

RATIONALISM.

AN ADDRESS

BY

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RATIONALISM.

THE subject that is to occupy our attention to-night is rationalism. This is a word that signifies the acceptance of, or belief in, nothing more than what can be accounted for by our reason ; nothing that the natural faculty of the mind, by itself, is not able to apprehend. It is the exact opposite of faith. It says : " I will believe what I can see. I will believe what I can grasp with my natural understanding, but I will go no further." Looking at this subject as one of the especial characteristics of the last days, I propose to base my remarks on a Scripture in the second epistle of Peter, 3rd chapter, 8th verse : "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It will be interesting to notice that, before the word ignorant, there should be a very emphatic you—"Be not *you* ignorant." It is just put in contrast to those who were willingly ignorant, in verse 5. Moreover, we do not quite get the force of the idea in the word "ignorant." Literally, it would be more correct to say, "This is hidden from them, they being willing." And then the 8th verse would read : "Let not this one thing be hidden from *you*, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Unbelief, that is only content to walk by sight, never can have the patience to wait for God. Faith, that is occupied with the living God, alone is able to wait for the accomplishment of what He is doing. Unbelief says, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were," and wilfully shuts its eyes to all that would prove the contrary. Faith

knows, that God—who once fulfilled His intention of visiting a guilty world with judgment, though in long-suffering He waited a hundred and twenty years ere He carried it out, and overthrew the world that then was, with the deluge of water—by the same power by which He formerly created and upheld the world, is still reserving the world unto judgment; and in connection with His purposes, He tells us that one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. And this one thing must never be hidden from us, the beloved ones of God, if we are patiently to walk on in the path of simple faith; because it is only the consciousness of this truth that can enable us to wait for God. But we are told further, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness.” Now this word rendered “slack” means dull, heavy, sluggish, implying a person whose slowness to do a thing is not the result of patience, but arises simply from his sluggishness. They must not suppose that God is indifferent about His promises, because He does not hurry in fulfilling them.

But we had better read a few of the earlier verses of this chapter. Verse 3: “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” Now the special feature of the last days, set before us in this Scripture, is that scoffers—the word means those who jest or make a joke of a thing—are walking *after their own lusts*, all the time they are saying “Where is the promise of His coming? What have we to tell us that God is ever going to interfere personally in the affairs of the world?” and while they are jesting and making it a thought for mirth, that God, who made the world, should uphold that which He has made, and control

everything that takes place, and should presently manifest Himself in judgment? "After their own lusts." Remember, that word "lust" means the desires of the natural heart. It may take the form of gross carnal appetite; or, it may assume a more refined appearance, though one quite as wicked in the sight of God; and it may even take the form of religiousness. To bear this out we might turn to Ephesians ii.; "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Paul is addressing Ephesian believers, who had formerly been idolators, worshippers of the goddess Diana. Consequently they would be well acquainted with all the abominations of that worship, and would readily understand the meaning of the words that follow: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

You are well aware what a marked contrast is brought before us in the Word of God, between the Jew and the Gentile. The Jew, brought near to God in his national character, while the Gentile is afar off. The Jew, with all his knowledge of God, and with his zeal for the Scriptures and the ordinances; the Gentile having no knowledge of God, outside the household, and going on in the grossest superstition and idolatry. Now, bearing this in mind, and remembering the description the apostle gives of himself in the epistle to the Philippians, where he not only traces back his genealogy, proving himself to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but declares how he was a zealous Pharisee, and a persecutor of all he thought to be in opposition to God; full of zeal and earnestness, and, as regards righteousness, so blameless that no one could point the finger of accusation against him. Oh, how vividly it brings out the hollowness of it all when he classes himself among the sinful, God-hating Gentiles, and says, "Among whom also *we* all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of flesh." All his religion, all

his zeal, without the true knowledge of God and without a broken heart, all this he now sees to be as much a fulfilling of the desires of the flesh and mind, as the openly profane and unclean ways of the Gentiles at Ephesus. Now identically in the same way, these scoffers of the last days, with all their boast of knowledge and understanding, and their attainments of every kind, are walking after their own lusts. It does not matter whether it is men plunged in the most open of outward sins, or men, in the pride and boastfulness of their heart, seeking to set aside the Word of God, and rejecting all that God says about His work in creation; they are walking after their own lusts just as much in the one thing as in the other.

