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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—SYMPOSIUM ON MODERN CRITICISM.

HAS MODERN CRITICISM AFFECTED UNFAVORABLY ANY OF THE
ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY?

BY HENRY J. VAN DYKE, SR., D.D., BROOKLYN.

NO. I.

THE task before us would be much easier if the terms of the question could be clearly defined. What is meant by *modern criticism*? When is a doctrine of Christianity *unfavorably affected*? What are *the essential doctrines* of Christianity? Without assuming to answer for others, and especially for the eminent scholars who are to come after us in this symposium, we desire only to make a general agreement with our readers as to the sense in which certain words are to be used in this essay.

Criticism is a very broad term. The epithet *modern* does not restrict, but enlarges its scope. For the critic, whether in ancient or in modern times, is a judge whose jurisdiction includes all arts and sciences, all literature, all opinions, all books. No intelligent believer in the Bible claims for it any immunity from the same rules of evidence, the same tests of authenticity and credibility, the same scrutiny into the genuineness of the record, the structure of its sentences and the meaning of its words, which we apply to any other book.

Viewed in this broad light, modern Criticism is the new field of the old conflict between Christianity and Infidelity: and the question before us is, whether, in our day, the faith which accepts the gospel, or the unbelief which rejects it, is making the greater advance in the world. We think there can be no hesitation in the answer to the question as thus expounded. Facts and figures on every hand show that during the present century Christianity has made more rapid progress, won more converts, pushed her outposts further into heathen lands, entrenched herself in more institutions of learning and of beneficence, translated her sacred records into more languages, ex-

SERMONIC SECTION

GOD'S RESERVE OF GOODNESS.

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Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.—Ps. xxxi: 19.

GOD never gives all he has to give. The time never comes when he has nothing left to bestow. We never reach the best in divine blessings. There is always something better yet to come. Every door that opens into a treasury of love shows another door into another treasury. The unrevealed is ever better than the revealed. There is no danger that we shall ever come to the end of God's goodness, or to any experience for which he will have no blessing ready.

Yet the divine goodness is not emptied out in heaps at our feet, when we first start in faith's pathway. Rather, it is kept in reserve for us until we need it, and then disbursed. That is the thought in these words: "How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee." The goodness is *laid up*, stored away, kept in reserve. We think of one gathering food in bright summer days, when the harvests are golden, when the fruits hang on bending boughs, when the hillsides are purple with their vintage, and laying up for winter's use, when the fields shall be bleak, and the trees and vines bare. We think of youth toiling and garnering wealth, in the days of sturdy health and sinewy arm, for the time of old age and decaying powers. We think of a father gathering riches and securing them in safe investments or deposits for his children when they shall grow up. So God has laid up goodness for his people. The thought is very beautiful.

1. He laid up goodness in the creation and preparation of the earth. Ages before

man was made God was fitting up the earth to be his home. The story is all told in a few brief words in the first chapter of Genesis. First, there was chaos, a world without beauty, light or life. Then light was made to shine upon the formless void. Then the waters were gathered into seas and lakes, and the dry land emerged—plains, hills, mountains. Then life appeared, vegetable, animal, in succession. At last, one particular spot was chosen and fitted up to be a home for man—a garden of Eden, a Paradise, filled with the rarest things of creation. All this for man not yet made. All the varied and exquisite beauty and variety of scenery; all the wealth hidden away in mountains and hills; all the useful things prepared and stored up in nature, were for man's happiness and comfort.

Think, for example, of the vast beds of coal laid up among earth's strata, ages and ages since, in loving forethought, that our homes may be warmed and brightened, in these late centuries. Think of the minerals that were piled away in the rocks and hills, before there was a human footprint on the sand. Think of the laws of nature, as we call them, all arranged to minister to man's pleasure and benefit. Think of all the latent forces and properties that were lodged in matter, to be brought out from time to time, at the call of human need. Look at the springs of water opened on every hillside, in every valley, to give drink to man and beast. Note the provision in every clime and zone for food and raiment. Look at the medicinal and healing virtues, stored away in leaf, in root, in fruit, in bark, in mineral.

I simply touch thus upon thoughts which must have, for every devout student of God's works, a wondrous fascination. It fills us with admiration

Many of the full sermons and condensations published in this REVIEW are printed from the authors' manuscripts; others are specially reported for this publication. Great care is taken to make these reports correct. The condensations are carefully made under our editorial supervision.—ED.]

and praise to think that for countless ages before the race began, God thought of us, foresaw our needs and laid up goodness for us in the secret storehouses of nature. Surely no sane man will say it was an accident. Nay, the marks of design are seen everywhere; the prints of God's fingers are on all these beneficent arrangements.

