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God is ever blotting out sins from His remembrance—never tiring. O! I will tell you what it is like. It is like the infinite, tireless patience of the sea. The children heap the sand up, they dig deep into it. . . . And then quietly the old sea turns upon its course and rolls its waves across the sands, and every trace of scar is obliterated, becomes as if it had never been.—C. Silvester Horne.

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

The crowning grace of the Christian life is obedience. Nothing can displace it in the heart. To learn the will of God, and then to be willing to do His commands will lead the soul out into peace, joy and satisfaction. "The loftiest attainment to which any child of redeeming grace can aspire this side of Heaven," said Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, "is to do the will of the Master."

In our fear we sometimes fail to feel the exultant joy we should feel over the wonderful transformation of human society that the religion of Jesus Christ is producing. The world is better, happier, more joyous because Jesus lived and offered Himself a sacrifice for sin. There is still much evil in the world and there is much of unhappiness resultant from sin, but the note of joy sounds ever loud and clear as men appreciate more and more the amazing love of Jesus and His strong power to save.

The early and fundamental enthusiasms of life furnish oftentimes a prophecy of future activities and achievements. To the boy Jesus, the house of Jehovah and the appointed teachers of religion were the center of his keen, boyish interest and enthusiasm. On his visit to Jerusalem, when twelve years old, He became so absorbed in the things that concerned God's house, that he remained for three days unmindful of the appointed time for the return to Nazareth. Why should not the Church enlist the early enthusiasm of the boys, and turn their thoughts to their Heavenly Father's affairs? The wise pastor and the wise session will see to it that the boys are held to the church in their eager, early enthusiasms.

The home is the place where the largest number of boys and young men decide to become ministers. Of 410 candidates in our Church last year, 287 decided to study for the ministry before they entered college, 85 while they were in college and 35 after leaving college. Religion in the home is the surest and strongest influence to turn our boys and young men into the ministry. The probabilities of a young man's deciding to enter the ministry decrease as he leaves parental influences for college, and decrease still more as he leaves college for contact with the world. What a responsibility is thus laid on the home! Parents should count it an exalted privilege to hold in their hands so much of determining, directing and deciding power for the future welfare of their sons and of the Church. On page 19 of this issue will be found an article by the Secretary of Ministerial Education and Relief, that is filled with instructive statistics on this subject.

Doctrines do not serve their full purpose when they are embodied in a creed. A creed may be a cold and lifeless intellectual conception. But doctrines are intended to move the affections. In Paul's noble discussion of doctrine in the eighth chapter of Romans, he rises from one sublime doctrine to another, until the glory of God's amazing truth concerning predestination, effectual calling, justification,

and glorification, awakens unbounded gratitude, and he exclaims: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul connects doctrine with the affections. If you would increase your love for God and man, study the great doctrines of His Word.

The real revivals in the Church have followed the faithful and loving preaching of doctrine—the great facts of sin and redemption. There is nothing that stirs the soul to its very depths like the conception of the real nature of sin and the graciousness of God's remedy for sin. Nothing so mightily moves the affections as the truth about man's lost condition and the hope held out by Jesus of a full and free salvation. These deep doctrines develop the soul into greater spiritual fruitage, and love, faith, obedience and joy are increased with increasing knowledge of doctrines.

The Korean Presbytery at its third annual meeting in Pyeng Yang in September ordained eight native Koreans to the ministry and took steps to publish a Presbyterian weekly newspaper in the interests of their work. On page 10 is published an encouraging report of this meeting. One striking characteristic of Korean Christians is their earnest spirit for evangelism. Of the eight ministers ordained, one is to be sent as a missionary into Russian territory to carry the Gospel to the Koreans about Vladivostock. The irresistible impulse of genuine Christianity is to give the Gospel to all men.