Now I am not going to attempt to-night to deal with infidel arguments, or with sceptical reasonings of any sort whatever. I rather want to point out a little, from the Word of God, of the way in which God himself connects the whole of His grace towards us, as sinners, with the glory of his creatorship. To show that these two things are inseparable the one from the other. That the Creator God is the Redeemer God; and that we cannot be partakers of His saving grace, and not, at the same time, own His as Creator and upholder of all things. It is in this way alone, I am persuaded, that every child of God will be enabled to meet and to ward off the assaults of infidelity. These sceptics ask "where is the promise of His coming?" They say that they can trace back the History of creation written in the strata of the earth, and that there they find conclusive evidence of the incorrectness of what is written in the Scriptures. They carry back the creation hundreds of thousands of years, and they say that it has been a continuous order of things without a break. They are continually pushing back the period at which creation began. And they can look forward as far as they have looked back, and talk in the glibbest way of so many millions of years that present developments still need for their working out. It is this class of people that the Spirit of God sets before us in Peter's epistle; men who simply look at that which they can see, and say "We don't believe in a coming Lord; we don't believe that One

who made and controls all things is presently coming to close the present scene." Well, what is our answer to that? Oh, dear friends, all of us who have received the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, all of us who have tasted and found that the Lord is gracious, we only need to go back and see what God Himself says about the whole matter. As I said before, there is one thing we must take care we are not ignorant of; that God is patiently carrying out his own purpose; and that He can afford to wait, though the day of its fulfilment be thousands of years distant. Meanwhile, Satan, as god of this world, appears to be getting more and more power, and is organising men to more and more of defiance and open rebellion against God. Yet all the time God is assuring us that one day with Him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and that the day of the Lord will surely come. And as God is seated upon His throne, and as, in answer to all the scoffs of the world, He says "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," so your faith and mine should be established by the simple going back to the record of what God has done in the past. For He who spake, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast, sits above the water floods to-day; and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

We will turn back, then, to the beginning of God's Word, and see what He Himself declares. The very first sentence of God's revealed word to man, is the foundation of everything, and for that very reason, infidelity never ceases to attack it. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Most of you have heard before that the word "God" in that verse is in the plural, whilst the verb "created" is in the singular. Therefore, in that one sentence you have the Trinity in unity. For you recollect that in the Hebrew language there are three numbers, the singular, the dual, and the plural. When the singular is used, only one person or thing is referred to; when the dual, two are spoken of; whereas the plural always refers to more than two. Now here "God" is in the plural, and yet the word "created" is put in the singular to agree with it, for after

all it is only one God who creates. So we learn from this plural noun with a verb in the singular that it was a three-one God who was the Creator of the world. Let us now turn to the first chapter of John's Gospel. It is very familiar ground that we are travelling over, but I just want to start from the foundation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." A little further down we read in the 14th verse: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Now we may stop for a moment and compare these two passages, these two records of that which was in the beginning. "In the beginning" takes us back to before any act of creation. How far back it is impossible for Man's mind to grasp. While in Genesis we are told that in the beginning the three-one God created the heavens and the earth; here in John's Gospel we read that that Word which was with God in the beginning was made flesh and dwelt among us. Now in connection with God's work of creation, He is said to always act through the second person of the Trinity. While God the Father is spoken of as the author, in the sense of the One who plans and purposes and works all things after the counsel of His own will; the Son of God is always set before us as the One through whom all things are created. "All things," therefore, we are assured, "were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." And in this character, as the One by whom God creates and makes all things, He is set before us as the Word of God. Now we can at once see that when God speaks of His Word, He means something more than a mere spoken expression. The Word implies the whole of the creating and life-giving power put forth in connection with the Lord Jesus. In the Greek language, as used in the New Testament, we have two distinct words, both translated "Word." The one used here is "*logos*," and the other one is "*rema*." The word "*rema*" is literally "a

saying," a single utterance, and does not speak of the whole mind or purpose as "*logos*" does. And whereas "*logos*" is used specially in connection with creation, whether the natural or the new creation, "*rema*" is used (as a saying or utterance of God) in connection with the arrangement or putting in order of that which has been created.

