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THE CALL
OF THE MASTER



BY REGINALD HEBER HOWE

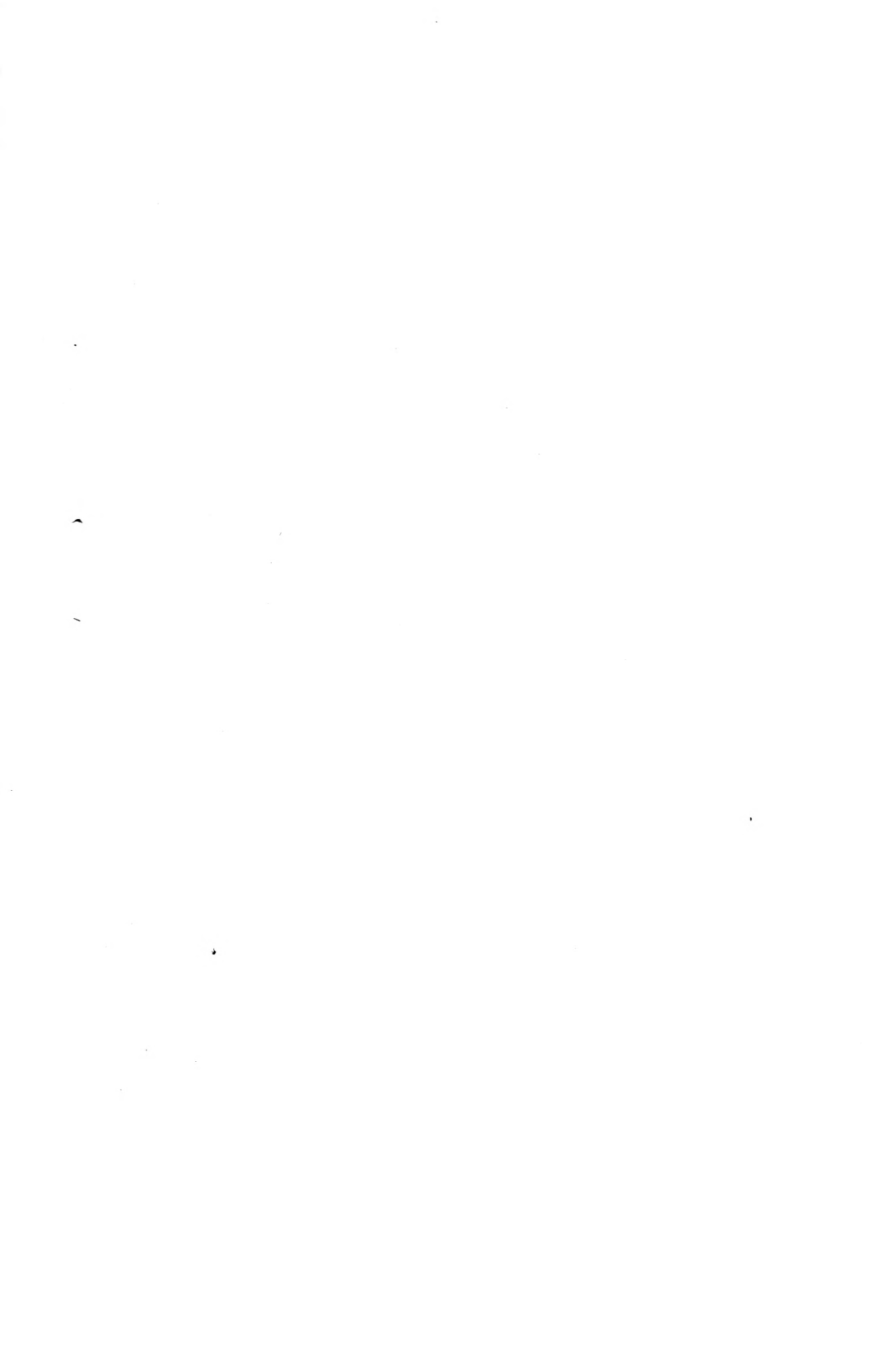


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THE CALL OF THE MASTER

OR

*The Voice of Jesus to Man
In the Stress of Life,*

BY

REGINALD HEBER HOWE, D. D.

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REGINALD HEBER HOWE

TO

S. A. H.

AN HELPMET

THOUGHTFUL EVER

OF OTHERS FIRST

OF HERSELF LAST

CONTENTS.

THE VOICE OF JESUS AS HE SPEAKS TO MAN IN THE STRESS OF LIFE.

- I IN DISTRACTIONS
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Preface.

The following Lectures were given by invitation of the late Dr. Lindsay, at the Noon Day Service, at St. Paul's Church, Boston, during the Season of Lent, one each week.

Two considerations and two only justify their publication.

The first is found in their subject : "The Voice of Jesus as He Speaks to Man in the Stress of Life." There is no one who sooner or later in one or other of its forms does not know and feel that stress, no one *then*, who does not long for some voice competent to speak to it, and the inquiry, the supreme inquiry of the day is, if I mistake not, What does Jesus say ?

The second, in testimony that has reached me through him who asked me to give them, and from others, of their helpfulness, and my hope, therefore, that a larger circle may find them helpful too.

REGINALD HEBER HOWE.

THE RECTORY
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
LONGWOOD

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘ Come unto me and rest ;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast :’

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad ;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.”

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Distractions,

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — ST. MATTHEW XI. 28.

There are many subjects which one would like to speak about at these special services in Lent. But it has seemed to me that there is one pre-eminent above all others, more deeply and truly satisfying than any. And that is The Voice of Jesus Christ as He speaks to man amid what we might call the stress of human life. What He has to say to us as day by day we encounter, as who of us does not, those things which are disturbing to the true peace of life. We come in here, into these quiet courts for a brief half hour or more, the very noise and turmoil of the street we leave without, an image often of the disturbance and turmoil of our souls under some form of life's experience, and what is it that we crave, you and I? Is it not for something, some word spoken, or

some message from hymn or prayer, that will quiet all this, that will say to us as One did once to the stormy waters of an inland sea "Peace be still, and there was a great calm," that will come with a message to us under whatever is resting heavily upon us, and send us forth the stronger and the calmer for what we have heard here. I feel sure I do not misread you when I say that.

And from whom can this message come with such power, with such authority, as from Him who at once God and Man spake as God, yet knowing all of man's infirmity. Behold then, the Person of Jesus. He is the One I would set before you all these days. Hear Him saying, who else would have dared to, would not have shocked our every sensibility—"Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Those words dear to us in our Bibles, made yet more dear as one of the four comfortable words of our Communion Office are to be

the great undertone invitation to us these Saturdays, as we think of our need and its supply under the stress of Distractions, of Temptation, of Doubt, of Poverty, of Discouragement, of Sorrow, those perhaps most common hindrances to our peace. They are, I need hardly say, broad and inclusive words, not to be narrowed to any single form of need or of cure. All that labor and are heavy laden under whatever weight, rest! — what would be rest under the particular burden whatever it it may be.

To-day we are to think of Life's Distractions and the voice of Jesus to us amid *them*. Naturally they come first, as Lent primarily is a call to us to come away from them, as far as we can to lay them aside and bid them not interfere with our spiritual life. For this they most surely do. In this busy, strenuous age they, as much if not more, than any other one thing, I had almost said, are hostile to the soul's health and growth. How in

evidence they are! What an array arise before us when we pause to think of them as they are common to man under the different conditions under which he lives. No former age exhibits business done at such a pace as it is to day. The very inventions that have been supposed to promote it and which do, have only quickened its speed and increased its volume. The pace set in one department or in one city determines the pace in another. No man can escape from it and succeed. From morning till night, day after day business drives men on and on, until strength is gone or life has been almost lived, under the never ceasing spur, the universal quest for gain. Many a man would confess, some most reluctantly, that his business is so engrossing that he has little strength, little time, little thought left for what concerns the less material side of life. Some take it even into their Sundays, and scan the quotations of the market as eagerly in their Sunday paper

or resort to their Post Office Box or even their office, as regularly as on other days.