Brazil is the subject for the meetings of the Women's Missionary Societies during November. On pages 6 and 7 of this issue will be found helpful and timely articles illustrated from photographs showing interesting scenes from this important field. The work is going forward in Pernambuco, Canhotinha, Garanhuns, Maceio, Ceara, Caxias, Maranhão and Para, as well as in all Brazil. There are the usual obstacles, but they do not deter our missionaries. For example, last March an infuriated mob, led by the parish priest, burnt a Presbyterian church and destroyed Bibles and other books at S. Joas do Calçado, just north of the national capital, Rio de Janeiro. The missionaries at Lavras were delighted when the news came of the appropriation for the enlargement of the Girls' School. One writes, "We have been going about our work with hymns of thanksgiving in our hearts, if not always upon our lips." What a stimulus we at home can give to the workers by doing our part. Nor should we fail to remember them in prayer at the throne of Grace. Other articles on Brazil will be published next week.

It will bring sincere sorrow to many hearts to know that the author of "William the Baptist," Rev. James McDonald Chaney, D. D., is dead. His death occurred at his home in Independence, Mo., on September 20, but information of his death did not reach the "Observer" until this week. He was the oldest member of Lafayette Presbytery, having been a member of that body for fifty-one years. He was in his seventy-ninth year, and a few years ago retired from active duties of the ministry. He graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1856 and was ordained by the Presbytery of Lafayette in 1858. The greater part of his life was spent in educational work. He was president of the Female Seminary in

For the Christian Observer.

# Has the Supernatural Ceased?

BY REV WALTER M. LANGTRY.

In all the ages of the world there has been much of the supernatural, real, supposed, or pretended. There is much of it now, and it is claiming the attention of many people. Therefore it is important to distinguish between the false and the true. Has the real supernatural ceased, or is God using it in His work in our time?

## Revelation and Miracle.

The supernatural may exist in two forms: revelation and the miracle. Revelation is produced by God, dealing directly with the mind, sometimes speaking with an audible voice, as at the baptism of Jesus, sometimes by a silent impression, as indicated by Peter's words (II Pet. 1:21), when he says that in prophecy, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"—but all with the use of supernatural means enabling the human mind to receive a definite message from the mind of God.

Inspiration, while a different thing, is yet closely enough connected with revelation to be considered a part of it for our purpose. The miraculous is the production of results in the external world, without the use of natural means, by divine power.

As believers in the Christian religion we regard the fact of a revelation, proved by miracles, as not only actual but also the natural way for God to express Himself. There was a particular purpose in connection with every revelation and every miracle, according to the needs and progress of the Kingdom at that particular time.

For Adam, this purpose was the promise of hope in the moral ruin of the world; for Noah, a warning of judgment and a plan of escape; for Abraham, the establishment of the church; for Moses, the great deliverance from Egypt; for the early prophets, warnings of the coming captivity, and protests against the sins that caused it; for the later prophets, a promise of the return; and, in the New Testament the supernatural is used to introduce the changes in the Church ushering in the Christian dispensation. Every case of supernaturalism is either in connection with the composition of the Bible or with some great movement of the Kingdom of God, or with some person who is prominent and important in the work of the Kingdom. The point is, that the supernatural never relates purely to the private life of the believer, either as to material or spiritual things. His individual destiny he is left to work out by the ordinary means of grace. The revelations to Hannah, to Manoah, to Abraham and to David, concerning the birth and work of children are examples of private revelations about public characters for the public good.

## The Miraculous is Never Used for its Own Sake.

It is used to support revelation. Hence, while revelation may be given alone, the miraculous is never used except with reference to revelation—is either in connection with some special message from God, as Gideon's fleece, or at least in connection with some man who holds the office of messenger, as Elijah and Elisha in their miracles of raising the dead. See the purpose of the miracles of the apostles (Mark 16:20): "The Lord confirming the Word with signs following;" and also the miracles of Christ, "a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him" (Acts 2:22), and even, in part, the purpose of His resurrection, as in Rom. 1:4, "Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." From these we get

this general rule, that when a man had a message of a new thing, hard to be believed, or requiring a new kind of work, it was attested by a miracle.

