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### TREES, NO. III.—THE TREE OF LIFE.

By Rev. E. E. Adams, D.D.

"Out of the ground He caused to grow  
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;  
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,  
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit  
Of vegetable gold."—Paradise Lost, B. IV.

What was the significance of this tree? What its use? Was it a covenant token? We do not deny that there was between the Creator and His creature man in Eden a transaction involving some features of a covenant. It may have been understood, that by obedience, the latter would have perpetuity of life and happiness. But the record presents no such transaction, gives no such intimation. It would seem rather that man was placed under a ministration of law. Rational, intelligent, free, he was the proper subject of precept, of command. The Word of God to him is imperative. "The Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This is the language of authority, of law. It has no covenant form nor tone. There may have been a covenant between God and Adam, but we are not informed of the fact, neither are we told that the "Tree of Life" is a token of any actual or possible event.

Was this Tree of Life a sacramental pledge, to be used occasionally as a warrant of the divine favor and medium of fellowship with God? The fact that its fruit might be freely appropriated by man implies that it was not sacramental; that its use was not special, but common. Nor was there need of a sacramental token in an unfallen state. Moreover Scriptural authority for this notion is wanting. Again, Was the "Tree of Life" a criterion of man's probation? A token to him of happiness unimpaired and eternal if he should endure the trial of his fidelity and worthily accomplish his probation? Now, however true it is, that God placed the "first pair" on trial, and however certain it may have been that their continuance in holiness for a limited period would result in their eternal holiness and joy, we see no evidence that they had any visible pledge of that result, not even the most remote allusion in the Bible to such a fact.

What then was the object of the Tree of Life? Why was it placed in Paradise? We are taught that temporal as well as spiritual death to man was the bitter fruit of his sin. "By man came death." "In Adam all die." "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." But for sin, therefore, man had not known death. It matters not whether he would have remained forever on the earth or have been removed, like Enoch and Elijah, to heaven. He would, in some world, have enjoyed a holy, happy, undying life. And this life would have been perpetuated by some appropriate instrumentality. In his innocence man was appointed to dress and keep the garden of Eden. He was to labor so far as the proper cultivation of soil, and the care of its products demanded; to guard and retain possession of the place. This would occasion, naturally, some "wear and tear." Flesh and blood, even in a state of innocence, would have to be refreshed. At all events, we are quite sure that the processes of a healthy body would involve the necessity of supply. This is supposed in the use of the fruits of the garden. Perpetuity of life would be secured by the Divine power indeed, but through natural instrumentality. There must be supply proportioned to waste. The material nature, equally with the moral, was on probation. Hunger and thirst and weariness must be provided for. The processes of nature must keep up their ebb and flow, in order to perpetuate strength and unfailing vitality. May we not in this constitutional necessity find the precise intent and use of the Tree of Life? Was it not evidently planted, or made to spring up in the centre of the garden, visible to the occupants from every quarter, and easily accessible, that it might be to them in their innocence, a preservative of health and vigor, preventing disease and decay, repairing waste and perpetuating life, so long as their probation was to last, or until that life were established in security and perfection? The name of the Tree indicates this. It was a living tree indeed, like all the rest, but it was more. It imparted vitality; it perpetuated life; not merely as a living tree; not as other trees promoted life, but as a SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTALITY,—the Divine method of rendering man physically superior to death. Moreover, what is the just and natural conclusion to be drawn from the words of God in reference to man after the fall? "The Lord God said: Behold the man is become like one of us, to know good

and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man, and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Sin brought death on the man, but had he again partaken of the Tree of Life he had lived. On no other account, was it necessary that he be driven from Eden. His expulsion, therefore, is an adequate comment on the office and nature of the tree in question. It was the physical source of man's vitality. By its decay was prevented, disease kept at bay. Immortal vigor and beauty were, but for sin, its blessed results. And even after his sin and his doom, let him again eat its fruit and he triumphs over his fate! He regains his immortality! The tree must be barred from his approach by sworded cherubim.

In confirmation of this view, it is to be noticed that the "Tree of Life," when used figuratively, signifies something healthful, salutary, life-preserving. Thus of wisdom it is said, "she is a tree of life," that is, healthful, life-giving. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life," that is, saving, giving life to the soul. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life," that is, good words are healthful. From these and other passages that might be cited, we learn what Solomon understood by the literal tree of life, which he used as the basis of his figures when uttering some moral sentiment, or speaking of some quality of mind and heart.

The 47th chapter of Ezekiel and the last chapter of Revelation present the same idea of this tree. It "is for the healing of the nations." Many considerations are suggested by these chapters, but we have not time to pursue them at present. When we enter the new Paradise we shall see the full significance of the Tree of Life.