And the gain which comes when it does come, brings its own distractions. It creates and makes possible many interests that otherwise would not be. Indeed in one sense the distractions of life seem mostly to go with the abundance of life. The prize I have been striving for, which has urged me on and for which I have labored hard all these years, lo! I have won it, now how shall I enjoy it? A perfectly legitimate question and desire. And to a life already full, each according to his taste, adds new interests. Into a costly dwelling, into society and its manifold claims, into art or music or foreign travel, into the gratification of public or social ambition one throws his energies, and for quiet thought or taking the measure and proportion of things, there is less time than ever. Do we not recognize the picture?

But this is only one side of it. There are distractions of a very different kind

The prize often is not won. Instead of the satisfaction, the enthusiasm, the intoxication of success, perhaps there is failure. The unceasing labor goes on and there is little to show for it except what meets the requirements of each day as it comes, and on into the future as far as the eye can see stretches the same dull path of duty, with nothing to enliven it — life shorn of its amenities. Distraction is there none here? Ah, yes! But now, that which comes from disappointment, from carking care, from a mind perturbed and distraught with conditions it would give any thing to change, but which it seems powerless to do.

Those of which we have spoken concern for the most part the men. There are those just as real to the other sex and as opposed to quietness of mind, to that composure of spirit essential to one's best nature that it should sometimes be. In the world of society an incessant round of engagements, a hurried flying from

one social function to another, night turned into day to eke out the insufficient hours, sapping the physical strength, undermining the health, rendering one unfit for one's best in anything, the ordained rest of the Sabbath founded as much on physical as on sacred laws, distorted to uses for which six afternoons are not thought adequate. In humbler homes the ceaseless round of domestic duties, with little to cheer the jaded spirit, sheer bodily and mental weariness incapacitating for any thought above the next meal to be prepared, the next garment to be mended. These are among the distractions of life. I need not dwell on them. You know them as well as I. From out such distractions of one sort or another we who are here this morning have come. They constitute one form of what I have called the stress of life, as we are conscious of it, as we feel it day by day. And if we look into our own hearts and answer honestly the question we put to them, we are bound

to say that it is in part because of just such things that the lamp of our religious life is burning low, we are not feeding it at the great sources of supply, it is dying of neglect.

Now, men have been conscious of all this, and the consciousness has led to expedients, if so be they might remedy the evil or at least forget it. And the human expedients have been of two and wholly opposite kinds. On the one hand there has been what we might call the homeopathic treatment. They have only accelerated the pace. They have plunged more deeply still into the strenuous life that at least they might not hear the admonishing voice of conscience inquiring, is this for what you have the sacred gift of life, is this all for which it should stand? They have drowned the sensibilities of the soul in a yet more arduous labor, in a yet greater whirl of excitement. We know we should, but we do not want to think of other things.

And the other expedient has been asceticism, withdrawal from the world altogether, retirement into a cell, or a convent, or a monastery, only to find as has often been the case, not only that it is really a retreat from dangers, which it would be braver and healthier to face and conquer; but that it has temptations of its own insidious and powerful.

What is the voice of Jesus to it all? To Him, to Him, we turn for the supreme word. Had he anything to say as to the stress of life that comes of the distractions of life? We listen for that voice with an eagerness born of the depth with which we have felt their force. Could it be that there is *anything* that has to do with the obstacles to man's highest interests and the means of surmounting them not known to him? We go to the record of that completest life, to that guide by, which to live for our answer.

The human Jesus well knew essentially this impediment and felt its force himself,

yet more, recognized it as it came to his disciples, and followers and saw its effect. I take but a few examples.

It was just after the beheading of John the Baptist. Beside the strong personal emotion which the death of one whom Jesus had known and loved could not fail to cause, it was a time of popular excitement. "When Jesus heard of it," we read: "He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart, but the people followed him on foot out of the cities." The Pass-over was approaching, and all the roads of Galilee were thronged with companies of pilgrims hastening to Jerusalem to keep the feast. The twelve, too, had just returned from their missionary circuit. The agitated conditions, the disturbed state of mind which could not but follow as a consequence are vividly brought out in one or two graphic touches by St. Mark: "There were many;" he says, "coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." The whole bustling,

unreposeful scene rises before us. Jesus felt it, felt it for himself and for His Disciples. "Come ye," He said unto them—the term you note includes himself, "Come ye yourselves, apart into a desert place and rest awhile." It was not a solitary instance. More than once when He had been teaching or when there had been a full crowded day, we read that He withdrew into a desert place apart or into a mountain alone. Once after healing at even many sick persons, in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed. One day one of the company said unto Him, "Master speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," and the diverting power of the quest for gain, how, when successful, it absorbs the being, to the exclusion of everything not material, He sets forth in the parable of the rich man, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the

things which he possesseth." "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits, and he said, this will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater. And I will say to my soul, Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him: Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Take an instance of another of the kinds of engrossment of which we spoke and yet very common and very real. Jesus was at Bethany, at that house which came nearer than any other on earth to being a place where He could lay his head. There were the two sisters so closely associated with him through all his active ministry. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered with much serving. She came to

Jesus and said, "Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone, bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

What do the Saviour's words in all these instances say to us, essentially the same thing, only suited each to the special circumstances of the occasion:— There must be moments of retirement from the distracting causes. If there cannot be of place, there must be in spirit. There must be quiet and meditation. The soul must have opportunity in some way to look in upon itself—aye, to look up above the disturbances to its peace. It may surround itself with everything meaning its earthly satisfactions, but at what fearful cost, if with no other. The faithful performance of our duties in life, be they ever so humble, be they only routine drudgery, it

is a noble, honorable thing to do, but careful and troubled about these things, we *must* not be to the extent of forgetting the one thing needful.

This is the way in the presence of this stress of life that Jesus says: "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." We are not to live here forever. "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." It is the principle of the Quiet Day. It is the principle of the season of Lent. It is the principle of serving God as one of our collects puts, it; "with a quiet mind." "The Church," it has been truly said, "never needed the doctrine of religious stillness and retirement more than now. We are hurrying on with a fast-living and outward-living generation, in a self indulgent, showy, noisy age."

"By all means use sometimes to be alone,
Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear:
Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own,
And tumble up and down, what thou findest
there."

“In silence and in stillness a religious soul advantageth herself.”

But the voice of Jesus to us under these conditions I should have very inadequately set forth did I stop here. We should have lost the end in the means. This invitation was to come apart and rest *awhile*. Jesus never condemned the rich, because they were rich and had accumulated much goods. He loved Martha as well as Mary. For the most part our lives have to be passed amid distractions. The making of quiet periods, or only quiet moments, is in order that when we go back, as back we must, into the strain of life, we may go stronger therefor, less likely to be overcome thereby, and lose our perspective. This was the Master's example as well as the Master's word. Apart into a desert place and then back among the multitude. Up into the mountain and then down on the plain with the people. “Did he say,” inquires another. “Stay apart, scorn society, escape like a

sentimental hermit from mankind, because mankind are bad? Never that. Rest *awhile*, but when the noisy comers and goers, fainting, sinning, dying, needed his gracious ministries again, He broke up his rest and went back to feed their hunger, to heal their sick, to wash their feet. Our religion is one half the loving adoration of God, the other half is the loving service of the brother whom we have seen --- our fellowman. Get down on your knees alone, or you will begin no work aright and then up and be doing."

