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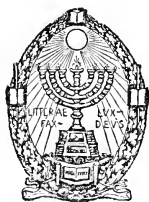
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THE CHRIST DREAM

BY

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"THE HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS," "CHRIST AND HIS FRIENDS," "THE
SALOON-KEEPER'S LEDGER "



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TO MY FRIEND,

Harriet Steele Lane,

THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

By the Author.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I.	
The Dream of Christian Civilization, - - - -	7
II.	
Angelic Models for Earthly Lives, - - - -	19
III.	
The Treasures of the Highlands, - - - -	32
IV.	
The Inspiration of the Hope of Immortality, - - -	45
V.	
The Vital Atmosphere of a Christian Life, - - -	56
VI.	
The Childhood of the Soul, - - - -	68
VII.	
Inspiration, not Imitation, the Key to Christian Character,	81
VIII.	
The Art of Gathering up the Fragments of Life, - -	92
IX.	
Heartstrings and their Melody, - - - -	102
X.	
The Struggle for Life, - - - -	111
XI.	
Self-triumph through Self-forgetfulness, - - - -	124

	PAGE
XII.	
Yesterday, - - - - -	137
XIII.	
The Conditions of Wealth in Spiritual Utterance, - -	149
XIV.	
Dante's Staircase from Despair to Hope, - - - -	161
XV.	
The Supremacy of the Spiritual Life, - - - -	172
XVI.	
The Darkness behind the Stars, - - - -	184
XVII.	
The Mirror that Transforms the Soul, - - - -	195
XVIII.	
The Voyage of Life, - - - -	206
XIX.	
The Lesson of Jehu's Bow, - - - -	215
XX.	
The Tragedy of the Napkin, - - - -	228
XXI.	
A Haunted Soul, - - - -	238
XXII.	
Heaven's Perfume—Golden Vials full of Odors, - -	249
XXIII.	
Frederick Douglass, the Eloquent—The Most Picturesque Historical Figure in Modern Times, - - - -	259
XXIV.	
A Farsighted Religion, - - - -	265

THE CHRIST DREAM.

I.*

THE DREAM OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.*

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth.”—Rev. xxi, 1.

THIS vision of John was a flower from a heavenly seed which the greatest souls had carried in their hearts through many generations. God had said to Isaiah, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.” Peter, also, had anticipated that time, and exclaimed, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

It may seem strange on this Memorial Sunday, when all over the land veteran soldiers are marching to places of worship clad in uniforms that recall the days of war, and discourses are being pronounced that record heroic deeds on the battlefields of the Republic, that I should call you to see in the essential thought of Decoration Day a prophecy of the coming of universal peace and brotherhood, a realization of the great dream of humanity—the “new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” But when we recall the fact that the essential idea of Decoration

* A Decoration Day sermon.

Day is not to keep alive feelings of vengeance and hatred, not to revive strife or discord, but to commemorate the self-sacrificing deeds of brave and heroic men, to cover the graves of both the blue and the gray with the emblems of forgiveness and love, and that in many sections of the South the Confederate veterans will on next Thursday cover the graves of their fallen foemen with a wealth of Southern flowers, it is easy to understand that the spirit of our theme is born of this occasion.

There are so many prophets of disaster in our day that I am sure I may be forgiven if I seize upon this opportunity to call to your mind some of the green buds of promise that prophesy the coming of a better day in our social, religious, and national life. Surely at no time since the War of the Rebellion has there been so much to assure us that Mason and Dixon's line is being obliterated and forgotten, that the old feuds between North and South are being healed, and that we are becoming, more perfectly than at any time since the nation was formed, one people. We have had recently two remarkable utterances—one in Brooklyn, and another in Charleston, S. C.—that to my mind are suggestive of great hope and promise. It was no small thing, the other evening, to hear Henry Watterson, from the pulpit of Plymouth Church where Henry Ward Beecher used to thunder his philippics against slavery, utter an eloquent and impassioned eulogy of Abraham Lincoln. How impossible it would have seemed a little over three decades ago that Henry Watterson, the then rebel editor, should stand in Plymouth pulpit to say;

“ One thinks now that the world in which Lincoln lived might have dealt more gently by such a man. He was himself so gentle, so upright in nature, and so broad of mind, so sunny and so tolerant in temper, so simple and unaffected in bearing—a rude exterior covering an undaunted spirit—proving by his every act and word that

“ The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring,”

that, though he was a party leader, he was a typical and patriotic American, in whom even his enemies might have found something to respect and admire. But it could not be so. . . . Yet, all the while that the waves of passion were dashing over this sturdy figure reared above the dead level, as a lone oak upon a sandy beach, not one harsh word escaped his lips, not one assault rankled in his heart to sour the milk of human kindness that, like a perennial spring from the gnarled roots of some majestic tree, flowed within him.”

And yet again hear Watterson, the aforetime rebel, say : “ I see him lying dead there in the capital of the nation to which he had rendered ‘ the last, full measure of his devotion,’ the flag of his country wrapped about him, the world in mourning ; and, asking myself how anyone could have dwelt in hate and anger upon this man, I ask you, How can anyone fail to cherish his memory ? Surely he was one of God’s elect—not in any sense a creature of circumstance or accident or chance.” And listen yet again to a man who struggled for the Confederacy : “ It was the will of God that there should be, as God’s own prophet had prom-

ised, 'a new birth of freedom ;' and this could only be reached by the obliteration of the very idea of slavery. God struck Lincoln down in the moment of his triumph to attain it ; God blighted the South to attain it ; but he did attain it. And here we are this night to attest it. God's will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven."

But it is still more startling to take the train and go down to Charleston, S. C., and hear Mr. John J. Dargan, an ex-Confederate soldier, also the editor of a Southern newspaper, addressing a company of three thousand colored men within a month of this Brooklyn utterance and saying to them, and through his newspaper to the world: "I stand to-day in what is known as the cradle of secession, and feel it to be a bounden duty to truth and justice to pay tribute here to the memory of William Lloyd Garrison, whose magical hand touched the auction blocks of this city, and they became schoolhouses. Should not this alone excite our liveliest and most lasting gratitude to him? More than all other men did he do and dare for the liberation and elevation of the whole people of Charleston. For by the abolition of slavery the slaveholder was as much liberated as the slaves. Under the slave system all the energy and talents of the slaveholder were exercised in holding the slave down. I feel so grateful to him myself for getting me off the Negro and showing me there was nobler and better work to do than the work of oppression. Had it not been for Garrison and his self-sacrificing band of abolitionists contending for the cause of justice and freedom, Charleston might have been still holding the

Negroes down in slavery. It is tremendously costly work, this holding people down; for neither the man held down nor the man holding him down can accomplish anything in this world. That is why the South had nothing before the war but the Negro and the art of keeping him down. The very arms with which we fought the North had to be gotten from the North. Where do your powerful steam engines on land and sea come from to-day? From the land of freedom. Your household furniture, your plantation tools, your very clothing, your books in your schoolrooms, the Bibles in your churches, the songs that you sing, and the wires over which you talk? From the free North, not the enslaved South. And this awful destitution is the just penalty we have paid for the privilege of holding the Negro down."

Surely when ex-Confederate soldiers make addresses like that and write editorials of that sort we can believe that the war is over and that the promise of a united country is at least in the dawn of fulfillment. Of course, there are multitudes of public men and many newspapers that do not hold this spirit; but these utterances are the prophecy of many more that are to follow. We shall soon see a new North and a new South wherein dwell fraternity and brotherly love.

It is surely not out of place on an occasion like this to notice the prospect for a better understanding between labor and capital. One of the most delightful things that has occurred in many a long day is the official announcement that, beginning with June 1, not only at Homestead, that place of

tragic history, but at all the many mills and furnaces of the Carnegie Steel Company—which has been, with good show of reason, a synonym for tyranny in the average trade-unionist's parlance—wages will be voluntarily increased ten per cent. This will affect an army of fifteen thousand men, and, through them, perhaps fifty thousand women and children. This increase had not been asked for by the men, and for more than half a year they could have been held to the present scale of wages, to which they had agreed. Such an act of justice, done by a corporation that has been so bitterly denounced, ought to warm the heart of the most rabid trade-unionist.

There can be no doubt that the relations between labor and capital, despite all the strife and discord which seem to belie the statement, are coming nearer to justice with every decade. It is a long and toilsome path from the almost universal slavery prevailing at the time of the birth of Jesus up to the high table-land of universal brotherhood. We have not reached that altitude yet, but there never has been a time in the history of mankind when the average condition of the world's workers was as good as it is to-day. This does not mean that there is not widespread injustice and that there are not multitudes who are cruelly oppressed; but it is nevertheless true that the laborer's hours are shortening, that his wages are slowly increasing, and that his opportunities for intelligence and education are steadily improving. The multiplication of the newspaper, at a price within the reach of the masses, carrying the views alike of capitalist and

laborer, of conservative as well as radical, into the ear of universal humanity, is certain to hasten the coming of justice and peace in the relations between capital and labor. The springing up throughout the world of experiments in cooperation, where the controllers of great capital are entering with a fraternal and kindly spirit into intelligent conferences with their employees and bringing them successfully to share in the burdens and in the profits of business, are indications of a good time coming when capital and labor shall no longer be separated by distrusts and prejudice, but shall work together, shoulder to shoulder, in happy and prosperous brotherhood. Paul's idea, that, in the social community, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it," which he learned of Jesus Christ, is to be the great permanent basis of solution of the difficulties between labor and capital. We have reason to thank God that, notwithstanding frequent strikes and lockouts, there is more promise of the coming of that day than ever before.

I think it worth while to turn our inquiry, if possible, into a still more delicate field, and call attention to the fact that there is more promise of united action for the benefit of our common humanity on the part of the great divisions of the army of Christianity than we have seen hitherto. God be praised for every ray of hope which foreshadows the better day of religious toleration! The venerable Dr. Henry M. Field, in an address before the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair, made this most remarkable statement:

“It has been my fortune to travel in many lands, and I have not been in any part of the world so dark but that I have found some rays of light, some proof that the God who is our God and Father has been there, and that the temples which are reared in many religions resound with sincere worship and praise to him. I am an American of the Americans, born in New England, brought up ‘in the strictest sect of the Pharisees,’ believing there was no good outside of our own little pale. . . . When I went across the ocean I thought a Roman Catholic was a terrible person. When I came to know the Roman Catholics, however, I found I was a very poor specimen of Christianity beside the Sisters of Charity whom I saw and the noble brothers devoted to every good, Christian, and benevolent office. Only a few weeks ago I was in Africa, and there made the acquaintance of some of the White Fathers designated by Cardinal Lavigerie to carry the Gospel into the center of Africa. What devotion is there we can hardly parallel. I knew that some of them—the first that were sent out—had been killed on the desert; and yet at Carthage I said to one of the White Fathers, ‘Are you willing to go into all those dangers?’ ‘Yes,’ said he. ‘When?’ ‘To-morrow,’ was his reply. Such a spirit is magnificent, and whenever we see it, in any part of the world, in any church, we admire and honor it.”

We have been passing through, during the last few years, a considerable revival of bitterness between the Roman Catholic and Protestant communions in this country. It is not my purpose to

enter into a lengthy discussion concerning the merits of the many controversies that have arisen between American Protestantism and Roman Catholicism; but my purpose is rather to call attention to the fact that the production of such men as Archbishop Ireland and many others that might be named, who are ardent representatives of American ideas and American patriotism, gives promise of "a leaven at work in the old Roman dough" of that historic communion which must yet make that church a great force in the progress and stability of American civilization. No one who has traveled widely in America and studied the trend of things among the new generation of Catholics, whether priests or laymen, can have failed to observe the growth of tolerance, the growing revolt against isolation, and the general desire, which in many cases has been irresistible, to join hand and heart and voice with men of widely different faiths and communions in bringing about social and political reform. The men who are seeking by secret societies to stir up sectarian hatred and to dig a deep gulf between Protestant and Catholic citizens may be very honest, but they are not very broad, not very wise, nor very Christian. Archbishop Ireland's stinging rebuke to the attempt to unite Catholics under a single party flag at the last election in this State ought to bring shame to the faces of narrow-minded Protestants, who have been seeking to obtain local political successes by arousing sectarian bitterness. America is a land for the sunlight. Its great battles have been fought out in the open air. The pure sunshine of liberty, the free breath of

open discussion, have heretofore been the great dis-infectants of this land. To these, to the vitality of truth, and to God's gracious purpose, and not to secret intrigue, must we look for the perpetuation of the Republic. There is no objection to the cry "America for Americans;" but when we raise that cry let us mean by it Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile—all who accept the American idea and who join hands in a strong, devoted, determined effort for the uplift of humanity.

We have reached a time in the progress of civilization when we need to turn the mighty power of our Christianity, not only to seeking after the lost, to building hospitals for the weak and the infirm and the old, to the erection of houses of refuge for the outcast, but to striking positively at the root of some of those evils that are the great sources of human degradation. Florence Nightingale, "the angel of the Crimea," in spite of the fact that she won her great reputation in nursing the wounded and sick, has yet all the while been more interested in the prevention of disease than in the nursing of the sick. This was exemplified in a letter which she recently addressed to village mothers. She advised them to see that their boys and girls grew up "healthy, with clean minds and clean skins." "After all," she wrote, "it is health, and not sickness, which is our natural state. There are more people to pick us up when we fall than to enable us to stand on our feet." What a suggestive statement that is! What civilization needs to-day is a mighty crusade against the giant evils which take men off their feet. It is well enough to save lost

men and outcast women, but it is a thousandfold better to dry up the streams which transform innocent boys and girls into profligates and outcasts.

Christianity was never so strong and mighty before. They reckon without their hosts who count Christianity as in its decay. Two Irishmen were at work in a certain Western town, where Ingersoll had been lecturing. One said, "Did you hear the lecture last night?" "No. What did he say?" "He said that Christianity is dead." "Indade! And isn't it a mighty queer dead thing that is building five churches in this town this year?"

Christianity is not dead nor sleeping; but what it needs is a deep concentration against the deadly foes of Christ and humanity. Do you remember when Christ came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and found there his disciples utterly helpless to heal the poor lad that was possessed with a dumb spirit, and how, when Jesus saw what was the trouble and heard the complaint of the father that the disciples could not cast him out, he cried out in rebuke, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me?" How shameful it is that the millions of disciples of Jesus Christ in this land should stand helpless before the liquor traffic, that demon spirit of our civilization, and fail to cast it out through lack of devotion and concentration.

When Sir Philip Sidney was only a boy he wrote down as one of the settled rules of his young life, "If there are any good wars I shall go to them." Young man, young woman, I call you to this good war—as holy and chivalrous as any for which noble

knight or pious crusader ever tilted his lance or unsheathed his sword ; a war for " God and home and native land ; " a war, not against your brothers, but against a vile institution which blights with the mildew of death everything upon which it falls. There is no cause for which humanity prays that would not gain new impetus and inspiration if the liquor traffic was slain. I call you, then, for the sake of the liquor dealer himself and his army of bartenders who are brutalized and degraded by it ; in behalf of the army of besotted drunkards falling into accursed graves ; in behalf of the sweet homes that are yearly wrecked and ruined, and the wives and children that are widowed and orphaned by this deadly curse ; in behalf of the childhood of America, which ought to be saved from its deadly fascinations ; in behalf of the " new heaven and the new earth," the coming of which every Christian heart has sworn to speed. In behalf of this sublime dream of Christian civilization, this noble hope of universal brotherhood, " which humanity has carried in its heart, like a heavenly seed, for ages," I appeal to you to come to this good war, and to come now !