### A STEADY HAND AT THE HELM.

When the storm is out on the waters, and the elemental war is so wild and furious that veteran hearts are appalled, and the faint-hearted shrink from their posts of danger and duty, how cheering to know that the hand at the helm is steady, and to feel the quivering ship come up bravely into the wind, under its skillful and unflinching pressure. Just such has been our feeling of relief at the cool, sagacious, unflinching attitude of the noble helmsman of our Ship of State—Governor Geary—while assailed with the most furious and perplexing storms of opinion upon matters most vital to the welfare of the State. A tempest of crime had burst upon us; the dread of the laws and their penalties seemed to have vanished. The worst criminals hoped for impunity in what they imagined to be the relaxed tone of public sentiment. By exciting popular sympathy at their just but dreadful fate, by taking advantage of the clamor against capital punishment in many quarters, by marshalling a vast host of impudent applicants for Executive clemency, they counted upon breaking down what barriers yet remained, after regular conviction and sentence, to their escape. So great has been their success hitherto, that one of our City Judges was constrained to declare to his grand jury, a little more than a week ago, that it has come to pass in Philadelphia, that it is more dangerous to pick a pocket than to take a life. The thief is much more certain to be punished, than the murderer.

Accordingly, when two men, recently convicted of the most atrocious murders, in this city, found it impossible to re-open their case in court, and the time for their execution, drew on, they and their friends and sympathizers, turned upon the Governor with all the energy of despair. Letters were written, pleading, arguing, threatening; petitions were circulated for signatures, misguided Christian people and even, as we are told, an elder in one of our own churches, aiding, actively in this work; two of Twitchell's jurymen, in one case, and the brother of Heenan, the victim of Eaton, in the other case, joined in the clamor for mercy, although the two jurymen afterwards wrote a private letter to the Governor, urging him to pay no attention to their first statement. In the very height of the excitement, the Legislature of the State came in with a bill, revolutionary of our whole penal code, yet carried through with such haste, as to give the law-making body the appearance of the closest sympathy with the most infamous class of law-breakers. It actually put into the Governor's hands the whole question of the death penalty, expressly allowing him to substitute for it, at his option, imprisonment for life. Thus, while it is only by a solemn constitutional provision that the Executive possesses the power of pardon, it

is here proposed, by a hasty legislative enactment, virtually to take from the Courts the whole question of the severity of the penalty, and subject it to the option of the officer appointed to execute, and not to revise or modify, the sentences of the judiciary.

And where, amid all this storm, threatening the security of the lives of three millions of people, and the majesty and power of all law, and levelling the crime of murder beneath that of pocket-picking,—where stood the Governor, upon whose attitude the whole force of the crisis had come? Serenely and courteously he received all applications; patiently he listened to everything in the shape of evidence, but with unswerving fidelity he kept his high position; he grasped the wheel with firmness, and bore the ship of State, with steady sweep, right, through the heart of the storm. Violated law, took its course; justice was done; the public safety was assured; morbid sympathy with criminals was rebuked, and the fearful spirit of violence that is abroad was awed. And to our lawgivers, swept down by the current, the Governor returns their bill with the veto. Gerald Eaton was hung on one day; the bill was gibbeted on the next.

At the battle of Gettysburg, General Geary withstood the desperate onsets of the rebels, who endeavored to make good their lodgment in the gorge at Culp's Hill. Seven times over they hurled their desperate, yelling masses, vainly against his steady lines. At length, forming his White Star brigade and putting himself at their head, he made one vigorous charge and drove them from their position, never to return. Had he yielded, in all probability the whole line would have been broken and the day would have been lost. It is not difficult to feel that he has just fought a harder battle and won a more important victory, through the exercise of the same soldierly qualities, and in like dependence on a higher source for strength. God grant that the Gettysburg defeat of the bold and dangerous army of sympathizers with crime may have taken place on the soil of our state, and that whatever alarming demonstrations they may yet be suffered to make, their strength, from this fateful encounter with our Governor, may be seen continually to wane.