I do not know from out what distractions you, and you, and you have come in here this morning. Every man knoweth the plague of his own heart. I doubt not every one of us, from some of those that I have mentioned, and that you are conscious of its having been a hindrance to your best life. But I do know that there is one, He who knew what was in man, who realized this difficulty with which we have to contend, who felt it himself and

for others, who looks compassionately upon you, who bade you get away from them for a time if you can, if not, then in the midst of them, make place and opportunity for the upward eye, bid the soul be still and refresh itself in Him according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

“Then be ye sure that Love can bless
Even in this crowded loneliness,
Where evermoving myriads seem to say
Go—thou art naught to us, nor we to
thee—away.”

“There are in this loud stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of th’ everlasting Chime.

May we, may you and I be of them.

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Temptation.

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — ST. MATTHEW XI. 28.

As I said last week, these words are to be the great undertone invitation to us on these Saturdays in Lent, as we listen for the voice of Jesus as he speaks to man amid the stress of life: the stress of Distractions, of Temptation, of Doubt, of Poverty, of Discouragement, of Sorrow, those perhaps, most common hindrances to the true peace of life, the bidding, — only a mockery unless He be one who can make good His promise, — if we would be strong and calm among them, to come unto Him. Today we are to go to Him, to hear what He has to say to us and can do for us under the stress of temptation.

Is it not such? Ah! is it not indeed? Through one or another avenue it is plying us all the time. It is as old as the

human race and as perpetual. Its seat is in our human nature. Its possibility in that which is one of the chief glories of man, the freedom of his will, his consciousness, in spite of what the fatalism of the day, so rampant in much of our literature, would try to make him believe, his consciousness that he has the power of choice. Often, alas! we know only too well, it is dominated over by evil, held in bondage by sin. St. Paul's confession would be the confession of every one of us, if we would honestly make it: "That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." But it is there only needing assertion, only needing the vivifying force which St. Paul found and which any one of us may find.

This is the conflict forever going on. Our inclinations of one sort and another are being continually appealed to by this and by that, and our will is resisting or

yielding. Every soul is a battle-field, could we look on it as on a panorama we should see the hosts marshalled against each other marching and counter-marching, now advancing, now retreating, now victorious, now defeated.

“Christian! dost thou see them
 On the holy ground,
 How the powers of darkness
 Rage thy steps around?”

* * * * *

“Christian! dost thou feel them,
 How they work within.
 Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin.?”

is the old seventh century's way of putting it.

Temptation! Ah! yes, you cannot tell me anything about that which I do not know, I seem to hear one say. Temptations which come into my being from without, from conditions under which I live, those who are difficult to get along with making me petulant and irritable; from seeing

others in great prosperity, making me envious and bitter; from prosperity itself making me selfish and uncharitable; from methods in my business supposed to be necessary to success, making me daily smother my conscience; from what entereth in through the ear, corrupting my moral sense, perverting views of right and wrong which I have held from a child; from what entereth in through the eye, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, making me commit heart sin or do almost anything to equal or outdo my neighbor. And temptations which arise from within, all that list which the Master once gave as coming out of the heart and defiling the man, evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. We recognize them do we not? We have felt their force, some of us one, others another. It may be that some have come in here this morning under this stress of life in

particular, heavy laden under the burden, under the felt power of temptation, sensible of their weakness to cope with it, bowed down by repeated failure, about ready to give over the fight, to say it is no use, it is no use to try any more.

Ah! it might be but for one thing. Jesus, yes, Jesus was tempted and won. Jesus speaking to this stress of human life, we might say almost in particular, for He was speaking of those burdened with the yoke of sin and the law, has said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Scarcely had He begun His ministry, as you know, before He was beset by temptation. It came to Him in the plausible way which often makes it so hard for us to resist, in the three forms which the story has made so familiar to us: That He should simply put forth His divine power to satisfy his bodily need. Why not? That if He lived by a higher law than that, the essence of which was trust, then trust

utterly the protecting power of God, even to testing it needlessly. He came to make the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of God and of his Christ. Why wait for the slow progress of truth, why tread the painful way of the cross, take thy power and reign, take it now. All plausible, all apparently that good might come. Nor was this all "The devil departed from Him," St. Luke says, "for a season," or possibly it should be "until a season;" until, that is, another convenient opportunity. And temptation came, and more than once. His own chosen disciple plied Him again with the same appeal to spare himself suffering. "Jesus began to show unto His disciples, how, that He must suffer many things, and Peter took Him and began to rebuke him, saying: "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee" "Get thee behind me Satan," was the quick reply. Again after the miracle of the loaves, the issue was before Him a second time, should He take the short, the

easy road to power. The people would have taken Him by force and made Him a king, but when He perceived it He departed into a mountain himself alone. Later still, into what He called "your hour and the power of darkness," the agony in the Garden, the "let this cup pass from Me," we must not penetrate, it is holy ground. "If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Aye, when He hung upon the cross: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe thee."

Tempted! Yes, Jesus was tempted, yet without sin. Each time He overcame. Each time He felt its force. Each time it was a real temptation, or we would have what we never could believe of Him a mere simulacrum of a temptation. Each time He put it away.

Do we not begin now to see what is the voice of Jesus to the tempted, how to us in the midst of this stress He speaks, saying, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest."

He was tempted. Through this experience of human life He has passed. When it comes to me I may know that it came to Him too. Is there not strength and comfort in this? Fellowship in suffering does help, even when they are only *our* fellows, how much more when it is He. Dwell on that word of the Apostle, take it into your being: "He was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin."

Again, it was the Incarnate Jesus who was tempted. He had your nature and mine. Then your nature and mine was victorious in Him. Once at least it has met the enemy and has conquered. That victory is the earnest of mine. It is its pledge, aye, it is its potency, or it may be.

Again, Jesus was tempted. And so He feels for you when you are tempted. He knows what it means. He has in Him the capacity for sympathy, He is at your side, could you but see Him, to keep your feet, to hold you up, to lift you when you fall. Is He not? "The Lord turned and

looked upon Peter." And the Lord said: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

But just here a thought will arise in your minds: This is all very well, but Jesus never felt temptation in the forms in which it comes to me. He never knew it in those baser forms, which are the ones against which man so often has to struggle. How can He know my conflicts? How can He sympathize with me, having never known the kind of warfare I have to wage? But because the form may not be the same, does that rob you of the encouragement born of knowing that even such as He was tempted, does that do away with the quality of sympathy? The higher the nature the keener the temptation. Temp-

tation does not grow less but more strong, its suggestions more horrible as we come into the higher planes of nature and of soul. By so much as He was above you, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners were his temptations abhorrent, and with deeper feeling comes deeper sympathy. Yes, you have His sympathy, a deep true sympathy in that temptation you are struggling with now. "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it," if you will walk in His way. And because we may not walk in it, because it is possible that we might fail in the conflict, therefore this merciful High Priest teaches us to pray, "lead us not into temptation "

Or another thought springs up in the mind, perhaps the one which seems more than any other to put the Master far away out of our sight, too high above us to be any satisfaction to us in an effort to be

victorious in temptation, in the presence of this stress to empty of comfort His invitation, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Jesus was the Son of God. By virtue of that, by His divine power He overcame. I am not He. I have it not. But see what were the means He used by which to overcome. Just such as we may. "It was not;" indeed, it has been well said, "the victory of a man overcoming by sheer force of human will without the assistance of Divine grace. But neither was it the victory of a God overcoming by His Divine force, and silencing and ignoring His human feelings. It was the victory of One who had thrown His whole self into human conditions, and fought with no weapons but those which are common to men, such as prayer, fasting and vigilance. Christ's life was a life of faith, like that of His brethren. Not by drawing upon a reserve of super-human powers of His own did He resist temptation, but by a humble creaturely dependence upon God."