II.

ANGELIC MODELS FOR EARTHLY LIVES.

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. vi, 10.

NO life ever rises into true greatness without lofty ideals. When God would exalt Moses to the faith and courage necessary to be the leader of his people, he gave him a vision hour on the lonely mountain side, and appeared to him and communed with him in the burning bush; and when the Lord sought to fit him for building the sacred tabernacle where his special presence was to be manifested, he took him up on Mount Sinai and communed with him and revealed to him in that exalted solitude the pattern for his work. We are all builders, and to each one of us, as to Moses, God gives vision hours, when common things are transfigured before us and we are lifted up to behold the lofty possibilities of life—hours like those which Peter and John and James had when they spent a glorious night on the mountain top with Moses and Elias, and Jesus was transfigured before them.

Let us thank God that he has not ceased to give vision hours to his children. There are times when our souls are lifted up and exalted so that all nature seems transfigured and glorified to us. I had an hour like that the other afternoon, when, riding rapidly in the train along the Hudson River and look-

ing out upon the spring landscape, God seemed to be more immanent and regnant in nature than ever before, and my heart drank in peace out of the beautiful works of his hand, from the sky above and the earth beneath. An indescribable beauty seemed to fall over mountain and river and forest; and, like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, I wist not what to say, for no language could utter it. It was one of those spring afternoons which are like a divine oratorio, when the earth palpitates with its innumerable insect life and its reviving tenderness; when the air is like a kiss from the warm-hearted South; when the trees, from the dark evergreen to the snow-white dogwood or pink azalea, the sunshine, streaming from the inexhaustible hearthstone of heaven, the blue sky, flecked with white clouds, like sheep on the pasture lands of Paradise, are all in the same happy mood, all at concert pitch, attuned by a divine hand until they are brought together in complete harmony—a halleluiah chorus, indeed, none the less glorious because silent to the earthly ear. The whole earth seemed like a Bible. The everlasting rocks of the Palisades overhanging the river were its Book of Genesis; the chirping robins were its Book of Psalms; the warm atmosphere, illuminated by the sunlight and spiced by the fragrance of orchard bloom, was its gospels; and the rapidly-advancing train, changing the panorama at every moment, turned leaf after leaf of its Book of Revelation.

There is no *sorrow* that an inspired soul cannot transfigure. Humanity has never known any bitterness of grief or dreg of misery that has not been

borne or drunk by lofty souls—like those of whom Paul says, in his letter to the Hebrews, “Of whom the world was not worthy”—with faces all aglow with love and eyes that mirrored the face of God. As the sunshine sprinkles down through the forest and illuminates the dark pool, or the starlit heaven bending over it mirrors its jeweled face in its black depths at night, so communion with God and love for him and reliance upon him flood earthly sorrows with beauty and transfigure them with a glory from heaven.

There is no *work* so monotonous that a lofty soul imbued with a Christlike spirit cannot transfigure it and change it from slavery into a divine mission. To those who live in perpetual consciousness that they are the sons and daughters of God, all toil which comes in the line of duty must become attractive. When the glory of heaven’s purpose falls over our work it loses its monotony and its hardness and becomes a divine calling. When we live in that spirit we come to feel and know that men are not only called to be apostles and prophets and poets, but are just as truly called to be carpenters and tailors and machinists, and that one can as surely drive a team or sweep a room or run an engine or nurse a child for the sake of God and humanity and duty as to be a prophet or priest or king. Work thus transfigured loses all its bitterness; it is no longer drudgery, but is glorified by high and lofty purpose, as well as by the blessed fellowship in which it finds itself.

The *friendships* and *loves* of our lives are transfigured and exalted when our souls are lifted up by

lofty spiritual devotion. As another has well said : " Friendship is only a habit of being together ; love is only a fire of straw, flaring and falling away in a moment, unless its soul is some generous, common aim, some noble, common inspiration. But, with these, when we talk with our friends, they are transfigured, and we are talking with Moses and Elias, with prophets and saints. Their garments are white as the light ; their faces shine as the sun. For, as Jesus is the mirror in which we see the face of God, so are all good men and women, in their better moments, the illustration to our hearts of the great prophets and saints of the earth." How can we ever thank God enough for these our own prophets and saints, our own heroes and martyrs. Call them up in your mind while I speak—the men and the women, many of them walking in the commonest places of life, yet so transfigured by the grace of God and so glorified by friendship and love that their names have been changed, as Jacob's was at Peniel, and they have stood before you, your Abraham and Moses and Daniel and Elijah and Paul and John, or your Dorcas and Lydia, or your Madonna. God be blessed for these household saints and prophets, these friends who are transfigured and transformed into our angels that help us up heaven's stairway ! How barren, indeed, would life be without them ! They make it easy for us to believe in all things good and true, and open to us beforehand the portals of a higher world.

So there are hours when Christ is transfigured before us, as he was before the disciples on that morning when Peter begged his Lord that they

might build tabernacles and remain, because it was so good to be there. There are other days when we walk the highway as the disciples did on their way to Emmaus, and, all unseen, the Christ draws near and becomes our companion, and our hearts burn within us as he talks to us and opens to us the Scriptures. In such hours the Saviour is more than Lord and Master—he is our tender Friend. He keeps step with us, his neck is bended to our yoke, his majestic yet tender face glows with sympathy and love. The Scriptures grow clear in such moments, grow intensely interesting. Whereas they were before dull, now every word is filled with fresh life. The Bible becomes transfigured. It is like the earth in the springtime—every book swelling the leaves and blossoms, every chapter instinct with life. Even death itself is transfigured to those who live in the light of God's truth and love. To all such "death is swallowed up in victory," and they cry triumphantly, with Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It was in a vision hour that Jesus, in an exaltation of spirit that came to him as he talked with his disciples and taught them how to pray, uttered the words of our text. The Saviour saw in these rude, ignorant, prejudiced, quick-tempered men about him, the possibility of rising up into communion with the holiest and loftiest beings. Heavenly purity and righteousness were to transform these rude lives. Angelic models were to be lifted up before them and allure them over an illuminated path toward the skies.

I shall not take our Scripture in its wider view

of the world, shall not study it in its broader horizon, as the promise of the coming of the kingdom of God everywhere ; but prefer to inquire briefly at this time what it is we pray for when, in reference to our own hearts and lives, we pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

There can be no doubt that, first of all, it is a prayer for purity. Heaven is a place of infinite purity. Jesus says, and it is one of the sweetest of all those sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." As heaven is a place of the highest and noblest standards, we cannot doubt that, when Christ teaches us to pray that his kingdom may come in our earthly lives and his will be done in us as it is among the angelic hosts in heaven, he is teaching us a prayer for purity of heart ; for, as President Warren of Boston University well says, in trying to estimate the rank and value of different kinds of purity, one is forced to the conclusion that heart purity is the highest of all. True, it is a blessed thing to have a pure body—pure blood, pure breath, pure complexion, everywhere the purity of absolute health and cleanliness ; but if we had to choose between this purity and purity of mind—pure thoughts, pure imaginations, pure intellectual tastes and habits—surely every sane man or woman would say, "Give me the pure mind." It is better to have an unwashed body than a filthy mind ; for if the mind is pure it will quickly find a way to purify the body.

But, precious as it is to have purity of thought and imagination and intellectual tastes and habits, purity of heart is still more important and desirable.

Purity of heart means purity of love and aspiration ; and by as much as our aspirations and desires and loves are deeper and higher and more vital than our fancies, by so much is purity of heart higher in the scale of excellence than even purity of thought. Those daring French surgeons tell us that in their experiments an animal's brain is sometimes removed by an investigating scientist and the animal goes on performing its functions in some modified way ; but when they take away its heart its life goes with it. So it is with man—his heart is the citadel of his life. Not only so, but as a pure mind will find some way to purify an impure body, so a pure heart will purify the mind. The great heart-longing for purity fills the mind with images of pure things and forces the imagination to feed itself on purity. Dear brothers and sisters, this purity of body and mind and soul, this purity of heart which shall clothe us with light, is our rightful heritage and may and should be enjoyed by us every one. How we are robbing our own lives by being so frequently satisfied with far less than belongs to us as the children of God !

A clever writer, in a recent work of fiction, pictures in vivid coloring the misery and growing despair of the heir of vast estates yielding a yearly income of tens of thousands of dollars. The inheritance is really his, free and unencumbered, but through the intrigue of some scheming, thieving men he is made to believe that he has lost everything, and that beyond all chance of recovery. While still possessed of a kingly fortune, he actually wants for the common necessities of life and is finally

on the verge of despair and desperation ; when he is coolly and simply asked if he has looked sufficiently and thoroughly into matters and so convinced himself, beyond all reasonable doubt, that he really has lost what were once beyond dispute his rightful possessions. The question so quietly put begets questions and arouses suspicions in his mind which, joined with his forlorn condition, stimulate to a keen search, resulting in the discovery that not only are the supposed alienated estates still his, but a hitherto unclaimed inheritance is his also.

How aptly this story illustrates the condition of those who, through sin, have lost purity of heart and cleanliness of imagination and the courage of righteousness, and who now are made to believe by the evil one that the inheritance had been taken away from them forever and that they must live on with poor, starved, bankrupt hearts until the end. Brother, it is not true. Sin may have marred and hurt and blighted, but the Christ who gave himself as a sacrifice for our sin is not only able to save us from the punishment of sin, but to purify us from its guilt, to cleanse us from its impurity, and to fill our hearts and minds with pure and holy thoughts, with noble and divine ambitions ; and, if you really and truly pray this prayer of our Lord, it is a cry of the soul that your divine inheritance may again be yours and its precious income of peace and joy and love in the Holy Ghost may refresh your enraptured soul.

The prayer we are studying is also a plea for entrance in a life of loving, willing service. However complex the Christian life may seem, it is very

simple and easy to be understood when approached through the door of simply trying to do what will please Jesus. I wish I might condense for you a beautiful little parable of James Freeman Clarke's. This is its story:

There was once a little boy who read in his Testament the stories about Jesus; and, as little children think that everything they read is near by, he supposed that Jesus and his disciples were living near by, in the same town or the next, and he thought he would like to go and find Jesus and ask him whether he might not stay with him awhile and be one of his scholars. So one morning he got up early and set out on his journey before anyone else was up. He left a little note on the table for his father and mother, which was this:

“DEAR PAPA AND MAMMA: I am going to find Jesus. I wish to be one of his disciples, with Peter and James and John. I am very little, but I can do something. I can bring him water when he is thirsty and wash his feet when he is tired with walking; and by and by I will come home and tell you all about it.
CHARLEY.”

So Charley set out very bright and fresh. He had an idea, as little children have, that the world is only a few miles across and that everything is close by; so he thought he would meet some one soon who would tell him where Jesus was. But after walking for an hour or so he began to get tired and wanted his breakfast. He went straight into a house and sat down. Now, in this house there lived a very old man and woman who had no

children. When they saw this little curly-headed boy coming in they said :

“What do you want, my son?”

And he told them he wanted some bread and milk for breakfast. They gladly gave it to him ; and, while he was eating it, he told them how he was going to find Jesus and asked them if they could tell him where Jesus and his disciples were to-day. The old man and woman were astonished at this question, and said :

“My dear child, we do not know.”

So he thanked them for his breakfast, and they gave him a piece of bread to take with him, and he went away. Then the old man and woman said to each other :

“Is it not strange that this little boy should be trying to find Jesus, and we have never tried to be Christians all our lives?”

So they resolved they would begin then to be Christians, and they knelt down and prayed God to make them so, and they felt very happy.

The little boy went on, and came to where two men were sitting and disputing. One man was an infidel, and did not believe in Jesus Christ at all. The other was a Christian, but he was a hard sort of Christian, who could argue for Christ, but did it as if he were scolding. The little boy stopped to listen, and presently went up and said :

“If this man wants to know Christ, don't wait here talking, but come help me to find him, for I am looking for him, too.”

Then he took them each by the hand and led them along, and they stopped arguing, curious to

see where he was going; and they went along together. Presently they came to where some one was lying on the ground, groaning with pain. Then the little boy said :

“O, now we shall find Jesus, for he always goes where people are sick; he will come here presently. Let us sit down by the sick man and nurse him and make him comfortable, and Jesus will come here directly.”

So they sat down and nursed the sick man, till at last he felt better, and got up and went away thanking them.

But no Jesus came, and the little boy began to be discouraged. However, he got up and said :

“Let us go and look farther; for he said, ‘Seek, and ye shall find.’”

But the two men said :

“No, little boy, we will go no farther, for we know how to find him now. We see that Jesus is not to be found in disputing, but by following him. Good-bye, little boy; you have done us a great deal of good.”

Then the little fellow journeyed on till he came to where a poor beggar sat on the ground, and he asked the little boy for bread. Charley took the piece he had saved in the morning and broke it in two and gave the beggar half and said :

“Take this and eat it in the name of Christ, and I will eat the rest.”

And the beggar said :

“Dear little boy, this is the first time I have eaten the Lord’s Supper in fifty years.”

So night came on, and the little fellow began to

be frightened. But the beggar asked him who he was and where he lived, and he told the whole story. Then the beggar got up and went with him and showed him the way home. And his father and mother, who had been looking for him all day, were very glad, and said :

“ We have sought you all day.”

But he said :

“ Why so ? I have been looking for Jesus.”

Then he crept into his little bed and went to sleep. And he dreamed ; and, behold, Jesus came to him and said :

“ My dear little boy, you have looked for me all day, and I have been near you all the time. I was with you when you went to look for me and when you went to see the old man and woman and the two arguers and the sick man and the beggar ; and you have led me to all of them. The old man and woman will now be my disciples ; the two arguers have left off disputing and have begun to do good works ; the sick man blesses God for the charity of his fellow-men ; and the old beggar feels that he is not alone in the world. Go on, little boy, and always do so, and I will always be with you. Though you cannot see me you shall feel me in your heart.”

I do not know anything better to say to any of you than “ Go thou and do likewise,” in the spirit of the prayer of our Lord.

We cannot fail to notice for a moment that this is a cry of cheerful submission to the will of God. If we enter fully into it we shall be able to sing with the poet :

“ O God, thy will be done !
We know not what the morrow may reveal,
What dole soe'er of misery or weal,
Yet may our spirits with thine own be one ;
And set upon our brows thy royal seal,
The name of Christ, thy Son.

“ We ask thee for thy peace !
Unto the morrow shall suffice its pain,
And every loss may prove a surer gain,
And every bondage lead to glad release.
Let not thy discipline be sent in vain ;
Yet give us, Lord, thy peace.

“ We ask to do thy will,
Not knowing yet what all that will may be,
But trusting that no dire calamity,
No hopeless grief, or needless breath of ill,
Can ever reach the soul that rests in thee,
And we can wait thy will.