## Is the Supernatural Continued in Our Day?

Let us now inquire whether the supernatural is continued in our day. For there are many who think it is to be the common rule rather than the exception in this dispensation, and that we are just now coming to understand this.

But the supernatural was not the common rule even in times covered by the biblical history. The supernatural covered a very little even of the lives of Abraham and Noah so far as the records go, and in the case of no great Old Testament character did it cover all, but simply came on occasion. So that probably the time when even the public life of God's people was guided by a continual use of the supernatural, was only a few hundred years.

We must conclude then that it is not God's plan for His people to live by the supernatural, but by the natural, including, of course, a use of the supernatural that He has already given. Especially is this true when we remember that during a large part of the Old Testament time, God's people had no Bible, and all of the time, very little, as compared with the present; so that they needed a revelation as men never will again.

## The Completeness of Our Bible

is another reason for believing that the supernatural has ceased. Why should it continue? Not to give us information about the beginning of the world or of the Church. Moses has done that. Not to tell us of the end, for Jesus and Paul and Peter and John have done that. Not for moral purposes, for with the whole Bible before us, full of that purpose, any addition seems unnecessary. Not to inaugurate any new work or new form for the Kingdom, for Jesus gave us a work 1,900 years ago which is not yet done.

The only object that can be imagined for the continuance of the miracle is that man should be put in direct communication with God, so that he could talk to Him and receive personal answers, just as one would with a personal friend, and as we expect to do in Heaven. But that would be only for our personal pleasure and profit—things for which revelation was never given. We can walk as close with God as we wish without any supernatural manifestations.

The continuance of the miraculous would also degrade the Bible from its position as "the only rule of faith and practice," and it would lead by short and easy stages to ideas of complete sanctification not consistent with the biblical view of man and the Christian life.

## The New Testament Claims to Close Revelation.

The New Testament represents its revelation as amply sufficient to make "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." It further represents that the next revelation is to be at the end, the revelation of Jesus Christ with judgment and victory. And then we recall those remarkable words with which John closes his Apocalypse, the like of which are found nowhere else in the Bible: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." And standing where it does it almost forces us to conclude that it applies to the whole Bible as well as to John's last book.

And if it closes that, it closes also personal communications from God; and if that, then miracles are done. I can not agree that if we had the faith we could work miracles.

Why should miracles be always used? It would doubtless be convenient and comfortable to be able to cure sickness, and to be independent, partly or wholly, of natural means. For a Christian not to have to depend on, nor to obey, the laws of nature as other people would practically take him out of the world, putting his life on an entirely different plan from his neighbors. This seems too preposterous to think of.

All the supposed revelations since the time of Christ, and they have been many, have not added one iota of knowledge to that of the Bible; and the supposed miracles have never raised a man from the dead, nor cured a broken limb, nor restored a member of the body that had been cut off.

## Claims of the Rationalist and the Mystic.

Today the rationalist and the mystic, the one reducing everything to the natural and the other to the supernatural, meet in the claim that they have more light on the character of God, and religion than the Bible reveals. To quote the words of one who is probably the most prominent rationalist in the pulpit today: "I know more about God than any man knew fifty years ago." A wonderful claim, this! Yet many people believe it.

And while the rationalist thinks he knows, the mystic is equally sure that he knows more about God than others, and both get their extra knowledge outside of the Bible.

There seems now to be a general desire for and interest in things supernatural. The age is marked by many supposed revelations. This shows itself in two ways.

First, in modifications of the true religion. Its devotees search eagerly for "signs" and "words" of private guidance from the Holy Spirit, either in religious work or in one's own affairs. And because they claim things hard to be believed, the inevitable result is the attempted miraculous. They claim a special gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues, and the gift of healing.