See how He met each of those in the wilderness. By the appeal to what was written in God's word, that man's whole nature is dependent upon God, and that care of him will follow as a result, not the object, that we must not tempt Providence, but that in the path of duty, not out of it, we may absolutely trust its protection; that God alone is the object of our worship, and keeping only unto Him, in His own good time and way He will give us what we seek, and crown our effort with success. We can use any and all of these means.

Are you then, any of you, burdened and heavy laden today, under the sense of the power of temptation and your ill-success in coping with it. Are you cast down in consequence, almost in despair? Then look away to the Master. Say to yourself, He knows what it is; I have His sympathy; He was victorious; His victory in a true sense was my victory, for He had my nature; His means of resistance, every one of them, are all open to me. Use

them, use them with the consciousness of His presence to help you, His Word to cheer you, His Church to surround you with the aids for which He intended it, and see if the Devil will not leave you and angels come and minister unto you.

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Doubt.

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—ST. MATTHEW XI. 28.

The subject which is to engage our thoughts to-day is of a somewhat different kind from those we have hitherto considered. We have heard what Jesus has to say to us amid the distractions and the temptations of life, to-day we are to listen for His voice as He speaks to those laboring and heavy laden under the stress of doubt. If the others had to do, the former of them with the whole being, in the swift and intricate life most of us now live, the latter with the will plied through every avenue of approach; this has to do with the mind, the mind in its effort to discover truth. None of us strangers to distractions and temptations as enemies to our peace, there are some whose difficulties are not so much these as intellectual.

We are to try and speak a helpful word to them this morning, helpful, truly, reliably helpful, because and in proportion as it is the word of Jesus. It is of comparatively little moment to me or to you what any individual thinks, it is of infinite value and importance what Jesus teaches, what His message is to those seeking rest from whatever it is that disturbs. And more and more men are going straight to Him and asking "what is His Word?"

"The most striking fact in modern life," it has been truly said, "is the growing reverence for the teachings and character of Jesus Christ. As once his brother's sheaves bowed down before Joseph's sheaf, so to-day art, literature, law, trade, reform, manifest more and more reverence for that Divine Teacher, whose sublime figure already fills the whole horizon, and whose teachings are founded as surely as the mountains and stars." This is why I have chosen the subject I have for these lectures. And only so far as I succeed in truly

setting before you Jesus, as He speaks to these various obstacles to our truest life, do I ask you to heed what is said.

There are of course various forms of doubt according to the character of the mind concerned, according to the nature of the subject in question. Time does not permit our going into these in detail. But you will bear me witness that I am truly stating the case, when I say that the demand of the day on the part of thinking people, with respect to Christian truth, is for demonstrable truths; and if these be unfurnished the mental attitude is one of suspension. We do not know; some of us even go farther, we cannot know, we will wait; we will not deny, neither will we assert. We will not oppose, neither will we embrace. We will simply do nothing. "Oh, to be nothing," begins one of the Revival Hymns. They realize this longing in themselves, only in a far different sense.

This is the form of most of the doubt

of the day. It is witnessed to in thousands of men, who are simply letting alone the Christian Church, though they cannot but acknowledge the good it is doing, and want it in their town, want it for themselves and for their children, in their deeper hours. It is witnessed to in our literature, yes, and withal, how unsatisfying it is, in the sadness which runs through so much of it, which is so marked a characteristic even of its lighter forms. This on the one hand, and some are content to remain in this simple negative position. And on the other stands a great organization, claiming infallibility, claiming the right of direction, substituting itself for personal thought and responsibility, and saying, come unto me all who know not what to think and find rest for your souls; and weary and heavy laden; welcoming an easy repose which they think they see, many heed the call; alas! not always to find what they have so painfully, so costly sought.

There is another voice, however, uttering these same words, so large, so inclusive as to take in their embrace those labouring and heavy laden under the stress of doubt, of the mind wrestling with truth. It is time we tuned to Him. I take but a few portrayals on the Gospel page of Jesus in the presence of this difficulty of man, and I ask you to listen to Him.

I pass by, except just to advert to them, His reply to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness," the answer forever to that spirit which declares not only that we do not know, but that infinitely worse one, that we cannot. His words to the nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," declaring as they do the worthlessness of a faith, the fruit of prodigy alone, with no change in the spirit of the one who witnesses it. His *condemnation* of those undisposed to

believe. His teaching so much by parable, that those whose heart had waxed gross, hearing might hear and not understand, and seeing might see and not perceive. His *commendation* of those with minds open to the truth, ingenuous to receive it if they could, in His words: "I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father for so it seemed good in thy sight." And I go directly to the two occasions when the Saviour dealt especially with this difficulty of the human mind, and which say to us what most needs to be said, which have a most practical word to speak to any who may be wrestling with doubt.

And first to that scene with St. Thomas, after the Resurrection. He was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared in their midst, and showed them His hands and His side, and when they told Him, declared: "Except I shall see in His hands

the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." The very demand, is it not, which men are making to-day for demonstrable truths, the evidence of the senses, of the microscope, the crucible, the scalpel, applied to all truths? St. Thomas must always be an interesting character to such. In the famous statue of him by Thorwaldsen in the Church at Copenhagen he stands the thoughtful, meditative skeptic with a rule in his hand for the due measuring of evidence. How does Jesus deal with him?

First He offers him the evidence he desired: "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," and *not*, be not faithless but *become* not faithless but believing. He did not want not to believe, he wanted to believe, all his hopes had been dashed by the crucifixion. He was in real perplexity in a matter of such overmastering importance, that he wanted

to be absolutely sure of his ground. He could not take the testimony of others, he must see for himself. And we respect him for it. He asked for no evidence which the others had not had, the sort of evidence for which the great forty days were, when Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs. A certain wrong has been done St. Thomas in thinking of him as a skeptic.

What does this first treatment of Jesus teach us? This: there are doubters and doubters. To the doubter hugging his doubt, dallying with it or possibly affecting it, regarding it as a mark of superior intellect, too proud to admit that it has no good ground even when he sees it, doting on the words:

“There lives more faith in honest doubt
Believe me than in half the creeds.”

while he distorts what their author meant and overlooks his adjective, Jesus would not have gone at all. The scorn He had

for the scorner is everywhere most marked, the protection He ever threw around the sacredness of His truth. Give *not* that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." But one in real perplexity, honestly seeking the truth, He makes the special object of His care, hears the very words of his misgiving, comes into his presence, offers him the evidence he desires.

But Jesus does not stop here. It would be a very imperfect setting forth of His dealing with doubt if we left the story there. St. Thomas apparently did not avail himself of the evidence offered him, but in a transport of adoration exclaimed: "My Lord and my God." Jesus saith unto him: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Evidence of the senses is one thing, but there is something infinitely higher. Evidence of the senses is knowledge, but it leaves no room for faith, and faith has its

own value, for it has to do with our hearts and wills. Enough is given us to satisfy our reason, but not more. Some room is left for the higher faculty, *or obliged* to believe there would be no choice. "If you could prove that there is a God in the same way that you can prove that two and two make four," it has been truly said, "it would be worth to you just about as much as the knowledge that two and two make four." We must not depend our faith on that which destroys the very nature of faith. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, faith is assent upon trust. Faith believes what it cannot know now completely, but which one day it hopes it shall. There is a demonstration of the truths of Christ, but it comes after, not before belief. It is a demonstration of the Spirit. Jesus somewhat sadly says to St. Thomas: "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed." Where could come in all the long line of after believers, who were not to behold the bodily presence of

the Master, on that basis? "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," and there is room for all the generations of believers for all time.