“ Thy comfort comes through pain.
Thy tender hand the heavy burden lifts,
And hope shines through the clouds in golden rifts
And unto those who trust thee, come again
Courage and peace, and all such kindred gifts,
Clear shining after rain.

“ And this is better so.
Who knows the depth is strong to scale the height,
Who knows the darkness best will love the light ;
And they who bear Christ's cross shall surely know
The blessedness of those who walk in white
After their toil below.

“ Thy children must be tried.
And so we dare not ask for joy or rest.
Whatever thou shalt choose for us is best ;
Whatever sorrow life's short day may hide
We know that when we waken on thy breast
We shall be satisfied.”

III.

THE TREASURES OF THE HIGHLANDS.

“He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.”—Deut. xxxii, 13.

IN his last poem, written only a little while before his death, Robert Louis Stevenson went back in his memory and lived again in thought in the old Scotch Highlands which were so dear to him. The poem is worthy of his genius, and interprets the higher voices which speak to sensitive souls from the “high places of the earth:”

“In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes;
Where essential silence cheers and blesses,
And forever in the hill recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies;

“O, to mount again where erst I haunted;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,
And the low, green meadows
Bright with sward;
And when evening dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarred!

“O, to dream ; O, to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath !
Lo ! for there, among the flowers and grasses
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes ;
Only winds and rivers,
Life and death.”

The suggestion of the Scripture we are studying is that there are such spiritual highlands for the soul—gloriously tinted skies ; lofty places of heavenly communion where plain men have rosy faces ; quiet hours where the very silence is full of a loving music that broods in tenderness ; lofty table-lands where heavenly trade winds blow, where the river of the water of life is flowing, and where great thoughts and noble joys inspire generous souls.

The lesson that I wish to impress upon your thought is that it is a high and noble thing to be a Christian man or woman ; that the Christian life is infinitely greater and grander than any other life in the world. We slander our Christianity when we put it on a par with any mere morality or formal righteousness. Jesus Christ said to his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees they could not enter into his kingdom. Christianity is to be a holy thing. It is the high table-land that lifts itself in lofty stretches above the valley. It inspires us to live a nobler life than the world has the power to conceive.

I have noted two testimonies to this truth from widely different characters within a few days. One was the testimony of a young mechanic who had

recently strayed into a revival meeting and, hearing the message of the Saviour, was so convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit that he gave his heart to God then and there. He went home and told his wife that he had become a Christian. He immediately set up the family altar and began to ask a blessing on the food at the table. "One day," so his wife reported, "he lifted up his face from the table over which he had bowed to give thanks for his daily bread and, with tears running down his face, said: 'Wife, it has only been a week since I began to live. It is a blessed thing to be alive with God!'"

The other testimony is from Mr. Gladstone, who is regarded throughout the world as the most remarkable combination of intellectual power and moral purity now living. Talking to a company of university students recently, he made this wonderful utterance: "If you wish to lead a life that is manful, modest, truthful, active, diligent, humble, and generous, take for your motto those wonderful words of the apostle where he says, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.' Everything that is good is to be before your view, and nothing that is not good. Whatever you aspire to, aspire above all else to be Christians and to Christian perfection." In that majestic utterance we have the secret of the true and lasting greatness of Mr. Gladstone.

No great life ever comes without lofty aspirations and without strong inspirations. The highest duty of the pulpit is, not to do the thinking

for the people, but to inspire them to do high and lofty thinking for themselves; not to set before those who listen a routine prescription as to conduct, however good, but so to arouse the soul to aspire after the righteousness of Jesus Christ that a low and vulgar life shall be impossible. More young men and women are robbed of their highest possibilities through lack of noble aspiration and a practical faith in the possible grandeur of their own lives than through anything else. To dare to believe that the most saintly life that was ever lived on the earth is as possible to you as to any other; that the most sublime heroism that has ever faced danger and rejoiced in self-denial, carried burdens for the oppressed and won victory for righteousness, is possible for you; that that high and purer life upon the highlands of the soul is the atmosphere for which you were born and the natural home of your heart—to believe that, to feel that, is to enter the kingdom of God, to come into fellowship with Jesus Christ.

The great French painter, Bastien Lepage, who died not long ago, was pursued by unmerciful disaster through his youth in his efforts to study art. His mother worked in the fields to keep the sickly boy at school. At fifteen he went alone to Paris, and starved for seven years. He painted without success—but still he painted. He had just finished a picture which he hoped to send to the Salon when Paris was besieged; and he rushed with his comrades to the trenches. On the first day a shell fell into his studio and destroyed his picture, and another shell burst at his feet, wounding him. He

was carried home and lay ill and idle for two years. Then he returned to Paris and, reduced to absolute want, painted cheap fans for a living. One day a manufacturer of some patent medicine ordered a picture from him to illustrate its virtues. Lepage, who was always sincere, gave his best work to this advertisement. He painted a landscape in the April sunlight; the leaves of tender green quivered in the breeze; a group of beautiful young girls gathered around a fountain from which the elixir of youth sprang in a bubbling stream. Lepage believed there was real merit in his work at last. "Let me offer it at the Salon?" he asked his patron. The manufacturer was delighted to have him do it. "But first paint a rainbow arching over the fountain," he said, "with the name of my medicine upon it." Lepage refused. "Then I will not pay you a sou for the picture." The price of this picture meant bread for months, and the painter had long needed bread. The chance of admission to the Salon was small. He hesitated, then he silenced his hunger and carried the canvas to the Salon. It was admitted. Its great success insured Lepage a place in public recognition, and his later work a place among the greatest artists of his time. His great ambition, his undying purpose to have honor and fame rather than bread, to refuse to be satisfied with anything less than the highest success, alone made such a triumph possible. It is just such an inspiration and ambition, infinitely purified and exalted by association with Jesus Christ, which every Christian must have in order to fulfill the lofty destiny which God intends for us.

There is always a temptation to be satisfied with a mere compromise life. The devil says to us, "You are formed of such common clay that high sainthood, lofty heroism, and sublime purpose are impossible to you. There are rare souls that were made to fly and bathe their pinions, like the eagle, in the face of the sun; but you are of the earth earthy, and must keep close to the ground." All such thoughts are delusions of the enemy. Lofty spiritual possibilities are within the reach of every one of us. They are our birthright. They are guaranteed to us in the charter of our creation. Every man or woman that has ever tried to do large things has been tempted to give up and be satisfied with something less, and the yielding to or refusing that temptation has meant destiny, high or low.

When Nehemiah undertook to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and had marvelously inspired the hearts of the people, so infusing his own faith and earnestness into them that the whole city was at work side by side, in relays, to replace the broken walls; his enemies, when they could not scare him out of his purpose or turn him from it by ridicule, sent him a soft, gentle, insidious sort of a letter in which they said, "Let us go down to the plains of Ono and have a council." But grand Nehemiah sent back word, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." And you see the result of that wise decision in the wonderful result which Nehemiah was able to accomplish. The Rev. Frank Hyatt Smith says that, in an age when shingles rot, and shoes are made of paper soles,

and ground peas become ground coffee, and cotton parades as wool, and paint is thinner than water, and all sorts of public institutions need the overhauling of investigating committees, it is very refreshing to read of a man who restored an immense wall solidly and systematically, scorned assistance from local croakers, compelled each mason to do his own, and not his neighbor's, work, gave every laborer a sword and a trowel, fed a hundred and fifty at his table each day, thought more of public duty than of private comfort, did away with financial pawnbrokers, abolished slavery without blood, refused any salary as governor, compiled an accurate census of the people, instituted a genuine worship and reading of the law, ordained a revival without evangelists, provided an equitable system of representation, separated the people on the basis of character, forbade Sunday labor, interdicted such marriages as Solomon sanctioned, and marvelously governed as many people as the whole State of New York contains without the aid of either a "boss" or a Tammany Hall to give him instructions. All that was accomplished by a man who was brave enough, when he had a noble conception of duty, to go ahead and do it and refuse absolutely to come down to any compromise on the plains of Ono.

It is such a courage as that which, above all things else, we need to exalt and glorify our daily lives. A courage which fears no one but God, and can look the devil in the face with an unblanched cheek. Sustained by such a courage we may sing, with Amy Seville Wolff:

“ I fear no more the coming years,
 What they may bring.
Days may be sunless, night bereft of stars ;
Mayhap the brightest blossoms of the spring
 Shall first be bound with winter’s icy bars.
But still beyond the cloud is always light,
The stars are in the sky all night,
And deepest snows are they which hide the bright,
 Green heart of spring.

“ Not all of life is dreamed away
 In summer skies.
Time holds a loss, a loneliness for me ;
But hope is strong, and faith dare not be weak,
 And love abides, the greatest of the three.
Enough if sweet to-morrow will repay
The disappointment of to-day.
Light follows dark ; sun, rain ; seas ebb away
 Again to rise.

“ And if the rugged road of life
 Doth wind around
The mountain side, where heavy clouds hang low,
And, as I climb, the pilgrim staff be changed
 Into a cross, still onward would I go !
The peaks of only highest mountains rise
Above the clouds to bluest skies,
And round the heaviest cross is hung the prize,
 The brightest crown.”

We have suggested to us in this Scripture picture which we are studying the precious rewards of such a lofty and elevated life. The whole paragraph is well worth quoting : “ The Lord’s portion is his people ; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness ; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an

eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." What a graphic picture it is! As the bee hunter, climbing up into the lofty places, finds hidden away in the caves of the rocks the wild bees storing up their honey, and in lofty and almost inaccessible places finds the sweetest honey culled from the mountain flowers, so he who climbs aloft in his ambition and purpose to know the secret of God, to live in highest associations, and to find the spiritual treasures of the highlands, shall find in those lofty and rocky places the sweetest spiritual honey, the richest and noblest food for his soul. The rock of trial and hardship shall become the rock of salvation.

Dr. Charles G. Ames very beautifully says that there is a fountain of heart's-ease in the brave acceptance of whatever sorrows and trials fall to our lot. When Jesus stands fronting the cross he says, with something of the joy which was the undercurrent of that life which was so "acquainted with grief," "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" There is an inspiration that comes to the climber, the one whose face is turned toward the mountain top. To aspire to live the noblest possible life has a courage in it all its own. To such a soul burdens become wings. But if one is sulky or cowardly, or if he whimpers and pities

himself, or envies other people who seem to have no loads to carry, he will have plenty of heartache, and backache too. There are a great many worse things in the world than burden-bearing, and the people who shirk the tasks which properly belong to them miss the sweetest honey that heaven has to bestow. Humboldt said, "It is quite possible to suffer many and great griefs, and yet not to feel thoroughly unhappy in consequence, but rather to find our moral and intellectual nature so purified and exalted thereby that we would not change this feeling for any other." That was certainly the experience out of which the apostle spoke when he said, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Certainly it is true that people who live in the easy-going valleys, and who never struggle to climb toward the mountain heights, and who seek only to have their own ease and luxury, are never the ones to make the world's noble history or find the hidden honey which is to feed the world's sorrows and assuage its griefs. I would to God we might be aroused to break every vulgar chain which cramps and fetters us and holds us to a life which is beneath us, and to rise up, climbing ever toward the heights, to possess the treasures of the highlands which are our rightful inheritance!

Paul exultantly exclaims in his first letter to the Corinthians: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Dr.

Brooke Herford, of London, commenting on this, says that there is a wholesome exultation about these words when we consider from whom they came and to whom they were addressed. We do not like to hear a rich man boasting of his wealth; but when a poor man tells us how rich he feels, that seems wholesome and it gives us a glimpse into the deeper fact of what "being well-off" really is. It is not what you can carry in your hand or pocket or title deeds that you make really yours; but it is what you take into your mind and heart, what you know, and what you love. That which you carry in your fingers you can carry only a little way; and then the fingers loosen, your grasp relaxes, and it all slips from you. But that of God's great world which you gather into the mind and heart does not slip away; that becomes part of your very self and goes with you into the immortal life beyond. This is true about everything that we try to possess.

Shakespeare's plays, Emerson's essays, or Tennyson's poems do not become yours by your owning handsome copies of them, but by reading and reading again and again until you know them and love them. Beethoven and Mendelssohn and Mozart belong to those who love and understand them. John Ruskin is so keenly alive to the truth that only knowledge and love can take possession of the highest treasures, that he pleads it is wrong in works of art to claim any private property or ownership. The beauty, the great thoughts, that which gives the marble or canvas its value—no man can buy that for money; it can only come by knowing and loving, by looking on the beauty until its lines grow

into the mind, by entering into its spirit and possessing it by the affections of the heart.

These truths need to be greatly emphasized in this rushing, sordid life, the currents of which whirl about us and so often threaten to engulf us. We need to have it said again and again, with increasing emphasis, that it is not what we carry in our pockets which makes us most truly rich, even though it be gold or diamonds. The open eye to see the beauty that is in earth's poorest place; the thoughtful mind to watch the world's life and change and growth working together; the large heart to look on all human life about us with tender, loving sympathy, feeling the joys and sorrows of every brother and sister of our humanity—these things are what make men and women rich and strong and powerful! If such is your conception of life and such the sublime ambition of your soul, then I am able to say with Paul, as I look you in the face, "All things are yours"—sunshine and storm; the flowers, the white robes of snow, the innumerable stars, the solemn mountain heights, the vast domain of history, the lofty ideals of art and music and poetry, the treasures of human life surrounding us, all good and wise and great heroes and saints, earth's noblest uses, heaven's most glorious hopes, things present, things to come—yes, all are yours; "and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." So wrote Paul to his audience, and so may I speak to mine. All the good things of the universe gather about God. All that is most earnest and noble and inspiring in our human life leads us upward to the great white throne. The honey which the struggling climber

finds in the cleft rocks of earth is only the sweeter because it is a foretaste and a pledge of still more blessed and precious joys above.

I set before you this glorious inheritance, and seek by every effort within my power to inspire you to enter in and possess it.

“ Two men toiled side by side from sun to sun,
And both were poor ;
Both sat with children, when the day was done,
About their door.

“ One saw the beautiful in crimson cloud
And shining moon ;
The other, with his head in sadness bowed,
Made night of noon.

“ One loved each tree and flower and singing bird
On mount or plain ;
No music in the soul of one was stirred
By leaf or rain.

“ One saw the good in every fellow-man
And hoped the best ;
The other marveled at his Master's plan,
And doubt confessed.

“ One having heaven above and heaven below,
Was satisfied ;
The other, discontented, lived in woe,
And hopeless died.”

I call you to the higher, the nobler, life, the life which is possible to you and, therefore, your duty. As Phillips Brooks grandly says, live such a life that if every life was like yours this earth would be God's paradise.

IV.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

“The power of an endless life.”—Heb. vii, 16.

