal spirit, but the angel of death had laid his chilling finger upon her lips. But that fixed searching, earnest look,—it was full of soul—it conveyed unutterable thoughts. No words can express the deep thoughts pictured in that eye; no eloquence could have excited such emotion in my own heart. It was a look of love, of sympathy, of tender expostulation. It was the language of the soul speaking out from the eye of a dying saint, on the verge of the spirit-land, already filled with the spirit of heaven. As she dropped my hand and turned her eyes upwards, I saw her lips tremble with the breathing forth of a prayer, and I felt that she was spending her last breath in intercession for me. From that time the impression made by the dying look and prayer of that departing saint, has never left me.—It was one of the most deep and early of those influences which, I trust, finally subdued me.—I shall ever have occasion to bless God for that unutterable prayer. Truly, "the righteous are blessed in their death."

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF MR. ONCKEN.

Mr. Oncken writes under date of May 31,

Our bible and tract operations are extending, and are carried forward with spirit and zeal. Our connections, in different parts of the country, are increasing, and we are thus privileged to scatter the good seed far and wide. We thank God and take courage, for the wide door he is opening for his word, and not less for his faithful internal instructions, by which we are made more and more to see and to feel, that we shall effect nothing, un-