Here, then, we come to what is the condition of the question as to our belief in Christian truth as it presents itself to us to-day.

We have not the visible bodily presence of Jesus. But we must not forget with regard to St. Thomas and the teaching of this incident, that he at last went infinitely farther than mere belief in the Resurrection. He appropriated to himself the personal Christ, his Maker and his God, in those words of his: "My Lord and my God." That He had read his inmost thoughts, that He had stooped to them in sympathy, that He was still his living Saviour, overwhelmed him. The personal Jesus in all that this revealed was enough. And that same personal Christ still living, though we see Him not, still knowing us through and through, still full of sympathy

for our unbelief, is the One who is presented for our faith, the truest completest answer to all our doubts. Behold Him, His Person, his character, his teaching, his example, the historic Christ, behold Him with an open mind without prejudice, with sincerity of spirit, wanting to accept Him as your Lord, and doubt any longer if you can. This is the supreme message to the doubter.

The other occasion, one of the principal ones, when Jesus touched upon this difficulty that men experience, was when to the Jews, marvelling at His teaching as He stood in the temple, He said: "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me. If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." If any man *willed* to do His will, expresses better the sense of the original. It is not simply the verb auxiliary "will." The human will to do the divine will is the *condition* of knowing the teaching. *No one* is excluded.

Its sweep is as wide as the race. If any man, says the Master, will do His will, he shall know.

Do you find yourself perplexed as to what to believe, among the multitude of counsellors saying this is truth, that is truth, coming to be a doubter of all truth? Then hear the Master as He says, have you *done* what you do know? You are not ignorant of much of His will. You at least can say, as did Robertson, wrestling in darkness of soul, as he wandered alone in the Tyrol, "Whatever else is doubtful this at least is certain, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste, than licentious, better to be true than false better to be brave than to be a coward." Have you done this? No man who is not living up to what he does know, has any right to say that he does not know more, and offer that as an excuse for being an unbeliever. *Do* God's will as far as you do know it, and you shall know. The pathway to faith is obedience.

“ I have a life in Christ to live,
But ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this and that book's date ?

I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die :
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply ?

Nay, rather while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat,
In gentlest accents heavenly sweet,
Come unto Me and rest,
Believe Me, and be blest.”

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Poverty,

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — ST. MATTHEW XI. 28.

This invitation, reaching out as we have seen, in its comprehensiveness, to include those under the stress of Distraction, of Temptation, and of Doubt, is to-day to be regarded as addressed to those under that of Poverty. There are none, perhaps, among all those we are to consider, to which the term more properly belongs. There are thousands of our fellow beings from whose minds it shuts out almost every other thought. There are those in every public assemblage into whose secret breasts, if you could penetrate, you would find this weight overbearing all. I speak not simply of the poverty of what we know as pauperism, with all its familiar train of consequent ills, but of the term in its larger sense,

humble circumstances, means inadequate to one's necessities, the condition of laboring hard for a bare living, and scarcely oftentimes making that. I take it in the full sense of where and wherever it means anxious care resting upon one, so that he can truly and rightly be said to labour and be heavy laden under it. As such it is a broad field that opens up before us, filled with countless human beings. "The most common, the most widely diffused, form of pain in the world," poverty has been called. "It is the prolific mother of an innumerable brood of ills. From it spring physical pain, mental distress, starvation of the affections, a thousand other misfortunes."

Consider for a moment its operations as we see it in the different ways it comes to men. In its lowest form it calls up to the mind the worst sections of our great cities, with their narrow streets and overcrowded tenements, damp cellars and dark attics, with their coarse language and

brutal faces regard for even the decencies of life impossible, children growing up familiar with vice in all its forms, never anything to suggest to them anything better or higher, save where Christian solicitude has sought them out, or some parent, who has known other conditions, fights against her present ones, and will have her little ones learn of something different. But what a stress it is! Here are *buried* purity and honor and patience and affection and every virtue. Here are *born* licentiousness and theft and hatred and intemperance and murder and every evil. Down into the maelstrom are going thousands every year of whom we never hear, the submerged Tenth who sink out of sight. And poverty largely the cause, not necessarily, thank God, but as things *are*, largely, chiefly, poverty which obliges them to live in such places, under such conditions. The unattractive home, — can we call it that, — drives the husband and father to the cheerful saloon for companionship,

the daily unenlivened struggle with only such results, forgets itself in drink, and this in turn, reacting, makes all the conditions already bad, worse. Ah! yes, Solomon uttered many wise things, but not many truer than when he said: "The destruction of the poor is their poverty."

But there is a fairer picture than this. We rise to that great company of men, and now more and more largely of women too, the wage earners. I call them not the laboring men, for we are all that; the business man, the professional man, is just as much a laboring man as the mason or the carpenter, there is no such class distinction; *the wage earners*: those who constitute the rank and file of the great army of those engaged in making a living. Their stress, what is it? Not of being of that great body, which always has, and probably always will, form the larger part of the human race, for this, as we shall see, should not be such. The stress which they feel, how justly or unjustly we are not

now saying, is that they have not and see no hope of having a larger share of the things of this life, that they must go on just as they are, nor only so, but see accumulated in individual or in corporate hands vast possessions which were more properly, more evenly distributed, see all that wealth brings paraded before their eyes and they having no part in it. And riches made the god they are, their acquisition to the average man the test of success, they fret under the feeling of having failed. And the fruit is restlessness, bitterness, socialism, communism, anarchy, nihilism and such like.

And then there are still others, whose condition is in some sort the hardest of all, the most trying, the most difficult, cheerfully or resignedly to bear, namely: those who have seen better days, but who now, through misfortune or misdoing of themselves, not infrequently of others, or death of the bread-winner, are in straitened circumstances ; accustomed to all the

comforts, even the luxuries of life, and never having known anything else, obliged to adjust themselves to new and strange conditions. Real stress, believe me, is here, how real, how actual, let those say whose lot it is. Shut off from sources of relief open to others, and coming sometimes too late in life to begin over again; habits and associations all formed, it is borne in secret, the heart knowing its own bitterness, with such grace as one may have or can derive.

Turn we to the fountain head to slake our thirst, to the Rest Giver to find our rest. What hath the Master to say to it all? He, one of the first of whose utterances was, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." What is that Gospel?

Its first great word to this condition of so many thousands of our fellow-beings, is in what was true of Jesus himself. He was poor. He was born in a stable amid

the humblest conditions, born into the family of a peasant mechanic. He grew up in the simple life of a Galilean village, for thirty years knew no other, save as He went up with His parents to Jerusalem to keep the feast. Early in His public ministry a certain scribe came to Him and said: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." And Jesus saith unto him: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." To follow Him was to share in poverty, privation, homelessness. His lot was the same as that He enjoined upon His disciples when He said: "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves;" and referring probably not merely to the ineffable glory of the Divine attributes He laid aside when He became incarnate, but also to the outward aspects of His life, "Ye know," says the Apostle, "the grace of Our Lord Jesus

Christ, that though He was rich, yet, for your sakes, He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