### A PRECIOUS MEMORIAL.

There are those who bequeath thousands to beautify the place of their burial; or who spend thousands while living, in garnishing the tombs of their friends, thus lengthening out for a few years the remembrance of the departed. There are others, who mark their lives along their course or at their close, by deeds of such substantial beneficence, that one does not think to seek their memorials among the dead; so noble and so prominent are their monuments among the living. Like the autumn leaves, having done their life work, and dropping off in a glow of heavenly beauty at the last, their place of burial may be unmarked and unknown, but their work in the enlarged and beautified and strengthened life and limbs of the tree, remains as their best memorial. Few know where and how rest the remains of the honored Baldwin; but the five church enterprises, which owe their external accommodations largely or entirely, to his beneficence, perpetuate his memory in the knowledge and regards of hundreds of thousands. Olivet, and Tabor, and Hermon, and North Broad, and Oxford churches are his monuments, more honorable and more effectual a thousand fold than any mausoleum could be, upon which the entire cost of all these churches had been lavished. Who knows of the burial-place and its appointments, of Mrs. Mary Cornell? We confess ourselves entirely ignorant on this point. But her monument at the corner of Ninth and Wharton Sts., in this city, is known and read of all men. Her little fortune, the minute accumulations of forty years of widowhood, isolation and obscurity, now stands embodied in a handsome church, filled with regular worshippers and their families, its pulpit occupied by a capable, earnest and faithful preacher and worker for Christ; its Sabbath-school rooms crowded with hundreds of children and teachers, and its roll of membership showing over two hundred additions on profession in less than five years since the building was dedicated—all testifying to the grace of God in one of the humblest of his followers during her life.

The erecting of a tablet, to the memory of Mrs. Cornell, and the services of dedication held in the church on last Thursday evening, are well fitted to commend her example to general imitation. Christian people have a lively sense of the value of such acts, and will not suffer them to run a risk of being forgotten. The record of such a deed, done under a former dispensation, is imperishably preserved in the Gospel narrative: "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue."

Who will go and do likewise? What man or woman of wealth will, living or dying, seek such a sure, and delightful method of perpetuating their remembrance among men? Who would put a considerable sum of money to the highest of all uses and in the surest methods? Who would cause a healing fountain to spring up, as it were, in the desert of some destitute neighborhood in a great and wicked city; a complete organized array of saving, elevating influences for time and for eternity? Let him plant a Christian church, in the proper neighborhood, so far as he can by building, clear of all incumbrance, a spacious, well-planned, and well-proportioned church-edifice.

There is, an effort which for some months has been on hand, for raising \$105,000 for church building purposes, in our denomination in this city. In all but one case, the churches are actually organized, and active, and well situated. The most essential part of the work is done. There is no question as to their success, if the material part of the work be performed. Who will make one of these churches his memorial—his monument?

### AN UNDERSTANDING REACHED.

"We are willing to stand with every one who accepts the Reformed or Calvinistic system in its integrity." So says *The Presbyterian* in reply to our question, as to the liberty of interpretation, to which it would invite us in the proposed re-union. This is explicit and satisfactory. "H. J." does not "want more extended freedom" than this. But this is exactly the liberty of the Gurley clause. *The Presbyterian*, therefore, like our Reunion Committee, "handsomely bows out" the amendment to the First Article, and yet concedes and endorses the asserted liberty of that amendment in all its length and breadth. We are gratified at this frank expression. New School Presbyterians, so far as we have knowledge, want no liberty, the swing of which will take them beyond the limits of sound Calvinism. The endorsement of "the Auburn Declaration" by the Old School Assembly of last year at Albany; the statement of the Pittsburgh Brethren (O. S.), that "all that is asked is an honest reception of the same honored symbols; and this demand is not understood to restrict either ministers or people in a due exercise of Christian liberty;" and this last declaration of *The Presbyterian*, that "we give undisturbed liberty to what does not endanger the integrity of the Calvinistic system," form an expression of opinion authoritative and decisive. Our branch of the Church says, it ought to be understood, that no right of reasonable liberty in doctrinal exposition, such as is conceded by the Gurley clause, is relinquished or denied by our Presbyteries in agreeing to the amendment to the First Article. And the O. S. Assembly, the Pittsburgh brethren and *The Presbyterian* say, Amen. H. J.

### CURRENT TOPICS.

—The financial year of most, if not all, of our General Assembly's Committees closes this month. Send on your contributions.

—We are informed, on good authority, that applications by letter from the individuals concerned, have been made to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, for honorary degrees; one from Toronto and two from the British Islands. *The Reformed Church Monthly* (Dr. Bomberger's) claims that, in the last ten years there have been received, in one of the Reformed churches of this city, more converts from Romanism to Protestantism, than perverts from Protestantism to Rome in all the Roman Catholic churches of this city in the same period.

—Rev. W. H. Thorne, lately resigned from the charge of the First Presbyterian church of Darby, has gravitated into the hands of the Unitarians, and preached to a slim congregation in Dr. Furness' church last Sunday. Mr. Thorne is a gentlemanly, amiable man, a native of England, who came into our body from the First Independent church of this city, and whose most marked characteristic was an unlimited admiration for the *N. Y. Independent*.