EASTER comes to us at the season of the year when all nature is illustrating before our admiring eyes its great truth. “The power of an endless life” is throbbing to-day in the black stems of the naked trees along our streets and blushing into promise in now and then a swollen bud; it is tingling with encouragement in the hidden, buried roots of many a tiny plant; it is swelling to the bursting of hope in many a bulb covered all the winter time with the black earth. And out of the decay of last year’s foliage the new adventurer is springing up to bear testimony to “the power of an endless life.” As another has said, the first grass blades on the graves of our dead wave in the chill April wind with a gracious suggestion of immortality. All that has ever been said about the victory over death is not so convincing as one blue-eyed violet shining out of its heart-shaped leaves. The softened sky, the kindlier sun, the whole teeming earth, full of tender brooding, like a mother’s heart, become to us a gigantic, but beautiful, symbol of an endless life. Surely we cannot help but believe in a time like this that God has as much care for the top of his

creation—for the children made in his own likeness and image, to whom he has given the power to reason, to worship, to love—as he shows for the pussy willows and the peony bulbs. I believe, with Dr. Barrows, that “God is not so poor a house-keeper as to let the best perish and the poorest live. He has made his world like a vast electric battery, to discharge into our souls faith in the hereafter—the renewed life.”

Not only the roots and bulbs and swelling buds speak to us of a life forever, sustained and planned by an invisible power which is not only wise but kind, but the birds that come to us from the South, some staying with us, like the bluebird and the robin, but others tarrying with us only for a day or shooting by us in the twilight, like the wild geese and ducks seeking the far North—all these speak to us of the endless life which is at once the care and the inspiration and the promise of our immortality. Some of you will recall William Cullen Bryant’s poem of “The Water Fowl.” It is full of the tenderest teaching of our theme :

“Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ?

“Vainly the fowler’s eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

“Seek’st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side ?

“ There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

“ All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

“ And soon that toil shall end ;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

“ Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

“ He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.”

The God who has given instinct to the water-fowl, to guide it through the trackless skies from Florida to Labrador, bringing it at last safely to its summer home and rest, may be trusted to care for the human life upon which he has so richly poured the tenderness of his love :

“ He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.”

The power of an endless life is illustrated in the nobility of purpose, the power of self-denial, the breadth and elevation of soul which come to those

who are inspired by it. It has been a common thing in our time to have pointed out to us, with a sneer of triumph, that many people who are not within the church, and who make no confession of faith in the resurrected Christ, are yet, in many ways, models of noble living, and have hearts broad and generous and, sometimes, abounding in philanthropic spirit. Those making these statements fail to appreciate the fact that such people, while they do not confess it and, indeed, in many cases are doubtless unconscious of it, yet owe all that is noblest and grandest in their character to the inspiration of the hope of immortality which was born into the world in its full glory in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Right Honorable Arthur James Balfour, a distinguished member of the English House of Commons, in his recent book written in defense of Christianity, illustrates by a very graphic picture the debt which non-Christians owe to the atmosphere which has been created by the divine life of Christianity in the world. He says that biologists tell us of parasites which live, and can live only, within the bodies of animals more highly organized than themselves. For them their luckless host has to find food, to digest it, and to convert it into nourishment which they can consume without exertion and assimilate without difficulty. Their structure is of the simplest kind. Their host sees for them, so they need no eyes; he hears for them, so they need no ears; he works for them, so they need but feeble muscles and an undeveloped nervous system. But, says the brilliant writer, are we to conclude

from this that for the animal kingdom eyes and ears, powerful limbs and complex nerves, are superfluities? They are superfluities for the parasites only because they have first been necessities for the host ; and if the host perishes the parasites will perish also. So it is true that there are multitudes of people to-day who are living lives of morality and public spirit and are valuable citizens to the community, but who sneer at church creeds and have a sort of lofty contempt for clearly defined Christian faith, whose ethical and spiritual life, such as it is, has all been drawn from the very institutions which they deride. Everything that is noble and grand in their thoughts, in their emotions, in their character, they owe to the spiritual climate created by the Sun of righteousness, which has shone on the world through the Bible and the church and the testimony of faithful and devoted souls.

The power of an endless life is illustrated in the courage which comes to those who are inspired by it. It has been said many times that the sublimest proof of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the signal transformation it wrought in the character of the disciples. They had been a timid, fearful, unreliable group of men before the resurrection ; but afterward their devotion became the marvel of the age, and not a single one failed to seal his fidelity with his death. In the light of the resurrection of their Master they lost their fear of death. Death was henceforth an overthrown enemy. The shadows might be dark at the entrance on the earthly side, but it issued into glory beyond. They believed, as Whittier so long after sung,

“ That Life is ever Lord of death,
And Love can never lose its own ”—

“ That death seems but a covered way,
Which opens into light.”

And each of them realized in himself a personality which fulfilled Browning's noble lines,

“ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better.
Sleep to wake.”

It is impossible that one should be truly inspired with the hope of immortality and not gain courage by it. It is impossible to realize that there is throbbing in our veins an endless life, that we are to have all eternity in which to develop the highest nature and fulfill the holiest purposes, without being in some true and high sense freed from the slavery of low and vulgar things. The chains of worldliness hang loosely about him who lives in the consciousness that he is pluming his wings for an everlasting flight.

There ought to be such a revival of courage in our own hearts in the presence of our great Easter truth that it shall make us brave to attack any difficulty that stands in our way. As common men come to be heroes on the battlefield, where the inspiration to heroism is on every side and victory is breathed on the air, so on this Easter day, when we stand in the presence of the victory of life over death, we ought to gain courage to attack every evil habit or vicious appetite or besetting sin and,

in the strength and power of an endless life, trample it under foot forever. As Phillips Brooks once said: "This is a day for strong and cheerful resolutions, because it is a day when, with the spiritual world open before us, we can all catch sight of the destiny of duty—of how some time or other every good habit is to conquer and every good deed wear its crown. Come, take that task of yours, over which you have been hesitating before, and shirking and walking around and around, and on this Easter day lift it up and do it. It is your duty. That which sounds hard and cold on other days ought to sound warm and inspiring to-day. For to-day we can see that duty is worth while. Duty is the one thing on earth that is so vital that it can go through death and come to glory. Duty is the one seed that has such life in it that it can lie as long as God wills in the mummy hand of death, and yet be ready any moment to start into new growth in the new soil where he shall set it. So let us all consecrate our Easter day by resolutely taking up some new duty which we know we ought to do. We bind ourselves so by a new chain to eternity, to the eternity of Him who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at God's right hand."

On such a day as this one ought to have courage enough to do that hardest thing—go on living a life of patient waiting, seeing but little result, conscious of many hindrances, of many chains of circumstance which bind and limit the daily action into narrow grooves. We ought to have courage to go on doing our duty in the simplest things and in

the commonest ways with a noble spirit, knowing that God shall bring good and blessing out of it all and make that which seems very little to us of larger and wider benefaction than we can dream. I do not doubt there are many quiet, patient souls in this congregation who feel bound to a very narrow round of duty. You think, when you come to add up the service which you are able to give to Christ and to humanity, that the total seems very small. Easter morning ought to mean much to you; for God has so ordered the world that its sweetest fragrance is breathed from smallest flowers, and its most precious stones are those which are the concentrated result of hidden and unseen influences. Some one sings a song which I wish to repeat for the benefit of any who have longed for a wider sphere, but whom God's providence has chained to quiet and hidden service. It is the song of "A Rose Jar:"

" I remember in my childhood, in a quaint, old-fashioned room,
A rose jar, flushed with crimson, like the colors of the dawn;
It stood upon a little shelf, filled full to odorous brim
With roses that had blossomed in the summers past and
gone.

" O, what a charm swept o'er me when, sometimes, sitting there,
I held the jar in careful hands and breathed its fragrant
scent;
I heard the bees go humming, and I felt the breezes blow,
I saw the river flowing where the drooping willow bent.

" Sweet friend, you say the roses that bloomed for you are dead,
You only have the withered leaves to hold within your heart;
The summer's warmth has gone, and the golden sunshine fled,
And the snows of cruel winter their blasting chill impart.

“ I only know that, now and then, your heart has stood ajar,
 And thoughts, like perfume sweet and rare, across my soul
 have swept ;
 Dear thoughts—like summer blossoms, swift thoughts—like
 eager birds,
 Shy thoughts—like blue-eyed violets, where summer show-
 ers have wept.

“ Then keep the withered rose leaves, preserve them in your
 heart ;
 Their perfume blesses other lives with thoughts of summer
 hours.
 And friend, dear friend, though winter’s snow lies white and
 chill to-day,
 Yet, after winter comes the May, and springtime brings the
 flowers.”

The power of an endless life is shown more tenderly and beautifully than anywhere else in the comfort which it brings to sorrowing hearts and the hope which it inspires within us of a precious reunion with our loved ones. I could not keep back the tears this week when I opened the *Michigan Christian Advocate* and saw, in the first lines of the editorial page, the cry of the soul of the editor, whose only child was taken away by death during the past month. These were the words: “ Never before was our Easter hope brighter or more comforting. Never before had we greater reason to rejoice in the doctrine of a resurrection, nor to thank God for the evidences that it is true. The dead shall live again. We shall see them. We shall be with them. Our reunion shall be eternal.” Going on to speak about his own personal loss, he says, “ We wept for him. We are weeping still.

" ' Yet 'tis sweet balm to our despair,
 Fond, fairest boy,
 That heaven is God's, and thou art there
 With him in joy ;
 There past are death and all its woes ;
 There beauty's stream forever flows ;
 And pleasure's day no sunset knows."

" We think of him," says the fond father, " as now with his brother, who died sixteen years before him. Surely the tender Shepherd has brought them together. They are happier than we could make them, and we shall be happier when restored to them than we ever could have been had they not been given to us. Of each of them we can say,

" ' He lives. In all the past
 He lives ; nor, to the last,
 Of seeing him again will I despair ;
 In dreams I see him now,
 And on his angel brow
 I see it written, " Thou shalt meet me there ! " ' "

I am sure that to every one of us this morning this Easter day is not without some message of comfort and hope. To some of us there are groups of loved ones who stand about us this day, and we hold communion and fellowship with them again as we do not on other days. Some who went home long ago come back and look in our faces with loving eyes at Easter time ; and some there are who only last Easter time were with us, and who are having their first Easter feast in heaven. How near they seem to us to-day ! Bless God, it is not all seeming—they *are* near to us.

“ O home land ! O home land !
 The veil is very thin
 That stretches thy dear meadows
 And this cold world between ;
 A breath aside may blow it,
 A heart throb burst it through,
 And bring in one glad moment
 Thy happy lands to view.

“ O home land ! O home land !
 One—Chief of all thy band,
 One—altogether lovely,
 One—Lord of all the land,
 Stands, eager, at the gateway ;
 The Bridegroom waits his bride ;
 And, resting on his bosom,
 I shall be satisfied.”

V.

THE VITAL ATMOSPHERE OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. ii, 5.

IT is the supreme glory of our Christianity that it demands of us our best. It is never satisfied with any low standard. It sets before us the loftiest ideal that the human mind can conceive of, and demands that our eyes shall be fixed upon that mark as “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I once heard Phillips Brooks deliver a sermon, which I think has never been printed, on Christ’s words to the young ruler as they are recorded in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew’s gospel, “Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” The theme was perfection. The great preacher said that Jesus had answered the young man’s question in an ordinary way and would have let him go. But this young man had great aspirations. He wanted to be better than the average. So Jesus turns to him and says, “If thou wilt be perfect—that is another matter altogether,” and marks out the way. It was like some great, strong man who sets out to climb a lofty eminence with a group of eager boys. They ascend to the

first good view, and most of them are satisfied. But in the eyes of one or two he sees the gleaming of a nobler light, and they exclaim, "We must go higher; lead us onward, take us to yon snow-white summit amid the clouds!" And the leader says, "Very well. If that is what you mean you must throw off your burdens and leave behind all useless luggage and come and follow me." Christ's whole life was a summons to manhood and womanhood to climb upward to perfection. This upward climbing brings us face to face with God. The reason some people do not believe in God is not because they are so broad and liberal and great, but because their lives are so little, so narrow and earthly, that they seem to have no need of God. When we broaden our lives and undertake some noble work worthy for men and women to do we come face to face with God and our great need of him.

I think no one can study the life of Jesus Christ without being impressed with the fact that it is not the individual miracles which he wrought and the great things which he did which have moved the heart of mankind, so much as the great spirit in which he did everything. You never feel in studying the life of Jesus that on any occasion he is summoning all his powers to meet some great emergency. All life was great to him. The commonest wayside conversation brought out clearly his divine insight, his wealth of resources, and the gentle sweetness of his nature. All this revealed the spiritual atmosphere in which he lived. It is this vital atmosphere of a Christian life which it is important for us to attain—not to be waiting for great opportuni-

ties to accomplish great deeds, but to live always in the spirit of Christ, so that everyday experiences shall be clothed upon from heaven.

The Christian spirit ought to attune us to everyday life in the same way the poetic spirit attuned the soul of Whittier, the Quaker poet, to the sights and sounds and harmonies of nature. Of him it was aptly said that while he was waging war with giant wrongs he "heard the fitful music still, of winds that out of dreamland blew :"

" The common air was thick with dreams ;
 He told them to the toiling crowd ;
 Such music as the woods and streams
 Sang in his ear, he sang aloud ;
 In still, shut bays, on windy capes,
 He heard the call of beckoning shapes ;
 And as the gray old shadows prompted him,
 To homely molds of rhyme he shaped their legends grim."

All nature was full of romance and poetry to him. He clung to the things of nature almost as he did to human friends. Once he said : " I am very thankful that I can almost forget age and infirmity in the contemplation of these lovely dawns and sunsets and these still, warm, pictureful noons. Shall we have them, or their like, in the new life? If not, I, for one, must miss them sadly. But His will be done." Again, in a June letter of the year he died : " It seems to me the world was never so beautiful as now, when I am about to leave it. But the future life will more than compensate." The result of this harmony of soul between the poet and nature, this poetic coloring of insight, is seen in a large number of his poems, such as " The Last Walk in Autumn,"

“The Barefoot Boy,” “Telling the Bees,” “The Tent on the Beach,” “Maud Muller,” “Snow-Bound,” and many others, which are full of beauty and which we have long since taken into our hearts. The thought which above all else I wish to impress upon you from our study is that, in a still higher and holier way, it is possible for us so to live in the spirit of Christ that our everyday life shall be glorified by it, and what are only hard, barren experiences to the dull eyes of worldlings shall to more clear spiritual insight unfold visions of beauty and blessing.

Let us study for a little some of the characteristics of the Christian atmosphere. First of all, it is a joyous, hopeful spirit. Paul, who certainly had his share of the buffetings and struggles of the Christian life, found it to be a life of abounding joy and ever buoyant hope. Farther on in this same letter he exclaims: “If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.” Christianity is the joy-bringer to the world. The evening before his sudden death in Samoa Robert Louis Stevenson, the brilliant poet-novelist, read aloud to his family a prayer that he had composed, which closes with this petition: “Go with each of us to rest. If any wake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns to us, our Sun and Comforter, call us with morning faces and with morning hearts, eager to labor, eager to be happy if happiness shall be our portion, and, if the day be marked to sorrow, strong to endure it.” The London *Spectator* declares that this is more impressive than anything else which that man of genius

produced. The desire that God would make him and his "eager to be happy," and the recognition of the fact that strength and patience in trouble have intimate connection with our capacity for joy, were born of a genuine spiritual insight.