Is it then that the Gospel, the good news to the poor is this, simply that Jesus himself was poor, simply the principle that misery loves company? To that one might say, it does not relieve, it only adds to the sense of my misfortune to know that some one else is in the same. Oh no! not this, but something infinitely better. Not simply either — though there *is* comfort in this — that having known our state He can sympathize with us, can be, what He is revealed to us as, a sympathizing Saviour, but this rather, that His was the life of what is and ever must be the life of the great body of mankind, and that great consequent truth that a man's life, true life, consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth, that he may be rich and have nothing, that he may be poor and have all things. He found it so, and so may we. Life is inde-

pendent of what may more or less be regarded as its accidents. Life, true life, is often submerged in those things which men so much make the one great object of their pursuit, and think so essential to their happiness. The truest life is sometimes lived by those who have the least. Somewhat of this may be meant by the words: "Thou O God of Thy goodness hast prepared for the poor," by the beatitude "Blessed be ye poor for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Was it then true?" exclaimed one whose words from this place (though these were not of them) no one who heard them can ever forget. "Did that, which all men are accepting as the pattern life, come into the world and go out of the world, without a single sign of any care about those things which the great mass of men are struggling after, as if there could be no joy in life without them. Ah! how vulgar and poor it makes the hunt for money seem! How it ought to break

some of those heavy chains! It is not necessary that you should be rich. There is no need of it whatever. Behold! He who struck the highest, purest note of human life, He who showed God to man, He who brought man to God, He who redeemed the world — He was not rich, but poor. Oh! blessed fact. What if it had been a rich man that saved the world? How conspiring with all man's native passion to be rich, the sight of the rich Redeemer would have enlisted all our best ambitions in the struggle for the money, which must then have come to seem indispensable for the best life and work! How terrible that would have been! Heaven and hell almost confederate to make the soul of man the slave of gold. But, now, how different. Now, the life of Christ *may* be misread into a false glorification of poverty, but it can never be made to preach cupidity. Now, he who reads the story of Christ's life, knows, that to be rich, is not, and never can be the worthy

object of a human life. He who reads that story despises his own passion for money. He feels dropping out of his heart the base and brutal contempt for the poor man. And the poor man himself fills his soul with self-respect and strength, beside the cradle of the poor Jesus. Oh! is it not true that poor and rich, in themselves and toward each other, can never be what they ought to be, so long as to both money seems to be the one desirable thing of life? If that be so, must not the first leaf from the tree which is for the healing of the nations come in this fact; that the Son of Man—the Man of men—the Man who lived the richest life this world has ever seen—was born and lived and died in poverty? ”

And then as a further word also to be spoken, there come, there is made possible all those graces which grow out of poverty. Patience, courage, charity, sympathy, all the virtues developed by the condition. Were all opulent where would these things

be? At the bottom of all the warnings to the rich, is the danger of their losing *them*, the price they often pay for their riches. Not that abundance is not a blessing, for it is, perhaps on the whole it is favorable to morality, if it is regarded and used as a means, not an end. But "How hardly shall the rich man enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare," for, "the love of money is the root of all evil." And of these virtues again are born much that is constantly tending to ameliorate the condition of those less fortunate, and blessing the doer as well as the recipient. To the pauper, thanks to the influence of the principles, the spirit of Jesus, are coming increasingly, a more favorable environment, better houses, helpful diversions, a wiser charity. To the laboring man, more humane hours, larger opportunity to be with his family, to provide them with something more than the bare necessities of life, the possibility, again and

again illustrated, of rising by worth, and to those reduced in circumstances, let us hope, more thoughtful consideration of the hardship of so great a change, more ability to accept it cheerfully. All these are traceable to the example and teaching of Him, who to all those who labor and are heavy laden says "Come unto me and I will give you rest," who if the burden cannot be removed, and if it is not best that it should be, gives us strength to bear it, and in whom therefore is the hope of mankind. Not always freedom suffering but attainment by it.

And finally a rectification some day of every wrong, the sure and certain hope of which cheers us on our way and bids us be of good courage.

“ From street and square, from hill and glen
Of this vast world beyond my door,
I hear the tread of marching men,
The patient armies of the poor.

Not ermine clad or clothed in state,
Their title deeds not yet made plain ;

But waking early, toiling late,
The heirs of all the earth remain.

The peasant brain shall yet be wise
The untamed pulse grow calm and still ;
The blind shall see, the lowly rise,
And work in peace Time's wondrous will.

Some day, without a trumpet's call,
This news will o'er the world be blown ;
The heritage comes back to all !
The myriad monarchs take their own."

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Discouragement.

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—ST. MATTHEW XI. 28.

Our subject this morning in the order of those experiences of which I have spoken as constituting the stress of life, is the Voice of Jesus to Man in Discouragement. Akin to those we have considered, it is yet distinct from them, follows not infrequently as their result. Torn with the distractions of life which succeed so rapidly one upon the other, one falls into satiety of its festivities or the hopelessness of ever rescuing any time for the higher exercises of the mind or soul. Wrestling with temptation, often only to encounter mortifying defeat, the greatest one of all ensues, to give over the contest altogether, to say it is no use, no use for me to try any longer. Struggling with doubt and failing

to find intellectual satisfaction, one despairs of ever knowing what is truth, and falls into careless indifference; and suffering the hardships of poverty, no end to which can be seen, one settles down to a stoical, cheerless endurance of its ills until all is over in the grave. Discouragement, the outcome of them all, sometimes from one, sometimes from another, sometimes from more than one. And these are but examples of causes. There are a hundred others. They are as many as the various conditions of life are many.

The company of discouraged people, how great it is! Many whom we hear of or see, many more who shut up their despondency in the privacy of their own breasts and carry it secretly to the last. Disappointed ambitions, disappointed hopes for themselves often, yet more for others. Its grimmest effects are to be seen in our prisons and reformatories, in our hospitals and insane asylums, in the long annual array of suicides.

There is a prayer that was proposed for our Revised Prayer Book which I have never ceased to regret failed to be introduced, I know not why, it is so tender and so sweet, so mercifully takes into account all those of whom we are speaking:

“O God, Almighty and merciful, who healest those that are broken in heart and turnest the sadness of the sorrowful to joy, let Thy fatherly goodness be upon all that Thou hast made. Especially we beseech Thee to remember in pity such as are this day destitute, homeless or forgotten of their fellowmen. Bless the congregation of Thy poor. Uplift those who are *cast down*, mightily befriend innocent sufferers, and sanctify to them the endurance of their wrongs. Cheer with hope all *discouraged* and unhappy people and by Thy heavenly grace preserve from falling those whose penury tempteth them to sin. Though they be troubled on every side, suffer them not to be distressed, though they be perplexed, save them from despair. Grant this, O Lord, for the love of Him, who for our sakes became poor, Thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

It is of all such that I am thinking, but not only as thus manifested. The

truth is, the mental and moral attitude of the day is largely one of discouragement and despondency. It has come in no small degree from that spirit whose strong note has been to subject everything to accurate analysis, and accept nothing not so discovered, and the disappointment which has followed the discovery that a point is reached at last, beyond which knowledge cannot go, and the soul of man still unsatisfied. Albert Durer's subtile print well sets it forth. The genius of knowledge and toil, in an hour of pause from labor, sits in an attitude of arrested thought, her cheek upon her hand, her compasses idle, her book unread, her instruments scattered idly at her feet, her keys unused, her eyes gazing into the void, her very wolf-hound fast asleep. The 16 squares of the window above each has a number, which in whatever direction you add them make the same sum, 34, the symbol of exactitude. An hour glass, the sands half run. The sun has set, a fiery

comet menaces the world below, and across the sky flies a bat with outstretched wings and bearing a scroll on which is written "Melencolia."

It is such as to have struck observers. "Never, I believe," says Paul Desjardins, "have men been more universally sad than in the present time." One of the most striking evidences of it, and one which the great body of the people are encountering and imbibing all the time is seen in the lighter literature devoured in such quantities. "Why is the fiction of today so depressing? is a question that is frequently asked," says a writer in a recent number of *The Outlook*. "Why in the century just closed, the century of the most tremendous progress, the most humane theories, the most emotional charities, has the fiction been so hopeless, and the music the saddest the world has ever heard?"