2. God laid up goodness for his people in his eternal covenant. If somewhere away down among the earth's strata, among the traces of the leaves and ferns of past ages, as you sought you came upon your own name, spelled out plainly on the rock of coal, how marvelous it would seem. "Who knew me then, when these things were laid here?" you would ask in amazement. Yet there is a place where your name was written, before there was a fern or a leaf. It is a wonderful thought that before the world was made the plan of redemption was arranged, and blessings were laid up in the covenant of love for God's children.

Shall we call the witnesses? Our Lord himself says that the kingdom of glory, into which, at the end, the redeemed shall be welcomed, was prepared for them, "before the foundation of the world." Peter says that Christ himself was "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," as the Lamb, by whose precious blood we should be redeemed. Paul says we "were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." And John says that the names of those who are saved were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, "before the foundation of the world." So God wrote our names on the scroll of life, and began laying up goodness for us in the storehouses of His covenant, away back in the infinite ages that are past, before the mountains were brought forth or ever he had formed the earth or the world. The goodness we are enjoying to-day is from a storehouse old as eternity.

3. The goodness of God was laid up for us by Jesus Christ, in His incarnation, obedience, sufferings and death. The children into whose hands there comes, at their Father's death, a large inherit-

ance which he has gathered during his life, never can know what it cost him to make this provision. They never can know how he thought of them in all his toils; how love for them inspired his heart and nerved his arm; how often he denied himself and made great personal sacrifices, that he might save and lay by the more for them.

We do not know, as we enjoy the blessings of liberty, how much it cost our ancestors to procure it and preserve it for us; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been laid upon the altar, as the price of the privileges that bring to us such peace. And we forget, while we pillow our heads on the promises of God, while we rest secure in the atonement, and while we enjoy all the blessings of redemption and the hopes of glory—we forget what these things cost our Redeemer. Turn back and read the story of Christ's humiliation, His condescension, His birth in a manger, His poverty, His toil, His persecutions, His agony and shame, His torture, crucifixion, death and burial. What was He doing during those long years of poverty, those sharp days of temptation, those keen hours of agony? He was laying up treasures of blessing and glory for you. He was preparing eternal joys for you. He was storing up an atonement to cancel your sins. He was filling a fountain in which you might wash and be clean. He was purchasing eternal redemption for you. In all His weary, painful, suffering life; in His obedience and submission; in His agonies and death, Christ was simply laying up blessings for His people. There is not a hope or joy of our Christian faith that does not come to us out of the treasures laid up by the obedience and the sorrows of our Blessed Lord.

"O Lamb of God, who by the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation; by Thy Holy Nativity and Circumcision; by Thy Baptism, Fasting and Temptation; by Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial, and by Thy crying and tears hast made for us eternal redemp-

tion, hast opened to us the gates of glory—praise and glory be to Thy holy and blessed Name forever.”

4. God has *laid up* His goodness. The word means *hidden* or *reserved*. The goodness was stored away for use when needed. The treasures were not all opened at the beginning. The world is many centuries old, but every new century has seen new storehouses unlocked; and still we have not received all that God has to give.

This is true of the *world of nature*. Originally the wants of men were few and simple; but as the race multiplied and civilization advanced, new needs continually arose; and to meet these new needs, new supplies have been brought forth from God's treasures. No thoughtful person can study the history of the unfolding and disclosure of the powers of nature, as seen in the great inventions and discoveries of the past centuries—such as the compass, the art of printing, coal, steam, navigation, electricity—and not be struck with the fact that they have all been made just when the interests of the race demanded them. So far as we know there has been nothing new created since the beginning, but there has been a continual succession of developments and disclosures of hidden treasures and powers. To illustrate, when primitive materials for light were about to be exhausted, the great reservoirs of oil in the bowels of the earth were disclosed; they were not then new made—they had been gathering there for ages—but the hidden stores were now first unlocked. And, further back, when the forests were being fast cut down and there seemed danger of a scarcity of fuel, the vast coal beds were found. They were not created just then for the emergency—ages before they had been laid away and then covered up—but at the time of the world's need the stores were brought to light. In like manner, in these recent days, men are just discovering the powers of electricity—not a new creation, but an energy which has flowed silent and unseen through all space from the beginning,

only to become known in these late days.