Christianity is a religion of hope. No man can despair of the human race who suns himself in the sublime optimism of Jesus Christ. Every such a one can sing with Zangwill:

"For all men hope, despair of none!
Foul vapors flee the golden sun;
The darkest puddle draws on high
To paint the sky with harmony:
So love shall lift to higher goals
The lowest lives, the darkest souls.
Rejoice we, then, of one thing sure—
We pass, but deeds of love endure."

There are enough Christians in the world to speedily transform it if we all lived in that atmosphere of faith and hope which characterized Jesus Christ. General Booth, of the Salvation Army, has proved by his farming experiment at Hadleigh, near London, that what seemed to be worthless and despairing tramps have, under the magical inspiration of Christian hope, become industrious and honest. Of the two hundred first sent out from the slums of London, only forty failed; that is, four fifths became self-supporting citizens. When he undertook the work the superintendent of police in the neighborhood and the governor of Dartmoor Convict Prison both warned him that he would have grave difficulties with so many men, some of whom were ticket of leave men; but as a matter of fact there

has been no difficulty whatever. Christian kindness and firmness have breathed an atmosphere of joyous hope into these weary hearts, triumphed over their despair, and lifted them into a new life.

This spirit of the Christ is a gentle spirit, brotherly and childlike. The gentleness of Jesus Christ is a characteristic which distinguishes him, perhaps as much as does his purity of character, from other men who have been mighty forces in the world's history. And the individual Christian among us to-day may be sure that there is no grace of character which he can cultivate that will be of more impressive force for good than that of gentleness. Perhaps there is no place where this grace will be more effective in bringing about the kingdom of God on earth than in our homes. As one has well said, if there is any place on earth where we should be uniformly at our best behavior, that place is home. There we find the best market for our most complete stock of all "the things which make for peace;" and we ought to keep a full line of that class of goods, and display and serve them to the best possible effect. Our homes are where we really live and where we can least afford to impose or to be imposed upon. We may resort to our philosophy and make the best of bad bargains in other directions and departments, but for home failure there can be no compensations. It is the worst species of heart failure. There are some people who put on their best manners, as they do their best clothes, when they go visiting; but you never would know them if you could see them in undress uniform at home. Many people who are very impressive abroad are

very oppressive at home. Henry Ward Beecher used to say: "Some men have the same conception of home that a certain domestic animal has of its pen. It is the place to eat and sleep and grunt in." And I am afraid he might have said just as truthfully that some women use the home as the place for target practice, in the way of scolding and fretting. Fretting is a sort of female profanity. I have good authority for that, for John Wesley used to say that he "would as soon swear as fret and worry." I believe the good old man was right. Vulgar and wicked as profanity is, I doubt if it does as much harm as constant fretfulness and nagging on the part of men and women in home life. The gentle spirit of the Christ which restrains the hot temper, cleanses away the selfishness, leading us to bear and forbear, putting ourselves in our brother's place, looking not mostly on our own things, but on the things of others—that spirit it is which makes the home like the heaven of which it is the promise and the foretaste.

The Christian spirit is the child's spirit, which is always ignorant of caste and class and bubbling over with the gentleness and kindness which is its inheritance. Here is a little incident which occurred the other day and was related in one of our Brooklyn papers. A car was crossing the city when a very young mother, with her little two-year-old baby, got into it. The little girl was just beginning to talk. She looked long and earnestly at an old woman, dirty, scowling, and repulsive, on the other side of the car. The child looked so earnestly at the old woman that the mother thought that, perhaps, that

was the reason why the old woman was scowling, and she tried to attract the little girl's attention; but it was useless. The big, blue eyes were not removed from the face of the old woman. At last the little girl became so restless that the mother stood her on her feet by her knee, when the child, with a quick step and outstretched arms, threw herself against the scowling old woman and said, in her sweet baby tones, "I dot dranma home; me loves dranmas." The old woman was so startled at this unexpected display of affection and interest that her eyes filled with tears, and, putting one hand on the child's shoulder, she pushed her gently from her knee and said, "I am not fit fer yez to touch, child, ye're so sweet and pretty." But the baby, with that clear look of innocence that is so startling in some children, pushed away the detaining hand and again leaned heavily against the old woman. This time, putting her elbow on the old woman's knee and her chin on her hand, she gazed with the most bewitching smile into the old woman's face, murmuring again, "I loves dranmas." The tears overflowed and trickled down the cheeks of the old woman, and there was not a dry eye in the car. The little mother, with rare wisdom, let the angel of mercy alone, and there the child stood, smiling her friendliness into the face of the woman to whom gentleness and kindness were evidently so great strangers. If we shall cultivate this precious grace of the spirit, what would otherwise be the hard experiences of life will become tools in the hand of the great Sculptor to fashion us into the divine image. Bessie Chandler sings of such a life story :

“ Scant beauty Nature gave her ; in disguise
Rugged and harsh she bade her go about
With face unlovely, save the dark, sad eyes,
From which her fearless soul looked bravely out.

“ But Life took up the chisel, used her face
Roughly, with many blows, as sculptors use a block ;
It wrought a little while, and, lo, a grace
Fell, as a sunbeam falls upon a rock.

“ Across her soul a heavy sorrow swept,
As tidal waves sweep sometimes o’er the land,
Leaving her face, when back it ebbed and crept,
Tranquil and purified, like tide-washed sand.

“ And of her face her gentleness grew part,
And all her holy thoughts left there their trace ;
A great love found its way within her heart—
Its root was there, its blossom in her face.

“ So when Death came to set the sweet soul free
From the poor body that was never fair,
We watched her face, and marveled much to see
How Life had carved for Death an angel there.”

The Christian spirit is a triumphant spirit. The true Christian ought to live in the spirit of Paul when he exclaims, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Do you remember the story of Amaziah, the King of Judah, which is related to us in the second Book of Chronicles? Amaziah had entered into a wicked league with idolaters. From principles of worldly policy he had entered into an unholy alliance with the enemies of God. Then the prophet came to him with this message: “O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel.” Amaziah was in great perplexity what to do. He had already paid out of

his treasury a large sum of money for this promised help, and now if he broke the compact he would lose it all. But the prophet said to him: "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." Amaziah at last yielded to the voice of warning and promise, sent his idolatrous allies away, and obtained a signal victory as the result. Christian friends, let us learn this significant lesson. We fail of many a victory because our allies are of such a character that God cannot bless them. The world, the flesh, and the devil may promise much in comfort and pleasure; but let us listen to the voice of God's prophet, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." We are never so strong as when, free from all entangling alliances and all compromises with the world, we are living in genuine loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it is we are able to claim the promise that we shall be "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

If you ask me how, above all else, you may come to breathe this vital atmosphere, I answer, Make much of the Bible and much of prayer. An impatient man will find no better companion for quiet conversations than Job. The man who is tempted to take the bit between his teeth and rule or ruin will do well to get intimately acquainted with Moses. He whose knees are weak and who finds it hard to muster up his courage to the level of his convictions will be greatly benefited by a desert journey with Elijah. The man who is cast down and always looking on the dark side of things will be cheered and improved if he take some lessons on the harp of thanksgiving with David for a teacher. The

brother who is trying to carry water on both shoulders can have no better diet than to eat pulse awhile with Daniel. If your love for the Saviour is getting cold spend a few evenings around those warm heart-fires in St. John's gospel. If your fears are getting the better of your faith take a sea voyage with Paul. If you are becoming worldly, until the things of the earth seem noisily near and the unseen and spiritual verities dim and vague, go climb up with John in the Book of Revelation, up to some hilltop in the isle of Patmos, until you catch a glimpse of "the city of God." If you thus live in fellowship with these great souls you will come to know that the very best things that can come to any child of God are included in your inheritance.

As Phillips Brooks so grandly says, when the spring comes the oak tree, with its thousands upon thousands of leaves, blossoms all over. The great heart of the tree remembers every remotest tip of every farthest branch, and sends to each the message and the power of new life. And yet we do not think of the heart of the oak tree as if it were burdened with such multitudinous remembrance. It is simply the thrill of the common life translated into these million forms. Somewhat in that way we may think of God's remembrance of his million children. The patient sufferer, the toilsome worker, are far-off leaves on the great tree of his life—far-off, and yet as near to the beating of his heart as any leaf on all the tree. He remembers them as truly as the heart remembers the finger tips to which it sends the blood. I pray God that out of all this reviving nature about us you may catch this gospel of hope

and inspiration! You may be sure, if any doubt or fear or sin in your heart is hindering the free flow of divine life in your soul, that neither doubt nor sin has separated you from his tender seeking, that with divine tenderness he is waiting and seeking to break down your doubt, to turn you away from your sin, and that whenever the path is open the pulsing lifeblood of heaven will fill your soul with a glow of the divine nature. I call you to your high and noble inheritance!

VI.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE SOUL.

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”—John xiv, 26.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”—Gal. v, 22, 23.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”—John xiv, 2.

THESE three scriptures are three golden links in a chain which reaches through the childhood of the soul up to its everlasting triumph, from the beginning of school time to the crowning day on high. The first, as I have given them to you, was spoken by Jesus to comfort his disciples on his going away from them. They were naturally greatly perplexed about their future. No doubt they all felt, as Peter expressed it, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?” But the Saviour opens up to them a life of preparation for a high and lofty destiny. The Comforter, which he declares to be the Holy Ghost, will come to them and will be, not only a Comforter, but a Teacher—“He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Then, if we turn a leaf in history and listen to Paul’s letter to the Galatians, where, as one of the tutors in the school of Christ, he is explaining to them the beneficent results of the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we find out

more clearly what this school life is to be. The fruit of this teaching, Paul says, is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And the reason for this teaching is that the soul is being fitted for a special destiny, which is set forth in the wonderful words of Jesus, "In my Father's house are many mansions," and in the further declaration, the explicitness of which has comforted so many trembling hearts, "I go to prepare a place for you."

Surely no one can fail to see into what a noble and high atmosphere such a conception lifts our human lives. It takes us up out of the dust and the dirt of a mere animal struggle and scramble for existence. All life is a school, and everything depends upon the school we choose—whether we choose the school of the flesh or the school of the Spirit; for our destiny is dictated by character, and our characters are formed by the principles inculcated in our life schools. We can see this illustrated every day. Here are two young men who grow up in the country side by side, on neighboring farms. They are warm friends through all their boyhood. But when they come to get out into the world they take different courses. One becomes a sincere Christian, yields his life to be governed by high ambitions, and works with honest purpose toward noble ends; the other becomes a gambler and a swindler. They may live together in the same city. There has been no quarrel between these two men, no outer wall has been built between them, and yet they are more completely separated than if the Atlantic Ocean rolled between them. They have both

grown and developed, but every step they have taken has separated them from each other. Without any ill feeling or special aim to exclude each other, they go separate ways. Each has his own circle of friends, his own school of influences, and these circles and schools never mingle. Like magnetized steel filings, they associate and separate by laws of their own, which do not depend for existence upon any social edict, but upon the very foundation stones of the universe, that can never be overturned. Such illustrations teach us that it is not the place where men dwell that unites or separates them, but the spirit which dwells in them. Oliver Twist, though thrown among thieves, retained his purity and was not a thief. Abdiel, in Milton's vision of the rebel angels, was not a rebel, but

“ faithful found,

Among the faithless, faithful only he.”

The Lord is drawing to himself all who, in the school time of life, are learning his spirit and are coming to have his likeness. If we do not have fellowship with Christ here it would be impossible for us to have any peace with him in heaven. Heaven would be a very poor place indeed if it were not something more than a city with golden streets, with living streams of water running through it, and trees of life waving on their shores. Many a man has had practically all these in the world and has committed suicide to try to escape the remorse of his conscience. No, indeed. Heaven is no mere land of healthful skies and wholesome atmosphere, where

“ Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.”

What could these do to satisfy a man of restless, unholy ambition or to give peace to one who all his life has been fostering in his soul an insatiate greed for an unbridled passion?

The scriptures we are studying make it very clear that it is idle to talk about going to heaven unless, during this childhood of the soul which we are passing through here on earth, we are being prepared and fitted to enjoy the conditions of the heavenly life. God prepares everything for its place. He adjusts the air to meet the necessities of the wing of the bird. He fits a bee to gather honey and prepares certain flowers to produce it; and this great law is true throughout all the universe. Man, who occupies the highest place in God's creation—the one, indeed, for whom all birds and all atmospheres and all bees and all the honey of life were created—is not an exception to this beneficent rule. Here in this world, in this time of the soul's childhood, God is preparing a people for a heaven of immortal glory which is being prepared to receive them.

Over in Scotland, when the North Bridge of Edinburgh was widened some years ago, they found in the arched vaults under the roadway the most wonderful caves of snow-white stalactites. The rain, percolating through the roof, carried with it the lime with which the stones were cemented, and by a slow and silent process, carried on for many years, transformed the gloomy vaults into a fairy scene. Who would have suspected that under the common roadway, under the tread of the busy feet of toil and of the hurrying world, such a wonderful transformation was going on? And who would suppose that in

the midst of this common, everyday life of ours the walls of an eternal city were growing up, without noise or ax or hammer, our visible life being merely the scaffolding of it; that out of the common materials of our hard, earthly experience there were being formed gates of pearl through which we shall enter into the heavenly city? Here and now, if at all, these walls and gates must for us be formed.

But we have marked out for us, in these scriptures, certain lines of education in which we are to be perfected, under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit. The first is love; and under that might be grouped, for convenience, gentleness, meekness, and long-suffering, as under the term "mathematics" we might group arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. The first law of Christian life is love, and the man who learns that well will know how to be meek and gentle and long-suffering.

Love is appreciation. It sees all that is good in the object of affection and rejoices in it and makes much of it. See how this is manifested by the Saviour in this fourteenth chapter of John. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" and then he adds, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Was there ever a more delicate and beautiful touch of tender appreciation of the feelings of others than that? He would not have let them go on hoping and wishing and longing for an immortal fellowship with him if it were not possible. And then he says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." How full of the comfort of love that is! How full of encouragement! He assures their

poor, timid hearts that the loneliness is not going to be all on their side when he goes away from them, but that heaven itself will lack them, and that he will look forward with loving joy to the graduation day when he shall come to the dark dungeon, or the gibbet, or the cross, where their earthly careers shall close, and with angelic retinue bring them home in glorious triumph to the Father's house.

How we all need this blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we may love each other more, and thus nerve each other day by day to do life's duties! There is no such sweetener of daily toil as loving appreciativeness. There is no grace of the spirit so beautiful in the home, and none that so takes away all that is harsh and galling about business associations. Every one of us knows by experience the effect, even upon our physical strength, of words of appreciation and encouragement. We never get tired telling the story of the fireman who was attempting to scale a perilous ladder in order to save a human life jeopardized in a burning building. He seemed to waver and be almost ready to abandon his attempt, when some one in the crowd below cried, "Cheer him." The crowd caught up the suggestion and sent up cheer after cheer, which so reinvigorated the almost exhausted man that he redoubled his efforts and energy, and the threatened life was saved. God only knows how many there are who fail of doing lofty and noble deeds for the lack of the good cheer of loving appreciation.