We are not now so much concerned with the causes as we are with the fact

and with its cure. It must be familiar to us all. One may have one theory, another, another. What we want to know is, not does it exist, but is it hopeless?

What has the Supreme Voice to say to it? What is the word that Jesus speaks to Discouragement and Despondency? Not that all voices, even human voices, strike this note. Noble words have been spoken by many, a reaching out for a firmer faith, a determination not to despair, a suggestion of various expedients.

“Ah yet!—I have had some glimmer at times
in my gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the great God
for aught that I know.”

is one.

“There will come a weary day
When, overtaxed at length,
Both hope and love beneath
The weight give way.
Then with a statue's smile,
A statue's strength,
Patience, nothing loth,
And uncomplaining, does
The work of both.”

is another.

But we want something better, something surer than these, to lead us to the light. "How beautiful your place is," said one to an old country woman who lived in a green little valley entirely surrounded by mountains. "Yes, yes, but it's too shut in—too shut in. Why I have to look up to see out." In discouragement we too have to look up to see out.

Let us do so, up to the Person of Jesus. Even in Durer's print there was also a rainbow.

There are not wanting in the story of the life of Jesus illustrations of what perhaps might not be termed discouragement but certainly disappointment, so giving at least the assurance of having His sympathy in ours, and sympathy has its value, does bring solace. The Pharisees sought of Him a sign from heaven tempting Him, and "He *sighed*," St. Mark tells us, "*deeply in His spirit*" as He asked, "Why doth this generation ask after a sign." "And ye will not come to me,"

He said pathetically, "that ye might have life." In sorrow of sympathy with Mary's tears, mingled with indignation at the mockery of sorrow in the Jews weeping with her, who presently sought to kill whom they mourned, Jesus "groaned in the spirit and was troubled." And a little later at their sceptical words, Jesus "again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave." Was there not disappointment, almost despair, that they would ever know the things that belonged unto their peace, in His weeping over Jerusalem, when they shouted their hosannas, but with no acceptance of Him as King, disappointment that cut Him to the quick, that one of His twelve chosen disciples should prove false and betray Him? Let every disappointed, discouraged one get such solace and encouragement out of this as He can.

But this is not the great voice of Jesus to us under such conditions. His word to all under the stress of discouragement is a double one.

First, it is a word of cheer. We are struck with how this was the word that He was constantly speaking. They bring unto Him once a man sick of the palsy, especially cast down apparently, perhaps from the consciousness that his disorder was the penalty of some special sin, since forgiveness of his sins was first granted, and Jesus meets him with the word "Son, be of good cheer." The ship bearing the disciples is tossing about on the stormy lake of Gennesaret, Jesus draws near walking upon the water, and when the disciples saw Him they were troubled saying it is a spirit, and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Once again, He is telling His disciples in those wonderful chapters in which St. John has recorded for us what He said to them on the night of the Last Supper, what should befall them, and what should be their stay, and thus He brought it to a close:—"These things I have spoken unto

you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world."

It was essentially the same when He did not employ this particular word, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God believe also in Me." To Zaccheus, the despised publican, who would not have thought favor possible from the Christ, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down for today I must abide at thy house." To the two disciples, despondent after the crucifixion, He draws near and asks, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad?" Ever the helpful word, to look up and not down, to be hopeful not disheartened, to be calm not disturbed, to be cheerful not discouraged. His own sense of disappointment, when He felt it, was always *only* when men were missing what they might be, what would lift them above everything

that was dark and disappointing. Yes, Jesus was in the best sense of the word an optimist. He had a sublime faith in men, in what was in them, in the ultimate power of the truth that it would surely, that it must surely overcome in the end, that the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church. "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." And every one who believes in Him must be an optimist also.

And then, secondly, it is a word of strength and support. The power to meet bravely, and in the best sense successfully, what perhaps cannot, and is not desirable that it should, be done away. Not always deliverance from what weighs one down but strength to rise above it. Not the cheer of no battle to fight, but of all those promises to him that overcometh. This, too, is Christ's message to the discouraged. Yes, and this specifically was what was offered in that invitation which has been

the great undertone text of all these lectures, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It is wide enough as we have seen to cover all labor, all heaviness, but it was spoken at the time with those especially in mind burdened with the yoke of sin and of the law which was added because of sin. It was in noble contrast to what others were offering. Those only made the burden heavier. He did not promise immunity from all sin and suffering, but rest in the soul, bearing it up against and through it all. "*Take my yoke upon you,*" He continues, "and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." The world proposes a rest by the removal of a burden. The Redeemer gives rest by giving us the spirit and the power to bear the burden, and the true disciple's exclamation is that which was St. Paul's, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."

As you look then into your own soul and see there the daily fight with sin, the old enemy put down, but again and again renewing the conflict, are you discouraged? Be not dismayed. Those that be with you are more than those that are against. "Son be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee." In the new born peace of sins forgiven brace yourself for the battle and know that victory *must be*, "in the strength that cometh by the holy cross"

As you look out upon the world and see apparently "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne," are you discouraged? Son be of good cheer. "Behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own." "The Lord is King be the people never so impatient, He sitteth between the Cherubim be the earth never so unquiet, He will not suffer His truth to fail."

As you labor among your fellowmen, perhaps among the outcast and degraded,

for the iniquity and wretchedness that has overtaken them scarcely able to see in them the divine image in which they were created, sinking deeper and deeper for all you can do, are you discouraged over your merciful task? Be of good cheer. Since Jesus has shared their nature, has made them the objects of His love in life and death, we must look on them with awful reverence and hope.

As you contemplate the satiety and the sadness which as we have seen so characterize our time and so colors our literature, perhaps have felt it yourself without exactly knowing why, except that a certain despondency has taken possession of you, is this your inward care? Then remember, this very inquietude is the sign of better things, is the witness to for what you were made, is the soul of man saying with St. Augustine, "Thou madest us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee," is the hope of our finding Jesus' remedy for discouragement.

ment in His "Come unto Me," the ever hopeful hoping Master. We too, to look out, must look up.

The Voice of Jesus to Man in Sorrow.

Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. — ST MATTHEW XI. 28.

We come this morning to the last of that series of subjects we have been considering together on these weekdays in Lent, namely, the Voice of Jesus as He speaks to man in the stress of sorrow. I have purposely kept it to the last, for as we draw nearer and nearer the shadow of the Cross, it is both timely and in keeping with our own deepening frame of mind.

But have we not already had it before us? The Voice of Jesus to men under the stress of Temptation for instance, of Poverty, of Discouragement, yes, and sometimes of Doubt, is not that it too in Sorrow? Yes and no. These often cause it and most genuinely. And yet we have in mind something different when we use

the term. We use it in a deeper and more poignant sense. Somehow it suggests to us chiefly those suffering under the sorrow of bereavement, the heart aching under the loss of some one perhaps dearer to us than life, when the sun seems gone from the sky, and as if for us it could never shine again. Not limiting it to this, though it is its most frequent application, we want to listen to Jesus as He says to all labouring and heavy laden under sorrow, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," and to see how it is that He does so.

Did you never think how the fact of His speaking to this experience of human life, of His ability to speak to it understandingly and with efficacy, constitutes one of His great claims to our love, one of His capacities to be unto us a Saviour, is what binds our hearts so closely to Him. Not that He does not touch all our life, all its moods, with His Divine hand, sanctifies our joys, consecrates our strength

and our vigor, for He does. But that He goes and can go down with us into the deep and bring us up again. "Imagine for a moment," writes another, "a pretended Christ, who demanded our faith chiefly on the score of his interest in our happier moments, how the burdened heart of the world, and even of the happiest hearts in it, would turn from him disappointed! If *He* did not sigh for us we should still have to sigh for each other, and then to turn and sigh still for a Saviour that *would* sigh for us—only in Him acknowledging the Master of our life and of our death."