I will now ask you to turn to the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, 3rd verse: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." While I have no wish to introduce needless difficulties, by referring frequently to the original, yet we are never to neglect any help we can get, by a more careful examination of the exact words as given by the Spirit of God. the word "worlds" is really "ages"; and if we read for "the worlds were framed," "the ages were re-set in order," we shall be nearer the mark. And this time the Word of God is the "*rema*," not the "*logos*." But to connect the thought here with the Lord Jesus we must go back to the first chapter of the epistle, where we learn that it was by the Son that God ordered the ages. Let us read from verse 1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He hath made the worlds." Here again the word should be "ages." It is not a question of the creation of worlds at all, but of the ordering of the ages. If, in the beginning, God created all things by Jesus Christ as the Word, the *logos*, of God, the One in whom His creative power was manifested; by Him also, as the "*rema*," God ordered the ages. God's actings, ever since the beginning of His creation work, pointed forward to the Lord Jesus. And, as everything looked forward to Him, before He came to earth, so now everything looks back to Him as the centre of all things.

I may take this opportunity to say a brief word as to the alleged discrepancies between the discoveries of science and the statements of Scripture. The scientific men, who have searched into the crust of the earth, tell us that they find

fossilized remains of creatures that once had life, and that must have existed many thousands of years before the time at which it is supposed God created all things. But the truth is that no one knows when God created the world; for in Genesis i. 1 it says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and, as I said before, we are not told how far back that takes us. There may have been a very long interval between what is spoken of in the first and in the second verses. But we are not concerned with that interval at all. It has nothing to do with our relationship to God, or with what He is to us. If He has left the record of it in the earth's crust, well and good. But we are not called upon to accept every shifting wind of scientific doctrine, with which these would-be expounders of the record seek to overthrow the written Word.

Now if you turn to the first epistle of Peter, the first chapter, you will find the same truth about the Word of God brought out in connection with the new creation. Verse 23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word (*logos*) of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." It is creation work here; and it matters not whether it be the creation of a world or the new creation of the sinner, the Lord Jesus in His *logos* character as the creating One, the One in whom is life, is the One by whom it is carried out. Now let us connect this with a word in the fourth chapter of Matthew, fourth verse: "He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Every word" is "every *rema*," every utterance. There again we have the sustaining and ordering of that which had first been created. Now is it not very beautiful to see God, in the natural creation, at the commencement bringing things into existence by His creative Word, and then by His ordering Word, maintaining, and, if need be, restoring what He had created; and then to see this as a figure of what He does in the new creation? Man, first of all, born again, by the creative Word of God, a new creation, as we have it in Galatians, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation"; and then, as the child of God, sus-

tained by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

We will look, now, at the first of Romans, and there see how God appeals to His works in creation, as giving a plain revelation of Himself, and so leaving without excuse those who do not want to retain God in their knowledge. Verse 18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The word "hold" is translated "hold down" in the revised version. It is not holding the truth, it is resisting it, holding it down, keeping it back. Verses 19-22: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are already seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." "Professing themselves to be wise," means professing that they had knowledge and understanding of their own; and it is by this that we can trace the whole matter.

In every direction men that put away the truth of God, and have not the knowledge of God, become fools. For all imagined wisdom, apart from the wisdom that God has given, only darkens our vain minds and renders us blinded and foolish. Verse 23: "And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen." In the Revised Version, that last verse reads as follows: "For that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." And this brings out more clearly the character of the idolatry of the would-be wise ones of these latter days. The heathen make images of some

of the creatures God has made, and bow down to them and worship them. How blind! how ignorant! we say. But what are many of the mightiest intellects of civilized lands doing at the present time? They have given up the truth of God, and exchanged it for "*the lie*," for so it should be rendered. The old lie of the serpent in the garden, who persuaded the woman that the wisdom to be snatched at, apart from God, was better than all that God had given. So these men of science have set God's Word on one side, and will only learn from the book of nature—and the result is that practically they become worshippers of nature—of the creature, or created thing—rather than of the Creator. Verse 28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient."