—The funeral orations given to the victims of justice are not only out of taste, but tend to the subversion of the very ends of punishment. Is not the dead body of the criminal entirely within the control of the government which could take his life? If so, the government is responsible for the effects of such demonstrations as the viler class of our citizens were allowed to make on Saturday over the remains of Twitchell and Eaton.

—The experiment of free pews is said to be succeeding in the church at Elkton, Md., the income having been considerably increased under the working of the new plan. This church, belonging to the Wilmington Presbytery, numbered not long ago among its members, and

perhaps still does, the wives of Postmaster-General Creswell and his first assistant, George Earle, Esq., these gentlemen themselves having been regular attendants, and Mr. Earle especially a warm friend of the pastor and a liberal supporter of the church. Secretary Creswell's fine voice was regularly heard leading the bass in the choir.

—With not a few there is a nervous anxiety that Reunion be consummated without delay at the coming meetings of the General Assemblies. Meeting in churches of the same neighborhood in New York city, it is hoped by some, and feared by others, that a way will be found shorter than the regular methods, to bring the two Churches there represented substantially together. A sort of "higher law" theory or sentiment is believed to be abroad, under which the two bodies will then and there be compelled to unite. It would indeed be strange enough if two bodies of Christians so closely related, should not, under such circumstances, indulge in the most fraternal demonstrations. But we cannot believe they will allow themselves to be drawn into any hasty or crude disposition of so momentous a matter as Reunion. Certainly they most sadly underestimate its importance, who think it does not deserve to be wrought out with the utmost patience and care. Few if any things ought to be done at all, if they can only be done in a hurry and at fever-heat. A work which is to be coeval with Christendom, a Church whose massive towers and bulwarks are to stand until they are lit up with the glory of the Second Coming, will never be reared by men who grudge a year or two to the work of harmonizing the materials and deepening and widening the foundations. Meanwhile, it should be understood that our Church has been ready for union on terms proposed twice over, and is ready still. It can only be for the sake of the other branch that haste is urged.

—Wisely or unwisely (we think the latter) our branch of the Church, through its Committee on Reunion, has consented to abandon the "only" clause in the Basis of Reunion which guarded our liberty against a rigid construction of the standards. But in so doing, the Committee repeated its understanding, that such liberty was expected and would be exercised. That declaration is no guarantee or protection to a reasonable liberty in the future. "No lawyer, judge or jury would count it worth a straw. And if after Reunion we get into difficulty, such as our past history shows is not impossible, we shall be debarred from an appeal to the law, under the consciousness that legal men would smile at our simplicity, and remind us that we deliberately tied our hands when we went into the union. Who does not know what a sedative it would be to the uneasy, heresy-hunting class in the Church, to know beforehand that a constitutional provision too plain for courts in *banc* or juries to misunderstand or override, stood in the way of the final accomplishment of their purposes? This, we say, a mere "it is understood" of a preamble could not do. Nevertheless, such a preamble, rigidly retained, ought to be of great value in *foro ecclesie* and in *foro conscientie*. It makes a powerful appeal to the honor of our brethren of the other branch. Only our Presbyteries and General Assembly must state the understanding, clearly and authoritatively; let there be no room to doubt that such is the understanding, let there be no finching from a frank policy from a fear lest it may defeat Reunion. Then, if with full ranks, the great and powerful body with which we are negotiating, rolls out its Amen! we will respond with Hallelujah! We shall feel that we have our security in the ascertained temper of the body, and shall have no fears for the future history of the Church. But if that understanding is timidly stated, or left in such a way that it shall appear to be the sentiment of a mere minority, then indeed the distinctive character of our branch will be sacrificed, and nothing will be left of it but a sepulchral record and a *Hic jacet*, to tell what has become of it.

The Fifty-Second Annual Report of the American Colonization Society, shows that they received in 1868 \$56,640.77 from all sources, (to which add balance, Jan. 1st, 1868, \$8,425.51.) and expended \$63,388.63 leaving a balance on hand of \$1,677.66. They have sent since 1820, 12,995 emigrants; the largest number sent in any one year was in 1832; 796; the smallest, 23, in 1864; during 1865, 6, 7 and 8, they have sent 2,233. Average number for 49 years, 265. The last annual meeting was held Jan. 19th and 20th, 1869, in Washington, D. C.

—Read Rev. A. M. Stewart's Letter on Libraries for Mining Towns on the 2nd page. It presents a most important object of wise beneficence.