Second, among the irreligious or among those not grounded in the faith, the same thing shows itself in other religions and cults. Mormonism was the first great cult of modern times based on a pretended revelation. Then followed Christian Science with a similar basis which denies the material altogether; and spiritualism, which is thinly veiled materialism, both the latter pantheistic. Then many other cults, hypnotism, thought-transference, telepathy, mind-reading, presentiments, and coming on down the scale to vulgar depths we find the common ghost story.

These show a very striking tendency of the age, "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." When people are looking for the supernatural, they seldom fail to find it. The visionary Christians who believe in their own miracles charge that those of Christian Science are of the devil. Possibly they are right. But they seem to forget that to an outsider their own look exactly like them. God's miracles always surpassed Satan's. The magicians turned their rods into snakes just as Moses did. But Moses' snakes swallowed theirs, and the demons fled from the presence and power of Christ.

If any of the miracles of today are from God, we need some mark to show us which. We must also remember that Satan's methods are probably natural, and often by human means. "Satan hindered me." I Thess. 2:18. "The messenger of Satan to buffet me." II Cor. 12:7. See also Mark 4:15 and 8:33. All modern miracles in their deceiving power can be fairly charged to the working of Satan, "who clothes himself as an angel of light," and works with "the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," and will deceive, if it were possible, "the very elect."

This all seems to be a part of the penalty we pay for our credulity on one hand, and our unbelief on the other. Some will believe, on the strength of feeling instead of evidence, things that contradict reason, and some will not believe anything out of the ordinary experience of men. Men find the Bible hard to

believe, and yet will accept anything else that is brought to them.

Christ healed "all manner" of sickness and disease. His worst enemies did not deny it, because they could not. They tried to kill Lazarus, but they did not deny his resurrection. The miracles of the disciples were equally unquestioned. "They could say nothing against it" (Acts 4:14, 16). The Gospel supernatural is clear and purposeful. But if the world fails to believe it, is it not logical that God should send them "a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"—because they did not love the truth?

The only forms of the supernatural clearly promised in the latter times are, the new birth, the witness of the Spirit to it, the power of prayer which God answers by natural means, and probably the call to the ministry.

Every other use of the supernatural either adds nothing new, and so is useless, or adds something new, and is dangerous, weakening the authority of the Bible as a guide which is the test of all false doctrines. "Though we, or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel . . . let him be accursed."

Clayton, Mo.

For the Christian Observer.

### VIA AMORIS.

BY ALICE HARPER.

I wandered in a gloom-enshrouded land,  
Where clouds and lurking shadows veiled the light.  
Where haunting fears and doubts, a spectral band,  
Pressed close around me in the gathering night.  
So deep the gloom I scarce could see the right.  
So thickly thronged those shapes and phantoms weird;  
The dismal clouds above obscured my sight,  
I groped my way, nor sheltering haven neared;  
When lo! athwart my path a prostrate form appeared.

I stooped and found, all sunk to earth with pain,  
Forspent with toil, one weary, overworn.  
No longer then I roamed in wanderings vain,  
No longer moaned my solitude forlorn;  
My cold heart glowed with sympathy new-born.  
I raised him from the earth and soothed his woe;  
Then straightway fled the clouds of night, and morn  
Shone beauteous o'er the brightening vale, and lo,  
The sky was bright above, and all was peace below.

The spectral doubts and fears had vanished all,  
My path lay clear before me, and the sun  
Illumined all the vale. The urgent call  
Of need responded to, the duty done.  
The glad new life of sympathy begun,  
Dispelled the night and made the shadows part.  
And gave fair promise of a race well run.  
With joy in gladdening many a grief-worn heart:  
For joy is plural-born and dwelleth not apart.  
Clinton, Tenn.

For the Christian Observer.

### EVENING.

BY FAITH SOMERS.

I love to connect our word *serene* with the Latin word for evening as well as with its own mother-word *serenus*—clear or bright.

Often after a windy, stormy day there comes at evening a clear, bright stillness, so that at evening time there is serenity as well as light. So often in life's evening there comes a lull, a time of peaceful waiting "between the lights," the burden-weighted heat of the day behind, the radiance of eternity before. Perhaps the day has been in truth "life's little day," swiftly ebbing to its close; perhaps the worn, tired pilgrim has lived even beyond the measure of three-score years and ten. In either case it is in truth the evening.