Now in connection with this part of our subject we will turn to the book of Job, the closing chapter, and notice how instructive the character of God's dealings with Job is to us. Job had been questioning the ways of God. Job had been as good as saying that God did not deal fairly with him. He had presumed to put himself in the position of a judge. He had taken his place on the judgment-seat, and had been arraigning God at his bar. In answer to Job, God first sent Elihu to reason with Job and show him his folly, and then God speaks Himself. And what does He say? He simply gives a description of His own works in creation, and uses them to break down Job's stubborn and self-righteous heart, and to bring him to know himself as a sinner. In the thirty-eighth chapter, verse 1, we read: "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man: for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it?"

If you were to read right on, you would find that God, after first speaking of the work of creation, goes on to single out a number of specimens of His works; the treasures of

the earth, of the air and of the sea, the living creatures of the water and of the dry land. He sets these things before Job, and asks him what he has to say about these things, as to their origin, and the power that brought them forth. And this is the whole of God's appeal. There is nothing else. God makes Job to feel his utter feebleness and insufficiency, in the face of the wonderful works of creation. And that carries all besides along with it. Job had said himself (for he knew something of God in the character of the Redeemer) "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He had declared his assurance that, though his body should go down to the grave, yet, in the latter days, he should see God with his own eyes. But all the time he was crying out against God's dealings with him, and questioning both His righteousness and His love. Then God just reveals Himself, by His works in creation; and when Job finds himself face to face with God, he sees that he is nothing but a poor worm of the earth. Then, because he was indeed a child of God, he is humbled in God's presence, and led to make the confession of chapter 42, verse 1: "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Now I think that this is most instructive for us, in connection with our subject. In the first of Romans we have men, in the pride of their hearts, refusing to see God in His works, because they did not like to retain Him in their knowledge. The result of this is that they exalt the creature above the Creator; and God, in solemn retribution, gives them up, first to worship created things, and then to corrupt and defile their own bodies and to commit every abomination. On the other hand, in the case of Job, we have God revealing Himself, in all the majesty of His omni-

potence in creation, to one of His children, who had been betrayed into the sin of challenging God's ways and rebelling against them. And what is the result in the latter case? Job is humbled by God's revelation of Himself as the mighty Creator. He takes his true place and says, in effect, "Oh, I have been meddling with things that belonged to God, and not to me; now I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

In further illustration of our subject let us turn to the nineteenth Psalm. This psalm is dedicated to the Chief Musician. And who is the Chief Musician but the One who says in the second of Hebrews "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." There we have the Lord Jesus in the character of the Chief Musician. He is the One who leads the song of eternal praise, all because, as the fortieth Psalm tells us, He Himself had been down to the depths of the horrible pit, and had proved the power to save of the God he had trusted. We often use the language of the fortieth Psalm in regard to ourselves; but none of us has ever tasted the terrors of that horrible pit as He did. And just because He went deeper down than any of us, He now occupies the place of Chief Musician, the leader of the choirs of all who have learned the new song of redemption. This Psalm, then, is prepared, so to speak, for His own use, and it is divided into two parts—the word of God in creation, and the word of God in His dealings with His people. Read the opening of the Psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." And now turn to verse 7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." And it concludes with the prayer that should ever go up from our hearts when we seek to bring our songs of praise to God: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."

You see the character of the whole thing. You see how this song, fitted for the lips of the Chief Musician, acknowledges God both as Creator and Redeemer; the One who makes and upholds all things by His power, and who also, by His word, converts and makes wise the simple one, draws him to Himself, and gives him all he needs.

But if the Creator God is the God of redeeming grace, He is also the God who will judge the ungodly. We find this set before us in Psalm xxxiii. We will read from verse 6: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect."

We might also refer to Psalm cxxxvi. After every verse there is, you remember, that sweet refrain, "For His mercy endureth for ever." The Psalm begins with creation. It goes on to speak of judgment upon the heathen. It refers to the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness. All these varied utterances lead up to one and the same conclusion. At every stage we are assured, "His mercy endureth for ever"—that the God who created all things, and who will judge the ungodly, is the God of everlasting mercy to His people.