The same is true of the supply of the needs of *individuals*. No devout person can look back over the years of his own life and not see, how, always, just at the right moment, a treasure-house of goodness has been opened to meet his want. We grow anxious and fearful as we see our supplies melt away. What shall we do to-morrow or next day? But when the morrow comes, it brings us to the door of a new storehouse and puts the key in our hand. The same is true of *spiritual* goodness. Take the Bible for illustration. It is a great treasury of hidden and reserved blessing. There has not been a chapter, not a line, added to the Bible, since the pen of inspiration wrote the last words; yet we know that every generation finds new things in the blessed Book. This is so in our personal experience. As children we study it and con its words, but many of them have no meaning for us. The light, or the comfort, or the help, is there, but we do not see it, we cannot see it, until we have more experience. The same law applies in all *learning*. The rich treasures of high culture are not unlocked to the school-boy until he passes through a long preparatory education and training. “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,” was one of the Master's words to His disciples. They were not sufficiently advanced in spiritual knowledge and experience to be able to receive and understand the hard truths He had to communicate to them. A young Christian cannot understand the deeper truths of spiritual life until he advances further in personal experience. There are many things that can be learned only when the heart has been prepared to receive them. So it is that the rich truths of the Bible can be understood only as our experiences prepare us to receive them.

You may write with lemon juice and the words will fade out, leaving no trace, but expose the page to the heat and every line will come out bold and

clear. The words of the Bible, in like manner, seem to hide away, and their meaning to fade out. We read them in sunny youth, but they do not appear to have any special meaning. Then we go on into the midst of the struggles, trials, and conflicts of real life, and new senses begin to flash out in the familiar Scriptures. Promises that seemed pale before, as if written with invisible ink, begin to glow with rich meaning. Experience reveals their preciousness. The heat of trial brings out the hitherto invisible truths. Every Christian who has lived many years, and passed through sore afflictions and trials, knows how texts he had known perhaps from childhood, but in which he had never before seen any special preciousness, all at once, in some new experience of need, begin to flash out and pour bright light upon his path. Yet the light was not new; it was shining there all the while, but he could not see it before because other lights shone about him obscuring this.

Passing over the Pennsylvania railroad in day trains, when you near the summit of the mountain the employees go through the cars and light the lamps. It seems a strange thing to do at mid-day, and a very useless thing. Those dim lamps give no light in a car filled with sunshine. But while you are wondering what it means, your train plunges into a long, dark tunnel, where no sunshine ever penetrates. Then you understand why the lamps were lighted: then you see the use of their light. So it is that the meaning of many of the most precious words of the Scripture has to be learned. We see no beauty or bright beam in them at first, when the world's light floods our path. They lie in our memory, and the years come and go, bringing new experiences. The light of human joy wanes. Health gives way. Disappointment comes. Sorrow breaks in upon our homes. Some human trust fails. The sunlight that flowed about us yesterday has been put out, and our path sweeps into the darkness. Then the words of God that seemed so pale and common-

place before, like the dim lamps in the noon-day, flash out in full splendor, and pour heavenly light about us. Did those words have no light in them until just now? Yes, the light was there all the years; the texts meant just that—all of that—the first time you ever read them. They hung above your head with all this wondrousness of help, comfort and divine revelation all the time you were moving along through the lovely valley and up the mountain side; but it was not till you plunged into the darkness that you saw the brightness. The goodness, the comfort that came so sweetly was not prepared for you new that moment. God laid it up, long years since, in the precious words of inspiration; but you never found it before: the storehouse was unopened till now.

5. It follows, then, that the storehouses of goodness are *not opened until we come to where they are*. They are placed, so to speak, at different points along our path; the right supply always at the right place. At every river there is a bridge. In every desert there are oases, with their springs of water and their palm trees. At the foot of each sharp, steep hill there are alpenstocks. In every dark gorge or tunnel there are lamps. For those who fear God and walk in His ways there is not a real need of any kind along the entire path to heaven's gate, without its goodness laid up in reserve. But we shall not get the goodness until we reach the point of need, where the supply is laid up. When the Israelites came to the edge of the wilderness, where no bread could be gotten, the manna began to fall; and wasn't that soon enough? When they came to a place where there was no water the smitten rock gave its supplies; wasn't that soon enough?

A great many people find the bulk of their anxiety in forecasting future possible needs or trials. Many of these may never come at all, and those that do come will bring with them their own relief. It may not be disclosed in advance, but why should it be? Will it not be soon enough when the shadow deepens for the lamps to be lighted?

Will it not be soon enough when the larder is empty for God to send bread? When you get to Marah's bitter waters of sorrow you shall find the tree to sweeten them. Will not that be soon enough? When you reach your Gethsemane and lie in the deep shadows, with the agony in your soul, will not that be soon enough for the angel to come?

