

**ISMS OLD AND NEW: WINTER
SUNDAY EVENING SERMON-
SERIES FOR 1880-81 DELIVERED IN
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
CHICAGO**

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Isms Old and New: Winter Sunday Evening Sermon-Series for 1880-81 Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Chicago by George C. Lorimer

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GEORGE C. LORIMER

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WITHDRAWN

ISMS

OLD AND NEW

WINTER SUNDAY EVENING SERMON-SERIES FOR 1880-81
DELIVERED IN THE FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH, CHICAGO

BY THE PASTOR
Claude
GEORGE C. LORIMER

MEMBER OF VICTORIA INSTITUTE, THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF
GREAT BRITAIN

Till at length no heavenly Ism any longer coming down upon us, Isms from
the other quarter have to mount up.

Carlyle's "Past and Present"

CHICAGO
S. C. GRIGGS AND COMPANY
1881

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TO
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CHICAGO,

THESE DISCOURSES ARE INSCRIBED

WITH GRATEFUL MEMORIES OF

UNWAVERING AND UNCEASING KINDNESS

TO THE AUTHOR.

"My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen."

WHILE it is preëminently the duty of the pulpit to expound the doctrines and precepts of Holy Writ, there are times when it should confront and challenge the insidious errors which unfit the public mind to receive attentively and believingly its expositions. Exegesis, however eloquent and elaborate, will be as powerless, morally and religiously, as the learned interpretations of dusty Egyptian hieroglyphics, if confidence is seriously impaired in the Divine origin of the Book whose teachings it seeks to unfold. The unclean spirit must be cast out, and the house be swept and garnished, before the spirit of truth will find there a welcome and a sure asylum. We invite the wayward to accept Christ and be saved, and when we chide them for not doing so, we frequently overlook the fact that they are in sympathy with forms of thought which are irreconcilable with the claims of that volume on whose authority rests the duty so earnestly enjoined. Hamilton says, "Plato in his *Phædo* demonstrated the immortality of the soul from its simplicity; and in the *Republic* demonstrated its simplicity from its immortality," a species of reasoning still in vogue, and by many highly esteemed, but which is utterly inadequate to meet the subtle and protean infidelity of our age. Never will its enthusiastic course be arrested, nor its illusions be dispelled, nor the asbestos fire it is kindling be quenched, and the Gospel achieve its triumph over both head and heart until, abandoning the *petitio principii* in our methods, we fight the enemy with its own weapons, and prove at least that it is not invulnerable.

This conviction led to the preparation of the accompanying sermons. Working for Christ in a community distinguished almost as much by its mental restlessness as by its business activity, the author became convinced if he would promote in the highest sense the religious life of the unconverted in his congregation he must diminish their confidence in certain prevailing errors, and disengage

them from their fetters. His endeavors were so favorably received that he has ventured to seek for his series a wider sphere of usefulness, by giving the discourses to the press. They are not, however, printed precisely as they were delivered. They have been subject to such revision as the cares of an exacting pastorate, enhanced by the labors incident to the formation of a new church and the building of a house of worship, would permit; and they have been increased in number by the addition of several that were not included in the original course, of which the one on Buddhism is a sample, which was preached under a different title soon after the appearance of the beautiful poem which it commends and reviews.

In dealing with such themes as are presented in this volume, especially within the limits usually prescribed to sermons, an author will find himself frequently baffled by the immeasurableness of the territory he has to traverse, and by the shadowy vagueness of the land he seeks to invade. Dr. Johnson has said, "There are objections against a plenum and also against a vacuum, but one or the other must be true." Verily; but how much wearisome thinking and how much wearisome writing would be needed to answer all these objections, and how much more of both would be required to completely fathom the emptiness of unbelieving speculation, and to vindicate the fullness of Christian truth. This the author of these discourses has keenly felt; and he has done, not the best that could be done, but the best that *he* could do under the circumstances. While not attempting an exhaustive treatment of these *Isms*, he has tried to point out their startling dissonances, their thought-encircling darkness, and their comfortless, hopeless, soul-freezing tendencies; and he has tried to help his readers to grasp more deeply and feel more intensely those essential doctrines of religion that meet the necessities of our spiritual life, as the celestial poles coincide with the axis of our revolving world. As Lord Byron says in *Childe Harold*, "what is writ is writ"; and the author can only pray that it may not "die into an echo," but prove a word of hope to many a troubled heart,—a living seed, which, however lowly and insignificant, may not altogether prove either flowerless or *leafless*.

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