We might also refer to the 8th of Proverbs, where the Lord Jesus is personified as wisdom. Verses 22 to 30: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him"—or, as the Revised Version gives it, as "a master workman; that is, as one who has been apprenticed and made perfect master of his art. He is there in the character of the *logos*—for "without Him was not anything made that was made"—as the master workman, the One who minutely carried out all that God had designed. And verses 35 and 36 tells us that whoso findeth Him

findeth life, while those who hate Him love death. We will look next at Isaiah xl. In the earlier part of this chapter God has been promising wonderful things to His people, who were in a sorely distressed and broken condition; then He has been dealing with idolatry, with the folly of men who make images after the fancy of their own minds, and bow down to them and expect help from them; then He proceeds in the 27th verse: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." It may be long to wait for the accomplishment of a'l that God promises in this chapter, but the same truth applies here, "Be not you ignorant that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." God comforts and sustains the fainting hearts of His people, in the midst of all their sorrow, by reminding them that He, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, and that those who wait on Him shall not faint either.

Now, if you will turn to the 29th of Deuteronomy, and the last verse, we may connect these words with all that has been before us. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Now is not that sweet? God *has* His secret things. Job tried to find them out, but failed. He tried to probe into the mystery of God's unrevealed things, and the conclusion he came to was that he was running against a stone wall, and would only succeed in breaking his own head. What God keeps secret, nobody will be able to fathom. But, oh! dear friends, while the secret things be-

long unto the Lord our God, those things which it has pleased Him to reveal belong to *us* and to our children for ever. And what for? That we may be pleasing to God. Only let there be in us a heart that wants to please God, that takes delight in doing His will; and all the revealed things shall be to us such an inheritance, such a treasure, that no words will be able to express the blessedness of our portion.

There is one other Scripture that I wish to refer to before I close. It is the well-known appeal of God in the 36th verse of the fourteenth chapter of first Corinthians: "What! came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" Now most of you recollect the occasion of that question. This fourteenth of first Corinthians gives a number of very minute instructions connected with the assembly of God, as to the worship and ways of those who are gathered by the power of the Holy Spirit to the name of the Lord Jesus. It is a most remarkable thing, and one to be taken account of, that this chapter has, with one consent, been set aside by almost the whole of Christendom. Ask any one of the existing denominations "How is it that you do not put the fourteenth of first Corinthians into practice?" and they will tell you that it is not suited for the present time. It would not do for these days. But notice the question that God asks here: "Came the word of God *out from* you, or came it *unto* you only?" When did the word of God begin with each of you? When it came as the mighty creating power, to create you anew for God. It came *unto* you. It did not come *from* you. The Lord Jesus, speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, declared that it was easier for heaven and earth to fail, than for one jot or one tittle of God's law to be annulled. And the precious Scriptures of the New Testament have not one whit less of authority. "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord," added the apostle. But these are the very things that those who profess to be teachers to-day refuse to own any obligation to obey.

Now, a very solemn consideration arises from all this. How is it that scepticism is no longer confined to the ranks of the irreligious, but that the professing churches are, in many cases, saturated with it? How is it that Mr Spurgeon finds himself compelled to withdraw from the Baptist Union, because many of its ministers are subverting the very foundations of the truth? Alas! it is not in vain that the Deceiver has persuaded God's children to trifle with God's Word. It may have seemed a small thing to give up apostolic practices, because changed circumstances made them inconvenient. Expediency may have appeared a sufficient excuse for obeying the human tradition, and so making the commandment of God of none effect. These were the non-essentials, about which the world's religion proclaims liberty. But let the authority of God's word once be challenged on the smallest matter, and who can tell what the end may be? It is the opening of the flood-gates, and none can afterwards stay the flood. Christians, do you want to be preserved from the assaults of modern unbelief? Do you wish to see your children kept from the Devil's most subtle and seducing snare? Oh, then, cleave to the whole Word of God. Let your heart be subject to its every commandment, and count each precept as more precious than your necessary food. The revealed things belong unto us and to our children for ever. Do not let go one jot of the precious heritage; for if you venture to trifle with one line, one word, of what God has spoken, how can you take your stand against the man who would rob you of the whole?

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