The dear face reflects "eternity's wonderful beauty," the sweet, serene spirit is freshened by dew from the heavenly Hermon, the fragrance of evening flowers fills all the air, the songs of birds come in tender, satisfied cadences, and even the clouds which remain are enriched and made radiant by rays from the sun of righteousness.

We, whose evening is not yet, are entranced with the exquisite blending of the warm human affection with the celestial flame kindled from the sacred altar. With hushed souls we minister and are ministered unto, until, too soon, the twilight time is past, and the evening and the morning have become the eternal day.

For the Christian Observer.

## Progress in Southern State Institutions.

BY W. D. WEATHERFORD, PH. D.,

International Student Secretary of Y. M. C. A.

From time to time there have appeared in the magazines of our country hysterical articles which would try to persuade us that every educational institution is a hot bed of skepticism and a den of vice. The men who write these articles are not infrequently non-college graduates, who "undertake an itinerary of class-rooms and then boldly write up their impressions, just as many others have proposed to give the public reliable accounts of the manners, customs and ideals of a people whom they have studied from car windows on a hurried cross-country trip. These writers are adepts at taking the statement of one college professor and magnifying it into the attitude of the whole college community. It would be very difficult to find twenty or more thousands of men in any profession without finding individual cases of radicalism, and even moral obliquity; but I am persuaded, after eight years of travel among the colleges of America—not as a curiosity hunter, but as a worker for college men—that in no other class of men can higher ideals be found than among the professors and students of American colleges.

It has been my privilege in the last eight years to know personally practically every college president in the South and Southwest, besides hundreds of professors, and I have also "undertaken a few itineraries" of colleges in every section of the country. I have gone into these colleges to investigate the moral and religious conditions—not to write about them, but to help better them if possible. In order that I might be of the most service, students and professors have talked openly and frankly about conditions, thus giving the best possible chance of knowing the exact situation. I am not unaware of the sins of college men, neither am I unmindful of the fact that a few professors fight every legitimate effort to build moral and religious character among students, but neither of these is the dominant fact of college life.

In order to reassure those interested in the moral conditions of our colleges I have made a careful investigation of a group of State institutions—and State colleges are generally conceded to be the least religious and most immoral institutions in America. Whether or not this be a true impression, I do not stop to discuss, but simply give the following facts to indicate that in these institutions, at least, religious life is not a minus quantity.

In the thirteen Southern and Southwestern States, which territory is my special field of work, including Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Oklahoma as the northern boundary, there are twenty-two State colleges enrolling men, exclusive of normal schools, industrial institutions, and district—or semi-State schools. Each State has one or more such colleges, Virginia having four, Arkansas, Florida and Louisiana having one each, and the other States having two each. In these twenty-two institutions there are about ten thousand men students enrolled this year, or probably one-half or one-third of all collegiate students in the section, according to classification adopted. In these colleges a disproportionately large number of the lawyers, doctors and professional leaders of the section are being trained each year. The political leaders for the future in particular are being trained in these institutions. Both from the standpoint of numbers and of public careers in the future, the men in these colleges are very important, and whatever affects their morals affects the life-springs of the section.

In view of the fact that religion is not officially taught in State institutions, we have been in the habit of thinking that there can be no religious life in them. This is a conclusion not warranted by the facts. While the State colleges have been charged—not altogether without justification, in particular instances at least—with lack of morals, there are many facts today which would seem to mitigate that charge.

Any fair study of the religious and moral conditions of State institutions must begin with certain granted facts. In the first place, it would not be expected that as large a percentage of the men entering such a college would be church members as those entering denominational schools. Many Christian parents have preferred to send their children to church schools and not a few have naturally favored denominational enterprises aside from moral questions involved. Again, one would not expect to find so many ministers, missionaries, or other religious workers among the graduates of a State institution as among the graduates of a denominational college, for the evident reason that most young men who plan to enter such Christian callings matriculate in the college of their denomination, both because it is cheaper and because they there find congregated more men of their own particular denomination with whom they must later work.