See then Jesus in His relation to this aspect of human life, where and how He touched it, nay, how He illuminated even it. At the very threshold He is no stranger to it.

"The year begins with Thee
And Thou beginn'st with woe,"

are the opening lines of the Christian Poet

for the festival that falls on New Year's day.

“Art thou a child of tears,
Cradled in care and woe?
Look here and hold thy peace.
The Giver of all good
Even from the womb takes no release
From suffering, tears, and blood.”

So, too, as we saw with reference to His message to the poor, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me He said, because also He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted. It was one of the great purposes of His ministry, announced at the very outset. This was the unction from the Holy One, which made Him the Christ, the True anointed of the Lord. It is only therefore what we should expect, to find Him every where the compassionate Saviour. A certain poor widow was carrying out her only son for burial, “And when the Lord saw her He had compassion on her and said weep not, and He came and touched the bier and said, “Young man,

I say unto thee, arise." "There came a leper to Him beseeching Him and kneeling down to Him and saying unto Him, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched him and saith unto him, "I will, be thou clean." He knew what it was to mourn the loss of friends, and the sorrowing heart of humanity has rested itself in that simplest, shortest of Bible verses, "Jesus wept," as even in the fires it sings,

"Christ leads us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before,"

and rejoices in the fellowship of His sufferings. He knew the sting of ingratitude, of heart sickness, when men would not see what belonged unto their peace, and when He was come near He beheld the city and wept over it, silent tears before, but now He wept aloud. Yes, He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and surely He hath borne our griefs and car-

ried our sorrows, and therefore we are certain of His sympathy.

But we do not have to content ourselves, only with these general considerations. He has a more special word to speak to human sorrow. The first great one occurs in what has so impressed unbeliever as well as believer, that which we know as the Sermon on the Mount, forms one of the beatitudes with which it opens. "Blessed," He said, "are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The word is commonly coupled with weeping. "Be afflicted and mourn and weep," says St. James. It is a universal experience. No life from which sooner or later in some form it is absent. To the reason for it, why it is permitted, to its removal or its alleviation, to the question how it is to be received, men have addressed themselves in all ages of the world. Left to itself, the spirit of man, in the presence of it, has ranged from the mad defiance of a Henley to stoical endurance. There have

been comforters by the score. You may read of some of them in the Book of Job. But it was left for Jesus to rise above them all, to transmute trial into a blessing, to lift up sorrow even into a beatitude. No one before had ever said blessed are they that mourn. The world had been waiting like the aged Simeon, waiting for the consolation of Israel. Behold, here He was and blessed was the mourner, said He, for sorrow was an angel in disguise, blessed was the mourner for he should be comforted.

Does not experience confirm it? Some of the best blessings have come to the sufferer through his sufferings. He has been made most truly strong by means of them. Some of the greatest gifts to the world in literature, in art, in music, have been made in and because of suffering. Out of his blindness wrote Milton his *Paradise Lost*, out of his pain over the loss of his friend Tennyson his *In Memoriam*. In his poverty Millet painted the

Angelus. "My compositions," wrote Schubert in his journal, "are the result of my abilities and my distress, and those which distress alone has engendered appear to give the world most pleasure." "We shroud the cages of birds," said Richter, "when we would teach them to sing."

You have asked Him, no doubt, to take away that which is troubling you; to let the cup, whatever it may be, pass from you. But it has not, you have had to drink it to the dregs. And yet, and yet in some richer view of life and quickened sense of its deeper purposes, and in a chastened but stronger spirit, the word has come to you: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," and you have begun to see that it is true.

The next word that Jesus has to speak to this form of stress, is summed up in what we may call His doctrine of the Cross. It entered His own life, as we are seeing especially at this time, and through the week that lies before us. The shadow

of the cross! A great painter has thrown it upon the wall behind the Saviour, as at the close of day he stood in the doorway of the carpenter shop at Nazareth, and stretched out his arms in weariness after His toil. It was never absent thereafter. It was there as He lamented the unbelief, the ingratitude of those He came to save. It was there as He told His disciples again and again that He must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes and be killed. It was there, Oh! yes, was it not, in the garden, ere yet He hung upon it, as He sweat great drops of blood under the burden of the world's sin, and in the antecedent victory there won, bowed in self sacrifice to the Father's will. It surmounted the hill without a city wall where the dear Lord was crucified.

And as it was not apart from His life, He tells us it cannot be from that of the disciple. As with the Master so with the servant. "If any man will come after

me let him take up his cross and follow me. He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. I came not to send peace but a sword."

Man's thought, man's effort is to do away with it. It is the aim of that modern Gospel of man, or rather of woman, which for the time being is having such a following, to eliminate pain and sorrow, to eradicate the cross from human life. It is a fruitless aim. It never can be done in this world of sin. It will be the doom of Christian Science, so called, if made its central feature. Strength by suffering attainment through sacrifice, is the law of the Christian life. Even the Captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings, the true prayer of every under soldier:—"Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain, and entered not into glory before He was crucified, mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of

life and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

Another word of Jesus to those in Sorrow has to do with that with which we said the term is usually associated, that of bereavement. It is that great word of His to one of that little household in the midst of which He seems to have had more sense of home than anywhere else while He was upon the earth, when all but overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her brother, Martha said unto Jesus, “Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.” “Jesus saith unto her thy brother shall rise again.” But as if that were a far off answer to her cry, and what should she do all the intervening waiting years, as though that utterly failed to meet her present need, Martha saith unto Him, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said unto her, “I am the Resurrec-

tion and the Life." I your personal present living Lord, "*I am* the Resurrection, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

"We conquer," it has been said, the pagan thought "lost forever," but we are often conquered by the thought "lost for the present." The lonely bleeding heart cries out for companionship, for the lost companionship *now*. And lo! He says, you may have it. If those asleep in Jesus are with Him and we are with Him, we are with *them*.

So helpful I have known them to be to many persons, some words that embody this truth, I cannot refrain from giving them to you.

"Beside the dead I knelt for prayer,
And felt a *presence* as I prayed :—
Lo, it was Jesus standing there—
He smiled—be not afraid.

Lord, Thou hast conquered death we know,
 Restore again to life, I said,
 This one who died an hour ago.
 He smiled—he is not dead.

Asleep, then, as Thyself didst say ;
 Yet Thou canst lift the lids that keep
 His prisoned eyes from ours away.
 He smiled—he doth not sleep.

Alas ! too well we know our loss,
 Nor hope again our joys to touch
 Until the stream of death we cross.
 He smiled—there is no such.

Yet our beloved seem so far
 The *while*, we *yearn* to feel them near,
Albeit, with Thee, we trust they are.
 He smiled—and I am here.

Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
 Still walk unseen with us and Thee,
 Nor sleep nor wander far away ?
 He smiled—Abide in Me.”

Finally, there is that word of Jesus which He made good after His Resurrection, of which we make all too little, but revealing one whole function of His perpetual spiritual presence with His people.

“I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you.” *Comforter*, in the full sense of Paraclete, not merely one who consoles, but who stands at our side to counsel, to guide, to plead, to strengthen. “Strengthen them we beseech the, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter,” we pray in the Confirmation Office. It is in exact accordance with the Saviour’s promise, it is His word to those in the stress of sorrow which crowns them all, which does not leave them to themselves, but strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son. May He grant it to us every one.

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