Love will make us meek, so that we shall be able to give and take in our church work, not always stubbornly thinking our way must be the right way

and our brother's way wrong. The lack of meekness on the part of Christian people is a great hindrance to the church. A Scotch Presbyterian minister tells the story that on one occasion he happened to visit a resident of his parish and asked what church he was in the habit of attending. The man answered that he had belonged to a certain congregation, but that he and others could not assent to certain views which were accepted by the majority, and they had, therefore, formed a secession.

“Then you worship with those friends?”

“Well, no; the fact is, I found there were certain points on which we could not conform, so I seceded.”

“O, then, I suppose you and your wife engage in devotion together at home?”

“Well, not precisely. Our views are not quite in accord, so she worships in that corner of the room, and I in this.”

This, of course, seems an exaggerated illustration; and yet do we not see the same spirit lived out among people who continue to remain together in the same church?

But we may rest assured it is meekness and gentleness in us that will attract men to Christ, while a stubborn spirit on our part will drive them away. It is related of Beethoven that he once visited a church where the organist did not know him. At the close of the service a friend asked the organist to allow Beethoven to play as the congregation went out. They were in the habit of going out hastily, as the organist was a perfunctory, wooden sort of person; but when Beethoven touched the keys

every person in the assembly who had music in his soul paused, and when fifteen or twenty minutes had passed the audience was increasing instead of lessening. The regular organist lost all patience and said, "You don't know how to play the people out of church; let me take hold." And, sure enough, as soon as he began the congregation dispersed with a shiver. It is only the true heavenly music of love and gentleness and meekness and long-suffering that will attract the dear ones of our homes or the wandering ones in our community to forsake their sins and accept our Christ. If we want to win others to our school we must show by our own proficiency in the art of loving what a blessed Teacher we have.

Then there is another branch of education pointed out to us in the one word "goodness." This is in contrast to the school of the flesh. We are taught in the school of the Spirit to abhor that which is evil and to cling to that which is good. To be good is, to put it in the simplest way, to be morally healthy. Goodness means health. It includes, of course, honesty, righteousness, justice, and throws about them all the aroma of love which, being taught in the same school, pervades the very atmosphere of it. But we need to have the emphasis put again and again upon the supreme duty of the Christian to be simply and honestly and genuinely good.

We have had a signal illustration of the necessity of this kind of teaching in New York city during the last few days. The Tenement House Commission, which has been making investigation into the condition of tenement houses belonging to the parish of Trinity Church, has found that many of them

are miserable old rookeries, in which decency is impossible, and where the death rate is almost unparalleled in any other part of the city, and that the representatives of this property had fought the Board of Health in their efforts to get water on to each floor in these tenement houses so that the poor people might have some fair chance for cleanliness and health. What a contemptible thing it seems in the midst of all this to have the agent of the property boastfully state how much of this rent money they give for charity! How God Almighty must spurn such charity money as that! The idea of keeping poor, hard-working, toiling people in dirt and filth, wringing the last penny out of them, in order that when they have reached the bottom of the ladder, or by this cruel treatment their children are sick unto death, a mite of this blood money may be doled back to them in charity! Such charity smells of the pit, rather than of the kingdom of God.

I fear there is a great deal of false consecration to God; a sort of sentimental consecration without any strong purpose of soul back of it. The historian tells us that, in the year 1471, Louis XI executed a solemn deed of ownership by which he conveyed to the Virgin Mary the whole country of Boulogne in France; but the wily king reserved for himself all the revenues thereof. And no doubt he deluded himself with the idea that he had done a generous and pious thing toward the Virgin, when in fact he had done nothing at all. Brother, are you thus deceiving yourself about the consecration of your life and all you have to God? We want, not a mere

sentimentalism, not a goodishness, not a goody-goodyness, but a positive goodness that shrinks from and abhors evil and loves and clings to the good in our everyday life.

Then there is faith which we are to study in the school of the Spirit; and under it you may group its results—joy and peace and temperance. The word “temperance” here has no reference to our modern use of the term. It means moderation. The man of great faith is the one who can afford to be temperate and moderate, conscious as he is of the immutable strength of his position. And the ripe scholar in faith cannot help but be joyous. Dr. Meredith tells us of a little colored boy down in Mississippi who was converted to God, and he was so happy he did not know what to do with himself. He danced, and he leaped, and he sang, and he shouted; and finally he cried out, “O! it is sweet—it is sweet—it is sweet as molasses!” That little curly-headed fellow felt just like David did nearly three thousand years ago when, rejoicing in the same experience, he exclaimed, “Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” One of them lived in a honey country, and the other in a molasses country. But the blessed experience, joyous beyond all words to express, was the same in both cases, and is being multiplied all over the world in every land and kindred and tongue. Out of a living faith springs joy as naturally as the mountain spring bubbles from its snow-fed reservoir. The exulting joy may not always last, but the peace into which it flows is an ever-widening river in the faithful heart.

This faith which thus feeds joy and peace is the key

to all Christian power. Dr. Judson was once asked, when the cause of missions was in its infancy, if he thought the prospect for the conversion of the world looked bright. His reply was, "Yes, as bright as the promises of God can make it." O brothers and sisters, let us in this church keep in close touch with the sublime spirit of our Christianity! Above every other faith in the world Christianity is the religion of expectancy. We do not have to look backward for any golden age in the past; our golden age is coming day by day, and every act of self-denial and every earnest deed we do in Christ's dear name help to swell the glory of that coming time.

The result of all this education is a mansion. "In my Father's house are many mansions." This conception of life robs death of its terrors. Death is our graduation day. It simply takes us away from the seminary or college and takes us home to the family mansion and the ancestral estate. And the experience of all the glorious names in this blessed school of Christ, stretching through all ages and all around the earth, bears testimony to this. Dean Stanley, when traveling once in Germany on a Rhine steamer, became acquainted with a boy. The boy asked him his age. Being answered, he said, "Why, all your life is over." "No," said the dean, "the best time is yet to come." A friend once said to another, "You must be on the wrong side of sixty." "No," he replied, "I am on the right side." We can never thank God enough for the shining pathway up which Christian old age walks, with the glory of the sunset, which is the promise of the sunrise, upon its happy face.

When Frances Ridley Havergal had reached the last day of her saintly life she said to her friends, in the midst of great pain, "God's will is delicious; he makes no mistakes." Bidding one of her physicians good-bye, she asked, "Do you really think I am going?" He answered, "Yes." "To-day?" she inquired. "Probably," was the reply. Then she exclaimed, "Beautiful! too good to be true!" And, looking up with a smile, she added, "Splendid! to be so near the gates of heaven!" Later, as the time of her departure came, she nestled down into the pillows and folded her arms upon her breast, saying, "There, it is all over! Blessed rest!" And, as they watched her, her countenance became radiant with the glory seemingly breaking in upon her soul, and those who watched her thought she appeared as if she were conversing with the King in his beauty. She tried to sing, but after one sweet note her voice died away, and she was gone to be with her Lord.

Glorious, indeed, to die the death of the righteous. As another has so beautifully said, each season of the year and every period of human life have heaven's gate open above them. William Cullen Bryant, the poet, all his life wanted to die in June, and God gave him his desire; but December answers just as well, and is balmy for dying if it is not for living. Thank God, heaven is not so cold that they have to shut the door in winter to keep it warm! Life's seasons all front the open gates of eternal blessedness. They are open to the little babe who says to the challenge of the sentinel: "I was born near the gates of pearl and had not far to

come. I came across only a little narrow strip of breathing and pulse beats. Almost as soon as the earthly air blew upon me it wafted me hither. My feet have not so much as touched the earth and are not dusty; they will not soil your gold-bright pavements. Let me in!" They open, also, to the old saint who says: "I have eaten the bread of more than fourscore years. I have ridden the earth around the sun above eighty times. The snow five thousand winters old on the world's most aged mountain is not whiter than my locks. I have traveled all lands, I have sailed all seas, I have borne all weathers. If the earth is not weary of me I am of it. Welcome, heaven! Let me in!"

"O, heaven is nearer than mortals think
When they look with trembling dread
At the misty future that stretches on
From the silent homes of the dead.
'Tis no lone isle in the brilliant main,
No distant but brilliant shore,
Where the loved ones, when called away,
Must go to return no more.

"The eye that shuts in a dying hour
Will open in endless bliss;
The welcome will sound in a heavenly world
E'er the farewell is hushed in this.
We pass from the clasp of mourning friends
To the arms of the loved and lost;
And the smiling faces will greet us there
Which on earth we valued most."

VII.

INSPIRATION, NOT IMITATION, THE KEY TO
CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

“Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.”—1 Cor. xi, 1
(Revised Version).

AT first glance this seems very strange advice. Here is a brave, strong man, an energetic, bold, daring spirit, full of originality, clinging to his own individuality with intense persistence, striking out into new paths, and yet asking others to be imitators of him. It seems to strike directly at one of the great essential truths of our human nature—the individuality of human life; for there is no profounder truth, and none more important, than that we have a personal selfhood which we are under supreme obligation to God to retain inviolate and develop, and make of it the most that we possibly can. To be a mere copyist of other people is the most dreary and monotonous outlook that can be presented to any human soul. Nothing cramps and fetters and cripples progress more than that.

We have, then, here a serious question. What did Paul mean when he deliberately said to these Corinthian people, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ?” The explanation of the first phrase is in the last; and in order to know what he meant we must turn to Paul’s own life and find out

how he imitated Christ. When we do that I think the difficulty disappears; for we see that in the imitation of Christ in Paul's life there is nothing that cramps or fetters, but everything that inspires and enlarges. Paul did not undertake to do the same things that Christ did. He did not undertake to imitate him even in the style of living or in any of the peculiar characteristics of his work; and yet there was never a more loyal disciple on the earth than Paul to Jesus Christ. He worshiped him, he revered him, he loved him, he counted it all joy to suffer for him, he never made a murmur or a complaint at any burden laid upon his shoulders on account of his loyalty to Christ; but in his eyes even the scars left by the claw of the tiger or by the stones or bludgeons of a mob were glorified as being the marks of his faithfulness to Christ. And yet I repeat that he did not imitate Christ by trying to go about the world doing the same things that Christ did. With Paul, service was something infinitely greater and nobler than that. He had come into fellowship and brotherhood with Christ. He had caught his spirit. He felt that he was on the earth to represent Christ, to maintain the honor and glory of his name, to win disciples to him, and everywhere to be as his ambassador.

Not in any narrow sense, then, of copying or imitation of individual deeds did Paul follow Christ; but he was inspired by him. As Jesus came to the earth to do the will of God, to walk a pathway continually observed in heaven, to contend against spiritual adversaries with a brave and dauntless faith, so Paul was here to do the will of God. To him,

too, heaven was near and full of watchful sympathy. "We wrestle not," he says, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." And so the struggle of life was a noble fight to Paul. And, appreciating his spirit, it is easy to understand the tone and temper of his mind when he said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Let us ask, then, in what respect Paul did imitate the Lord Jesus Christ. I think we must say that, first of all, he imitated him in his estimate of the worth of personal character. Christ put great stress upon the value of the inner man. "Things" were of very insignificant value in his eyes. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" is one of those clear-cut expressions of his that cleave through all our worldliness and sophistry like a blade of Damascus steel. In Christ's gospel, what a man really is in his inner character is everything. If the tree is right the fruit will be right; so he reasons. With earnest query he puts it to his audience, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"—that is, if you have a bad tree, a noxious plant in its very nature, it must yield fruit after its kind; the divine imperative is upon it. But if, on the other hand, the inner nature is pure and good, the law that keeps the planets in their courses lays its imperative upon it, that it must produce good fruits.

Paul imitates Christ in this. He puts it in his

own way; there is no copying or slavish imitation even here; but it is ingrained into his very soul. And so it seems natural to hear him say, "All things work together for good to them that love God"—not because of a miracle or because they have instructions to do it or are commanded to do it by the King on his throne. They do it—they must do it. It is the law of the heart of God that for the good the universe works together to bring it to triumph. Or, again, we hear him say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And still again we hear him crying out to the Galatians in their battle against worldly lusts and low passions, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"—shall not, because your character is spiritual, your inner selfhood is divinely controlled. As naturally as a Bartlett pear tree grows pears instead of crab apples, so the divinely attuned soul must bear spiritual graces instead of the lusts of the flesh.

There could not be a more serious subject to study than this. What we are in our inner fiber must dictate our influence and our future. It is useless to undertake to do for others what we have not in kind in ourselves. Mr. Hall Caine, the author of *The Manxman*, recently delivered a lecture before a company of authors in Edinburgh, in which he declared that, though a writer may not be conscious of any purpose to influence others in their moral character, it is impossible for him to escape

doing it or to rid himself of the moral responsibility of it. "Your work," said Mr. Caine, "is what you are. It cannot help but carry with it the moral atmosphere in which you live. Tell me what manner of man you are, and I will tell you what the moral effect of your work will be." "Imagination," he continues, "is a chemical, which, let a man pour it on any plate whatsoever, is sure to develop the features of his own face."

And this is no more true of an author than it is of each one of us. For we are all authors. We are day by day, by every action of our daily lives, by every conversation we have, by every tone in which we speak our words, by the very atmosphere with which we welcome and warm the hearts of those we greet, or rebuke and freeze in silence those whom we would reject, registering—on far more imperishable manuscript than is produced in any modern paper mill, on the undying tablets of the soul—our thoughts, our convictions, and our judgments. We are writing books that no eye save God's can read as yet, it may be, but writing them to be an unfading record when all the libraries of the earth shall be burned up. And remember that all this registration depends upon what you are. If your heart is pure, if your courage is strong, if your ambitions are noble, if your trust in God is sublime, if your love for humanity is deep and tender, if your brotherhood is simple and Christlike, then you, too, are an imitator of Paul, as he was of Christ, and your life is continually an inspiration to all other human lives.

How natural this makes a Christian life. It takes

out of it everything that is unreal and unnatural, and brings us back to the plain, simple ground that by nature we are the sons and daughters of God, and that, though we have wandered and strayed away and are living in the low and vulgar conditions of a wicked life, when the Christ comes, bearing our flesh, living a human life like ours, and yet living it purely and in a brotherly spirit full of a divine joy and triumph, there is something in our own hearts that echoes back to it, and we are inspired and encouraged and roused to a glorious imitation—an imitation which is not imitation, but an inspiration to rise up and possess the life for which we were made.

Richard Watson Gilder has written some very suggestive verses on “ How to the Singer Comes the Song ? ”

“ How to the singer comes the song ?
 At times a joy, alone ;
 A wordless tone,
 Caught from the crystal gleam of ice-bound trees ;
 Or from the violet-perfumed breeze ;
 Or the salt smell of seas,
 In sunlight weltering many an emerald mile ;
 Or the keen memory of a love-lit smile.

“ Thus to the singer comes the song :
 Gazing at crimson skies,
 Where burns and dies
 On day's wide hearth the calm, celestial fire,
 The poet, with a wild desire,
 Strikes the impassioned lyre,
 Takes into tunèd sound the flaming sight,
 And utters with new song the ancient night.

“ How to the singer comes the song ?
 Bowed down by ill and sorrow
 On every morrow,

The unworded pain breaks forth in heavenly singing ;
Not all too late sharp solace bringing
To broken spirits winging,
Through mortal anguish, to the unknown rest—
A lyric balm for every wounded breast.