For these and other reasons the number of active Christian workers entering State institutions is considerably smaller than in other institutions,

hence the work done must be much more largely the outcome of spirit and active interest built up in the institution itself. If, therefore, we find that there is a reasonably strong religious life among students of State colleges, we may feel assured that every college man is not going to the bad.

The organization which is responsible for the moral and religious development of the students in State institutions—and this is true of practically every denominational college also—is the College Young Men's Christian Association. The measure of its strength therefore will be a measure of the religious conditions of these colleges.

In my investigation, I have gotten facts from men whom I know personally in every case and who have, with the greatest care, answered my questions. My own personal knowledge of each college has helped me to interpret the facts. In response to the questions about the relative number of students enrolled in college and the membership of the Association, fourteen of the twenty-two answered that they had 7,407 men enrolled in college, with a membership in the College Young Men's Christian Association of 2,785, or thirty-eight per cent. When it is remembered that the joining of the Association puts a man on record as in sympathy with, and co-operating in, the Christian work of the college, it will readily be seen that the Association must be a very vital force in college life. This organization outnumbers two to one or even three to one all the Greek letter fraternities, and not infrequently enrolls two or three times as many men as the athletic associations of the colleges.

Fifteen of the twenty-two institutions answered questions concerning Bible study, giving their total enrollment as only one less than the total membership of the above fourteen institutions, or 2,784, with an average attendance at the weekly class meetings of 2,074, or seventy-five per cent. When it is known that the courses of study used by these students are prepared by some of the most scholarly men in America, including such men as Dr. Kent, of Yale, Dr. Bosworth, of Oberlin, Drs. McFadyen and Falkner of Canada, one readily understands that the influence of such study on the whole college community must be nothing short of powerful. What other class of men outside of our colleges has two-fifths of its members studying the Bible in a regular, systematic and scholarly fashion? Some one has calculated that only one man in twelve is a member of an evangelical Church in America, and that only one church member out of every ten is a regular student of the Bible, or one man out of each one hundred and twenty at large is a student of the Bible. If we put by the side of this, the fact that two men out of every five in these State institutions are enrolled in the regular Bible classes of the Young Men's Christian Association, we ought to be reassured concerning the religious conditions of college men.

In these same twenty-two colleges, eight report one hundred and fifty-five men who have, during the college year, for the first time, openly confessed their decision to be followers of Christ. To this number also should be added several times as many more who have entered college as nominal church members, but who, for the first time in their lives, have this year become actively interested in Christian work.

Eleven of these State institutions report fifty-two men studying for the Christian ministry, thirty-three preparing for foreign missionary service, and thirteen preparing to become secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association. Of this number eleven have decided on the ministry as a life-calling, nine on the foreign mission field, and eight on the secretaryship of the Association during the college year past. It will thus be seen that twenty-eight men in eleven State institutions have decided during the present year to enter Christian callings. This number compares favorably with the number of men deciding on such callings in a corresponding number of denominational colleges. According to a careful investigation which I made personally three years ago, out of two hundred and fifty-four men studying for the ministry in nine denominational colleges, twenty-three, or nine per cent., had decided on their life calling after entering college. Here eleven out of fifty-two, or twenty-one per cent, made this decision during the present college year. When one remembers that godless associations have never been conducive to men entering Christian callings in large numbers, one must again feel reassured about the religious atmosphere of these State institutions.

Among other questions, I asked what per cent. of the leaders in other college activities were vitally interested in the work of the Young Men's Christian Association and the religious activities of the college. The fact that two answered, "only ten per cent.," one answered, "twenty per cent.," two answered, "thirty-three per cent.," etc., will indicate that these questions were not carelessly answered