The treasury of goodness is always just at the point in the path where we shall need it. So it comes that many of God's storehouses are in very strange places. Take a few illustrations: "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion." It is very clear that you cannot get that promise when you are in no danger or trouble. God does not say He will hide you in His pavilion when you are in joy and safety, but when you are in trouble. That goodness is laid up only where the way is perilous or where the storms break. "When thou passest *through the waters* I will be with thee." That promise is hidden in the very midst of the wild waves. You cannot find it in any sunny field amid the flowers, but only when you are plunging in the mad billows.

Take one other illustration. God gives many promises of special favor and blessing to the widow and orphan; for instance: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." It is easy to see where this cheering promise is to be found. It never can come to the tender wife when she leans upon the strong, manly arm of her husband, and is sheltered and supported by his love, nor to the happy children when they cluster around the living, loving father's knee. There is no need then for the promise. It can be found only by the dark coffin, or by the grave of love, where stricken ones with crushed hearts mourn over the husband and father dead. This rich promise is hidden amid the desolation of the household. This goodness is laid up in the midst of the darkness of sorrow.

So we see that these divine treasures are placed in the midst of the very

needs themselves which they are meant to meet and supply; therefore we cannot get the help or the comfort until we stand within the circle of the need. It is plain also that we cannot expect to receive grace and goodness in advance. God does not give grace to meet temptation when there is no present temptation to be met. He does not give grace to endure bereavement when the family circle is unbroken and there is no bereavement to be endured. He does not put the alpenstock in the hand when there is no mountain steep to climb. He does not give us night-lamps to carry around with us, when the bright sunshine pours all about us. He does not flood our souls with heavenly comforts when our hearts are overflowing with human joy. Why should He?

Many a mother, when she reads how some other Christian mother bore herself with sweet calmness and resignation when her child lay dead amid the flowers, says, as she presses her own little one to her bosom with all maternal fondness and tenderness, "I could not give up *my* child in that way; I have not grace enough to do it." But why should she have such grace now? Will it not be quite time enough for her to have the grace bestowed when she is called to enter the experience? Such strength God never gives in advance. *That* storehouse can be gotten at only when the little heart is fluttering in its last pulses, or when your child's lips are pallid in death. While the child lives the mother's duty is not sorrow, not submission, but rather, with loving fidelity, to train it for a noble, beautiful life, for Christ and for heaven: and for this duty she will receive wisdom and skill and help from God, if she seeks. If death should come to her child, then she will have grace given to meet bereavement and endure sorrow quietly and sweetly.

Many people worry because they have not "*dying grace*." They read of saints who have met death without fear, even with emotions of rapture and triumph. At once they begin to torture themselves with the question, "Could I meet death in that way?" And the answer

they get from their trembling hearts is, that they could not. Death is still terrible to them. They cannot think of it with a sense of joy and victory. They cannot say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Then the next question is, "If I were a true Christian, would I thus be afraid to die? Would I not rejoice to depart and be with Christ, my Saviour?" Foolish people! what business have they now with dying? God has never promised dying grace when one's duty is to live. He gives *living* grace then: grace for temptation, grace for struggle, grace for toil, for service, for all duty. For every hour there is some allotment of obedience or submission, and for each hour strength will be given. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." Then when the hour of death comes, God will give dying grace, and the believing soul will pass into the strange mystery, sustained by the Divine arm and supported by the Divine Presence. The promise is, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee;" it is not, "When thou art approaching, yet far away;" nor even "When thou drawest near;" but, "When thou passest through." The storehouse in which God has laid up dying grace is found only in the valley itself, and you cannot get it until you enter the shadows. Grace for duty, for toil, for love, for honesty, for earnest service in every good cause, for heroic struggle, for unselfish ministry, for holy influence; grace for noble and beautiful living and for loyal devotion to Christ while the heart's pulses are full and while God wants us still in this world; but not yet grace for dying, since death is far away; then grace for dying when the life's work is done, its duty finished, and the call comes to leave this world and depart home.

6. There is one other application of this text; God's goodness is *laid up in heaven*. The best is not here—is never here—but there, in reserve. Peter speaks of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, which is *reserved in heaven* for those who are kept in this

world by the divine power. So Paul speaks of the crown that is laid up for all those who love Christ's appearing. No eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, no heart hath conceived of the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.

