THE GODWARD SIDE OF LIFE; PP. 1-191

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BY

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS, D.D.

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To
My Father
For Fifty Years a Minister
of the Gospel

FOREWORD

These sermons are offered to those who will read them in the hope that they may have a message for our time. They were all, with one exception — the sermon before the American Board — given to the people of two parishes — the First Church in Detroit or the Central Church in Providence — in the ordered course of our parish life and were meant for the people to whom they were preached and colored by the conditions under which they were given. So much the reader will discover for himself.

They gather around one central theme — the Godward Side of Life — and there is of necessity a good deal of repetition. All that has been left with little alteration. The theme itself is commanding enough to be much dwelt upon.

Most of them were given before we entered the war; one or two before the war began. If there are paragraphs which the duty of the hour seems to contradict they have been left in the author's hope and confidence that a happier future will bring them into a new perspective. They seem to him to be of the essence of the Kingdom of God.

Finally, no one is more conscious of how much these sermons leave to seek than the man who preached them.

THE MINISTER'S STUDY,
The First Congregational Church in Detroit,
October 2d, 1917.

THE GODWARD SIDE OF LIFE

I

THE SUPREME SERVICE OF RELIGION

"Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice due to me is passed away from my God? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, 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 him that hath no might he increaseth strength. even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."—Isaiah 40: 26–31.

This great passage is the marching song of a people facing a great task and needing therefore to be inspired greatly and heartened. It was evident to the clear-visioned singer that the exile was almost over. Israel was on the eve of her release. Their God had raised up Cyrus, who was breaking the empire of their masters as time has broken the clay tablets upon which the ancient lords of Mesopotamia wrote the stories of their terrible victories. The gates of Babylon were to be opened and the Jew, after seventy years, was to go out through those gates and seek the land of his fathers. There such a task awaited him as no people — and especially a people broken in spirit and wanting in courage — could easily face. A ruined city was to be re-built, low fallen walls set up anew, a temple whose glory was but a dim memory be made again beautiful.