“ How to the singer comes the song ?
How to the summer fields
Come flowers ? How yields
Darkness to happy dawn ? How doth the night
Bring stars ? O, how do love and light
Leap at the sound and sight
Of her who makes this dark world seem less wrong—
Life of my life, and soul of all my song ! ”

Just so naturally comes a Christian's joy and triumph. Lifted up out of the mire, out of the fog and the mist and the darkness, out of the sin and despair, out of the doubt and the fear, he is set upon the rock where all the plains of God's love stretch about him. No wonder that a new song is put into his mouth, even praise unto our God ! He sings because he must. He is glad because he is in the realm of gladness. He is at peace because he has risen out of the land of discord and all the chords of life are in harmony.

Paul imitated Christ in his attitude toward his fellow-man. To both Christ and Paul the human problem was the only problem worth the giving of one's whole heart and soul. Everything else is insignificant in this world in comparison to the value of humanity itself. Railroads and steamships and machines and inventions of every sort are to be valued first, not for the amount of money they will make or the rapidity with which they will gather it, but for the kind of man they will produce. Geog-

raphers tell us that the loftiest mountain ranges on the globe are to the mighty diameter of the earth but as the rough spots on the rind of an orange to its sweet interior. So some one says, "All that is external to the man himself is but a wrinkle to his inner soul." I repeat it, that the human problem is the great problem. Even so devoted a scientist as Herbert Spencer says, "It may be a fact that my neighbor's cat has seven kittens; but, before you ask me to ponder it, tell me how that fact is related to me." The human interest is the supreme interest. Christ valued everything of the universe according to its relation to the building up of men and women and children. Paul was his most devout imitator in this. God help us to fall into the royal line!

All the great souls that have put humanity most in their debt have lived in this spirit. Charles Dickens, after he had written *Little Dorrit*, in which he had by his marvelous genius set in the pillory of public opinion many cruel abuses, described it to a friend as a personal safety valve. "I have been blowing off a little indignant steam," he said, "which would otherwise blow me up." The inscription on the tomb of General Gordon, better known as Chinese Gordon, in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, closes like this: "Who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God." What wonder that the Chinamen listened to him as if he were from another world, and that many an African tribe regarded him as a visitor from heaven. And what glorious op-

portunities are afforded us to work out our salvation and deck our crown with original stones, gathered in our own way, in our own land, for the immortal rejoicing!

“ God’s angels drop, like sands of gold,
Our duties midst life’s shining sands,
And from them, one by one, we mold
Our own bright crown with patient hands.
From dust and dross we gather them,
We toil and stoop for love’s sweet sake,
To find each worthy act a gem
In glory’s kingly diadem,
Which we may daily richer make.”

Paul imitated Christ in the high standard which he set for human life and character. It is the glory of our Christianity that Christ will not for a moment admit that we are not capable of the highest and noblest spiritual triumphs. He will accept nothing but our best. Ah, that is the hope of the race. These poor apologists that are always making excuses for humanity, and are saying that it is a poor thing and you must not expect much from it, are but tallow dips compared to the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that appeals to a man, while he is as yet in the bondage of sin and floundering in the quagmire of worldliness, and declares that he has the power within him to become, by Christ’s help, the accepted and honored son of God.

A writer not long since related a conversation which he had with a man of national reputation, which finally took a religious turn, and which concluded by this great man saying, “ If we do half as well as we know it will be all right in the end.” Just afterward, the gentleman who relates the incident

went to the bootblack stand in the hotel to have his shoes polished. The bootblack was a bright Irishman; and, as the gentleman had just heard what a man so near the top of the ladder had to say, he thought he would try the man who was so near the bottom. Reporting the speech he had just heard, he asked, "Now, what do you think of that?" "Think of it, sir?" the bootblack answered. "Well, I think if I only cleaned your boots half as well as I know how you would not want to pay me my dime; and if I kept on the landlord would run me out of the house, sir. And I don't like to believe that God Almighty is not the equal of the boss, sir." Did not the bootblack have the best of it?

Never thank any man for being satisfied with less than the best you can do. The moment you cease to do your best, that day you begin to die. The moment you cease to do your best and cease to live in that courageous, hopeful, and triumphant atmosphere, your spiritual vitality begins to lose its healthy tone, and you are in spiritual danger, just as the man is in physical danger whose physical vitality is at a low ebb. Any epidemic or fever coming through the community or any malaria that lurks anywhere about in the air is almost certain to strike him down. So if you begin to apologize for yourself, and make excuses for doing halfway work, and make compromises with yourself about that complete and holy life which your conscience tells you that you are capable of living, you are the easy prey of every enemy of your soul. It was Jean Paul Richter who said these words as he drew near to the end: "I have made of myself all that could be

made out of the stuff." The more you will study that sentence, the more marvelous it will seem to you. Brother, that is what God asks of you—"all that can be made out of the stuff." We are not to measure ourselves against each other and excuse ourselves because of each other's shortcomings. What a pitiable, miserable thing that is to do! But whatever the grace of God, whatever the tender fellowship of Jesus Christ, whatever the brooding of the Holy Spirit, whatever the inspiration of Christian comradeship, and all other blessed and holy influences with which God visits the soul, can make out of this material which he has put in my care, which makes me what I am, which is called by my name—that I am to make, and that I am to be responsible for, and I am to bring it up at last before the great white throne and give an account for "the stuff" which was delivered to me at the beginning. God help us to be faithful to the awful, but glorious, responsibility!

VIII.

THE ART OF GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS
OF LIFE.

“Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.”—John vi, 12.

I SUPPOSE there never was a boy whose eyes so stuck out with astonishment as that little lad who saw his five small barley loaves and two fishes so multiplied under the blessing of the Master that they were enough to feed thousands of people and have many fragments left. Indeed, the fragments were of more importance than were the loaves and fishes at the beginning. But it is neither the loaves, nor the fishes, nor the little lad, nor the miracle of the Saviour in feeding a multitude with a little, to which I wish to direct our thoughts; but rather to impress upon our hearts the wisdom of gathering up the fragments of life, so that we may get all the rich treasure and comfort there is out of it, and to urge that we shall not by any carelessness or wastefulness on our part let anything be lost.

These words of Jesus are in harmony with the creation and conduct of the whole universe. This world in which we live is made up of fragments, every one of which finds its continuity, its consistency and justification, in the eternal care of God. There is abundance in the world, in sunlight and snow and rain; and yet, after all, nothing is wasted. Everything is treasured up and used over again, and again,

and again. When it will no longer do for one purpose, God uses it for another. Ruskin, in his *Ethics of the Dust*, tells us how the soft, white sediments of the sea, in the course of ages, drew themselves into knots of sphered symmetry and passed at last, through pressure and heat, into the splendid marble quarries of Carrara, in Italy—quarries so magnificent that when you are passing by on the train you can hardly believe that the great white snowdrifts have not settled there between the hills.

All life on our globe is fragmentary and held together by the heavenly attraction—the Fatherly care which is over all. The psalmist, in the one hundred and fourth Psalm, sings the anthem of this care over individual things, and declares that God cares for the springs at which the wild asses quench their thirst; that he causeth the grasses to grow for the cattle; that he plants the cedars of Lebanon, and is interested in the forest where the birds build their nests, and takes note of the stork as she builds her home in a particular kind of fir tree; that he does not forget the high hills where the wild goats find refuge, or neglect to prepare rocks under which the conies may hide. The young lions also are the children of his providence. The wide sea, the earth full of creeping beasts, small and great, as well as man, all wait upon God. As Christina Rossetti sings it—

“Innocent eyes not ours
Are made to look on flowers,
Eyes of small birds and insects small;
Morn after summer morn,
The sweet rose on her thorn
Opens her bosom to them all.

The least and last of things,
That soar on quivering wings
Or crawl among the grass blades out of sight,
Have just as clear a right
To their appointed portion of delight
As queens or kings."

All this beautiful world is brought into this harmonious beauty because of the gathering up of the fragments through divine carefulness. It is a very hard lesson for many of us to learn that great things are made out of little things. Let us think for a moment about certain kinds of fragments which, if carefully gathered up, make a rich and precious life.

A reverent soul, dominated by a prayerful spirit, referring all questions naturally to the divine control, trusting and relying upon divine support and comfort in every hour of need—such a personality, for instance, is made by gathering up the momentary privileges and opportunities of prayer. That is what Paul meant when he said we should pray always, without ceasing. It is not that one should make long prayers at any one time, but that the momentary opportunities and privileges of life should be carefully treasured for divine meditation and communion. We have noticed some people in public service, in prayer meetings and other places, who seemed to have a disposition to pray always, without stopping, when they got started, and whose prayers did not seem to be any great pleasure to themselves or anybody else. But, on the other hand, there is the individual to whom prayer always seems to come natural, about whom there is a cer-

tain spontaneity of devotional spirit. His prayers bring blessings down upon all who listen to them, and there is about them a kind of heavenly contagion that draws listening souls heavenward.

The prayers of the Bible are all short. None of them would take half as long to utter as many of the public prayers to which we listen. The prayer of King Hezekiah for Jerusalem consists of one hundred and thirty-four words and would require, if uttered at an ordinary rate of speed, about one minute. At the time of Hezekiah's offering this prayer the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the Assyrian army, led by Sennacherib. Hezekiah was in a great emergency and had no hope of deliverance except from God; but that one-minute prayer settled the whole matter. The Lord sent his angel into the camp of the Assyrian, and in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand were smitten with death. Let Lord Byron sing their requiem in his oft-quoted lines :

“ The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

“ Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

“ For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still !

“ And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride ;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

“ And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown.

“ And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail ;
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !”

Character is built of fragments. A good character is often compared in the Bible to gold ; but the golden coin is composed of almost infinitely small fragments. A watch case manufactory, which for nineteen years had occupied the same building in New York city, moved recently into new quarters. Knowing how easily gold wears and rubs, especially as it is handled by workmen, it was the custom of the firm to save every bit of dust and all of the sweepings of the three floors they occupied and extract the bits of gold lost in the rubbish. Although this process was quite expensive, it paid very well. When the manufactory was moved the firm took up all the boards on the three floors, in order to save the gold dust that had not been gathered up in the sweepings. The boards were of ordinary pine, and were reduced to ashes, and the gold was extracted therefrom by a chemical process. Several thousand dollars' worth of gold was found. Although every possible precaution had been taken, a very large number of fine particles of gold had been ground

into the cracks and grains of the wood. Two or three years ago a treasure train brought several million dollars in gold from San Francisco to New York. When the money was counted it was found to be all right, as far as the number of coins went, but in that journey the rubbing together of the coins caused the loss of two thousand dollars. In this case it was a total loss, for the particles were so very fine that they could never be recovered.

Let us learn the lesson. Our characters are being formed by the addition of small particles of spiritual gold day by day. Single deeds of self-denial; momentary acts of sympathy and mercy; secret struggles against temptation; unknown battles that are never glorified in the public prints; hours of secret communion with the Master; times of loneliness and sorrow when meditations on the law of God grow sweet; burdens carried for the weak and helpless, that none know of save God; times of bitter trial when one's arms cling about the cross for very life—these are the kind of fragments out of which a noble character is fashioned and molded into strength and beauty. Let us gather up all such fragments, that nothing be lost.

The work of life is made up of fragments—moments, hours, days. General Booth, of the Salvation Army, has given a great lesson, in the result of his recent tour in this country, to people who are always dreaming of great things they would like to do and yet are doing nothing. General Booth is sixty-five years of age. If he had been a general in the United States Army he would have been retired a year ago. But during his five months' stay

on this side of the ocean he has averaged two meetings a day, speaking on an average one hour at each meeting. He has preached the Gospel in eighty-six different cities, giving three hundred and forty-three sermons. His audiences have aggregated nearly half a million people, and there have been many hundreds of conversions. In addition, he has been interviewed every day, he has written largely for the newspapers, and given great attention to the executive duties connected with the great army of which he is the head. Perhaps no man ever before in the history of the race traveled eighteen thousand miles, preached three hundred and forty-three sermons to half a million of people, was the cause of so many persons being converted to God, and attracted so much attention to the Gospel of Jesus Christ—all in five months. It was accomplished by caring for the fragments. No time was wasted; everything was looked after with military precision; every fragment was worked into its place. People who work in that way can always perform miracles in comparison with the helter-skelter work of other people.

“Uncle John Vassar” was that sort of man, who never let a fragment of an opportunity of witnessing for Christ go to waste. He came into a hotel in Boston one day, looking for a friend. Seeing that his friend had not yet arrived and that he would have to wait, he determined not to waste the time, but went directly up to two fashionably dressed ladies who were sitting in the parlor. He said to one of them, “Excuse me, madam, are you a Christian?” She said, “Of course.” He said:

“ I didn't mean that kind of Christian. Have you been born again? ”

“ Why, no ; we have gotten over that in Boston ; we do not believe in being born again any more. ”

“ Have you gotten all over the Bible in Boston, or do you believe that some more? ”

“ O, yes, we believe the Bible, of course. ”

“ Will you let me read it to you? ”

And he took his Bible and began to pour the word of God into her heart, until her soul burned within her and the tears came into her eyes. His friend came and he had to go ; but he said, “ Before I go may I pray with you? ” She answered, “ I wish you would. ” He knelt down and asked God to save her then and there. Her husband came in afterward, and, seeing signs of tears in her eyes, he asked, “ What is the matter? ” She said : “ There has been a strange little man here. He came up to me and asked me if I was a Christian— if I had been born again ; and then he preached to me and read the Bible. And, husband, I never in my life felt as I feel now. ”

He said, “ Why didn't you tell him it was none of his business? ”

She said, “ Dear, if you had been here, you would have thought it was his business. ” It is the men and women who gather up the fragments of opportunity like that who make glorious records in Christian work. Though you are so little that you feel you are only a fragment, if you will give the fragment to God, he will fit it into its own place where it will be more valuable than anything else in the world in that place.

Robert Browning tells an old legend in his poem, "The Boy and the Angel." The boy, working at his trade, and thus praising God with his faithful work and life, wins the heart of the angel, who helps the boy to realize his desire to praise God, as he imagines, in a more splendid way, as a pope. That the boy's work as he becomes priest and pope may not be left undone, the angel takes the boy's place at the workbench. But he soon finds that not even an angel can fill a boy's place and give God the praise of the boy's faithful work. And so there came to Rome another pope, and the boy went back to his bench to give the praise without which heaven's music was not complete. There is a vein of everlasting truth in the old legend. We may be only a fragment in God's universe, but that fragment is a special study of the Creator. You are the child of your heavenly Father, and if you do your duty faithfully you shall not be forgotten of him.

"Only a tiny candle
Lit by him,
Not lost, though he has many
Lamps to trim.

"Only an earthen vessel
Used to-day,
Although in the Master's pathway
Gold ones lay.

"Only a cup of water
Given in love;
But the Saviour saw and owned it
From above.

"Only the world's derision
Meekly borne,
Yet he notes the word, the action,
Done in scorn.

“Only a little service
 By the way ;
 He'll reward the smallest effort
 ' In that day.' ”

“Only following Jesus
 To the end ;
 And then his promised glory
 He will send.”