The Rabbins say that when Joseph had gathered much corn in Egypt, and the famine came on, he threw the chaff into the Nile, that when the people who lived in the cities below saw it on the water they would know there was corn laid up for them. So, what we have in this world of divine goodness is little more than the husks of the heavenly fruits, which God sends down upon the river of Grace as intimations to us and assurances of glorious supplies laid up for us beyond the grave. Many things here prove only shadows. Life is full of unfulfilled hopes. But if we are God's children we shall find in heaven the blessed substance of every empty shadow we have chased in this world in vain, and the full fruition of every fair hope that on earth seemed to fade. The best is yet on before, and to the Christian, death, instead of being a loss, or a going away from goodness, is a glorious gain and a going to the richest, fullest, most soul-satisfying good.

A poet represents our first parent as trembling when he thought of the sun setting the first day of his life, and of night's coming. It seemed to him, as he saw the orb of day sinking out of sight, that only calamity and disaster could result to this lovely frame, this glorious canopy of light and blue. But, to his amazement, when the sun went down softly and silently, thousands of brilliant stars flashed out, and lo! Creation widened in man's view. The night revealed far more than it hid from sight. Instead of fly and leaf and insect, which the sun's beams showed, the darkness unveiled all the glorious orbs of the sky which had been hidden by the sun's beams. So we shun and dread death. It seems to be darkness, and to hide and eclipse the lovely and beautiful things on which our eyes have been trained to look. But death will reveal

far more than it hides. If it shuts our eyes to the things of earth and hides these, it will unveil before us the splendors of eternity. Ah! it is *life* that shuts in our view, that hides the realities of the universe, just as day hides the glories of the sky; and it is death that reveals. The best things are reserved till we reach heaven.

So I have tried to open out to you a little of the great meaning of this text. It reveals the goodness of God in everything. Sorrow comes, but, veiled in the sorrow, the blessed angel of comfort comes too. It grows very dark sometimes, but in the darkness the lamps of heavenly promise shine out. Losses are endured, but there is a divine secret which changes loss into gain. Disaster falls, but in the very heart of the disaster goodness is hidden. There are bitter cups, but in the bottom is always a blessing. Death comes to those we love, but Christian faith knows that it but leads out of shadows and sorrows into eternal realities and eternal joys.

So this truth interprets the past, and shows divine goodness in everything. Then it forecasts the future and shows that whatever may come will bring only goodness. The path leads on from blessing to blessing, and up at last to the gate of pearl and the glory of heaven.

MORAL PURITY.

By WILLIAM F. WARREN, D.D. [METHODIST], PRESIDENT OF BOSTON UNIVERSITY.

Blessed are the pure in heart.—Matt. v: 8.

I BRING you to-night as text a declaration which needs no manner of argument. The holiest man you ever saw and the vilest agree in pronouncing this word true. No infidel, however rabid against Christ, has ever ridiculed or called in question this declaration. Every Jew who rejected and crucified its Author would have said, It is true. Every heathen devotee who daily washes in the holy Ganges is only saying in his own way, "O how blessed it would be to be pure in heart!"

We have here, therefore, one belief which we may call universal. Were all the tribes and nations of our world to hold an ecumenical conference for the purpose of agreeing upon a new and universal religion for humanity, all, civilized and uncivilized, Christian and pagan, Mohammedan and Jew, all could cordially unite in laying down as the fundamental principle and starting-point, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

Now this, surely, is something remarkable, the more remarkable because what we have said of this beatitude cannot be said of the others in the midst of which it stands. Men are by no means equally ready to agree in saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the persecuted and despitefully entreated for Christ's sake. Why is it that they single out this beatitude and say, It is well said? To this question I have given some thought, and the best reasons I can give as an answer are the following:

1. Pure things are always the best of their kind. Ask even a child what is the best gold; you will get the answer, "That which is the purest." The best milk is pure milk, the best water pure water, the best air pure air. So I suppose all men have been constrained by a kind of intellectual instinct or necessity to say that the best man is, must be, the pure man.

2. Again, in trying to estimate the rank and value of different kinds of purity, one must come to the conclusion that heart-purity is the highest of all. True, it is a blessed thing to have a pure body—pure blood, pure breath, pure complexion, everywhere the purity of absolute health and cleanliness. But if we had to choose between this purity and purity of mind—pure thoughts, pure imaginations, pure intellectual tastes and habits, I think we would all say, Give me the pure mind. It is better to have an unwashed body than a filthy mind. If my mind is pure it will quickly find a way to purify the body. Or if, through temporary subjection to disease or to some cruel Andersonville prison-keeper, I absolutely