If there are any here who are not Christians, I want to bring God's message to you in this scripture we are studying, and entreat you that you will gather up the fragments of time and opportunity that still remain and not let one of them be lost. Remember that it is only in the consciousness of divine forgiveness and love that real peace and happiness can be found. I have been reading this last week, as doubtless many of you have, a very pathetic speech by Prince Bismarck, in which he says : “When I reckon my few minutes of real happiness I am hardly able to make twenty-four hours. In politics I never gained enough rest to be happy.” What a wonderful confession there is in those few words of the hollowness of all mere earthly glory and success, and how idle to expect the world to give genuine happiness and peace to the soul ! One fragment of the Master's precious words, like, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” is worth more than all the political glory and renown in the world to give abiding peace to the soul. Gather up the fragments that remain to you. You have wasted many opportunities, many privileges are beyond your reach ; but there is left this fragmentary hour when, if you will, you may find salvation.

IX.

HEARTSTRINGS AND THEIR MELODY.

“There went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.”
—1 Sam. x, 26.

TO move men to action immediate and earnest you need only to arouse their hearts. The heart it is that furnishes life to all the body. The relation of the heart to a human life is like the relation of a great city to a State. Out from the city run railroad lines and telegraph and telephone lines, commercial and intellectual arteries through which flows the blood to sustain and carry on civilization to the remotest boundary. The heart is like that. It is the center of human action. The appeal of the Bible is to the heart. There are many accidents of time and place and position ; but after all as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

There is no musical instrument in the world so sensitive as the human heart, and none that is open to such a diversity of influence. How many are the players who touch our hearts ! Sometimes anger touches them, and the tones which are evoked are coarse and full of discord ; sometimes sorrow touches them, and they wail forth a *miserere* so tender and sad that it only finds its appropriate echo in tears. Satan plays on many a heart ; but the heart does not belong to him. He is an invader and an enemy, and his touch can only produce discord. Nothing

but the touch of God can bring forth perfect music from the human heart. Let us bring our hearts before the Lord and cry with the poet :

“ I kneel before thine altar, Lord, and fain a gift would bring,
But all I have is worthless and unfit for offering ;
A foolish heart, a foolish dream, a foolish, fruitless pain—
Such are my all ; O Love of love, do not the gift disdain.

“And even as earthly monarchs do, who take the tribute given,
And quick restore by royal grace, increased to seven times seven.
So take, O Lord, my offering, and vouchsafe me presently,
For emptiness, thy fullness ; for my hunger, thy supply.

“ I lay my heart down at thy feet, that tired heart and old,
Whose youthful throb has grown so faint, whose youthful fire
so cold.

Heart of the world's heart, Lord of joy, and mighty Lord of
pain,

Take thou the gift, and quicken it, and give it back again.

“ My foolish dream, so dear, so prized, baptized in many tears,
Loved, even as sickly children are, the more for doubts and
fears,

O Lord, whose word is faithfulness, eternal to endure,
Take it ; and give me in its stead the hope that standeth sure.

“ The pain that heart was baffled with, which could not bear to
die,

And, stilled by day, would stir by night, and wake me with its
cry,

That pain so close, so intimate, that death could scarce de-
stroy,

I leave it, Lord, before thy feet ; give me instead thy joy.

“All empty-handed came I in ; full-handed forth I go.

Go thou beside me, Lord of grace, and keep me ever so.

Thanks are poor things for such wide good ; but all my life is
thine ;

Thou who hast turned my stones to bread, my water into
wine.”

Let us study briefly the fruits of God's touch upon human hearts.

The first result is sympathy. We may see that illustrated in the incidents surrounding our text. Saul had been selected by the prophet, under God's direction, to be king over Israel. He was a bashful, young, timid fellow, and when the prophet wanted to introduce him to the people as their king he was not to be found, until after long search they discovered him hidden away among the pack saddles and "stuff," as the Scripture record gives it, of the encampment. And when they had brought him forth to receive his crown and he stood up there before them, head and shoulders taller than everybody else, looking every inch a king, bashful though he was, they cheered him with admiration and pride. And when the people were disbanded to go to their homes, and Saul also started on his journey, there were many men in the company whose hearts God so touched in sympathy with the young king that they went up with him to protect him and defend him. What we need to-day, above everything else, is that the great heart of mankind shall be touched into sympathy and fellowship. We need this continual touch of God in the Church, that its refreshing streams of sympathy may never dry up. No formal religion can ever take the place of warm-hearted, brotherly kindness.

In 1878 a party of Americans made a journey up the Nile, and afterward traveled through Egypt, Arabia, and Syria. When they were at Cairo preparing to cross the desert, each of the party bought some water vessels. One found in the bazaar

beaten jars of brass, whose fine designs attracted him ; another bought some painted porcelain vessels of great beauty ; while a third came back with coarse earthen bottles at which the others laughed. "Wait until the end of the journey," he said. The way across the desert was long and wearisome ; the heat was intense ; some of the camels fell sick ; and hence the distance between the stopping places required more time than usual. Every drop of water was of value. The glittering brass vessels soon proved useless, as the water in them was heated and became impure and poisonous. The fine porcelain jugs cracked in the fierce heat of the sun, and the water was lost. Both the brass and porcelain vessels were thrown away as valueless ; but the plain earthen bottles, being porous and unadorned, kept the water comparatively cool and pure until the end of the journey. "It was not vases for ornaments that were needed," said the guide, "only a vessel that would carry water." So if we are to bless the world constantly by the warmth of our sympathy, the good cheer of our brotherly fellowship, we do not want to smother our faith and hope and love under decorated forms or incase our Christian graces in a bigotry as hard and unbending as brass ; but, rather, we want to carry God's love into hearts so humble that it shall become in them a "well of water, springing up unto everlasting life."

No one can measure the power of a genuine exhibition of brotherly sympathy. At the battle of Fair Oaks, on June 1, 1862, General Oliver O. Howard had his arm shot off on the battlefield. As he was making his way to the hospital, weak from loss

of blood and pain, he saw a young man intoxicated. He was so under the influence of whisky that he could hardly walk. As the general came near him, he forgot the awful pain that was racking his body, and his own desperate condition, and his heart went out in sympathy for this poor drunken young lad ; and he stopped long enough to tell him that it did not pay to drink, that it would ruin him, and how much better it would be to stop before the habit had control of him. General Howard passed on to the hospital, had his arm amputated, and was sent home to recover. He learned nothing more of the drunken soldier for a great many years, when one day a letter came to him from Washington city which told him his subsequent history. The poor fellow, drunk as he was, was so impressed by the fact that the general, in his wounded condition, had taken enough interest in him to stop and give him advice, that he had then and there resolved to quit drinking. He kept his resolution and when the war was over settled down to a life of steady, honest, hard work. He gradually rose, and became finally a judge on the supreme bench of the State of New Hampshire and one of the foremost men in the Commonwealth. And he no doubt owed it all to the fact that this great-hearted Christian soldier had paused to pour on him the wealth of his Christian sympathy.

Victor Hugo says that whenever it is necessary we must sacrifice for our brother, no matter how lowly his condition, our gold, and our blood which is more than our gold, and our thought which is more than our blood, and our love which is more

than our thought. And we are sure that this is the spirit in which St. Paul lived when we hear him saying: "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." Paul states the supreme law of the kingdom of Christ to be, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." How the old earth would blossom as the rose if all our hearts were touched into that Christly sympathy!

Another result of God's touch upon the human heart is that he establishes it in courage—not a brutal, stoical courage, but the quieter, sublimer courage of confidence and faith. Bishop Potter, of New York city, relates a most striking incident which occurred when he was traveling some years ago in southern Florida. There was a man in the car who represented the great lottery system of Louisiana, which was then at the height of its infamous power and held the government of Louisiana in its iron grasp. This man was a very important personage in his own eyes. He had taken the drawing-room on the car, and something about the room gave him offense. He summoned the colored porter and, after addressing him in the most

vulgar and profane manner, sent for the conductor. There was obviously no grievance in the case; the man had lost his temper, was irritable and unreasonable from last night's debauch, and, if possible, his language to the conductor was more brutal and more insolent and unwarranted than to the porter. The bishop sat through it all, and was conscious of sensations tingling at the tips of his fingers that were entirely unepiscopal and which, to use his own words, "if they could have found expression at the moment, would have landed me in eternal disgrace." The conductor, who was a young man, a generous type of the Southerner, came to the bishop when it was all over and said, "I beg your pardon, but you have seen what has happened?" "Yes," the bishop replied, "and if you want to refer to me have no hesitation about doing so. I want to congratulate you on the spirit you have shown, and thank you for an exhibition of good manners in the face of the boor who insulted you every time he spoke, and to felicitate you for the dignity with which you have borne this." "O, sir," the young man replied, "when a man has come to learn how his Master controlled himself he ought to be ashamed not to be able to illustrate at least an equal control under less painful and trying circumstances." Bishop Potter declares that that was the finest testimony to the power of the religion of Jesus Christ to which he had ever been privileged to listen. That young man was a hero. It took more courage to do what he did than to march up to the cannon's mouth in the midst of battle. What a glorious thing it is to

live under the spell of that divine leadership where such sublime courage is born of the hope and faith and love which are the atmosphere of one's daily life !

The supreme result of God's touch on our hearts is self-denial. The law of the Christian life is proclaimed in the Master's words, that he that loses his life shall find it, and he that keepeth his life shall lose it ; upon which Dr. Brooke Herford comments that the highest, sweetest zeal of life is not in what we do in thinking of self, but in what we do for others, forgetting self. It is so even while in the doing. How much more afterward ! Life passes on ; years wane ; strength fails ; the shows and vanities and delusions of life wither and fall, like autumn leaves. The only things that do not fade are those we do in simple, self-forgetting loving-kindness to our fellow-men or in self-forgetting thanksgiving to God.

This self-forgetfulness is the true philosophy of the Christian life. No doubt some of you feel like saying, "Ah ! that perfect unselfishness is beyond my reach ; I cannot forget myself so entirely as Christ seems to put it." But have you begun rightly to undertake it ? You do not send your boy to the high school before he has gone to the grammar school or to the primary. So we are put to school in this Christian life on earth. Enter upon it in this spirit, think of others, give up your wish for others, help others, be kind to others in every way you can, and every such thought and care and kindness in which you unawares rise into this forgetfulness of self will be a lifting up of your life and make it more worth living.

You ought not to think that Christ's teachings are not practicable for this world and for your life, because you cannot rise above mistakes and blunders and practice them perfectly all at once. What is there in the world that is worth doing that you can do perfectly all at once? But you may depend upon it that these plain, heart-searching teachings of Jesus Christ, which call for self-denial and self-forgetfulness, are the true light of life, and their way is the way of all blessing; and if you will live that way, if you will live toward them, the more you do so the more they will bless you. Be Christ's disciple in the way of self-denial, and, though it may begin with a cross, it will end with a crown. You may have to begin with some pain of self-denial; but you will end in the quiet joy of self-forgetfulness. And more and more you will grow into that higher life in which our hearts go out lovingly to our fellow-men, and out toward all the beauty and glory of the world, and up toward God and toward that life which whoso lives with him shall live forever!

X.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”—1 Tim. vi, 12.

PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND, in his Lowell lectures on *The Ascent of Man*, delivered in Boston and now published in book form, discusses with great courage and clearness from the standpoint of the evolutionist the struggle for life. It is not either to criticise or to imitate him that I take my theme from his hands, but to follow a line of practical inquiry into that present struggle for life with which every one of us has to do. For the phrase “struggle for life” is certainly an apt description of the earthly experience of every human soul.

Dr. Drummond declares that the great allies of progress in human life are want and hunger, that “the inertia of things is such that without compulsion they will never move.” He compares the evolution of man to the experience of the little bird in the city park, whose day is spent in struggling to get a living. It awakes at daybreak and sets out to catch its morning meal; but another bird has been awake before it and it has lost its chance. With fifty other breakfastless birds it has to bide its time, to scour the country, to prospect the trees, the grass, the ground, to lie in ambush; to attack and

be defeated, to hope and be forestalled. At every meal the same program is gone through, and every day. As the seasons change the pressure becomes more keen, its supplies are exhausted, and it has to take wing for hundreds and thousands of miles to find new hunting ground. This is how birds live; and this, he declares, is how birds are made. They are the children of struggle. Beak and limb, claw and wing, shape, strength—all, down to the last detail, are the expressions of their mode of life.

But it is more to our purpose to pursue the struggle for life on Paul's lines, who deals with the story of the later evolution, where man is not so much goaded on by need as he is lured on by visions of glory—or, as Drummond would put it, "those high incitements of conscious ideals which completed the work of creating him a man."

There can be no doubt that life was intended by the Almighty to be a struggle, and that the discipline of toil, and even of drudgery, if you will, is a very beneficent influence upon human character. A great many people make the common and easy mistake of supposing that there are some favored professions and avocations where great success may be won without painful toil and prosaic, uninteresting drudgery; but it is probably true that there is as much of uninviting detail work forced into the career of those who are supposed to be great geniuses, as there is into the most common and sordid employments. The multitude of people who look upon a beautiful picture or listen to a great musician or read a poem that stirs the soul suppose that, because it is a work of genius, it therefore

came easily and without cost. The long days and nights of weary toil by which the painter learned how to mix his paints and oils, the weeks and months of study, that seemed to him to be of no value, by which his eye was trained in perspective—all this and many other things are unknown to those who look on the picture as a finished work of art. Goethe declared that “genius is but the ability for hard work,” which, though an extreme assertion, is true to the extent that success is not possible to genius without hard work. Life means struggle. Every young man—and young woman as well—should understand that; and, unless they are willing to pay that price, all hope of real success may as well be abandoned.

This is true on the lowest plane, as well as on the highest. Some two years ago, when our two most notorious American brutes had their disgraceful fight in New Orleans and one of them, who had been supposed for some time to be the strongest man physically in the world, was overcome and whimpered in his mortification that it was “booze that knocked him out,” one of the daily newspapers quoted a group of rough boys who were discussing the encounter. One of them was heard to say this—the language is rude, but it shows that even hoodlums of the street understand that the penalty of success must be paid for at a just price—“Well, fellers, de great mill is over, and Sully’s knocked out! Well, it only goes to show dat a man can’t be champeen soak and champeen fighter at de same time.” This boy had hold of the key which could unlock to us the cause of many other failures along

higher lines, for there is such a thing as intellectual and moral dissipation, as well as physical. There may be many things we can do without, but the stern discipline and struggle of life, which makes self-reliant men and women of us, is not in the catalogue.

A visitor to a famous pottery establishment was puzzled by an operation which seemed aimless. In one room there was a mass of clay beside a workman. Every now and then he took up a large mallet and struck several smart blows on the surface of the lump. "Why do you do that?" was asked. "Wait a bit, sir, and watch it," was the answer. The visitor obeyed, and soon the top of the mass began to heave and swell, and bubbles formed upon its face. "Now, sir, you will see," said the modeler, with a smile. "I could never shape the clay into a vase if these air bubbles were in it; therefore I gradually beat them out." Is not that the purpose of the discipline of life? And we surely can bear testimony that it has often had that effect on us. Who cannot remember when some hard knock, which was painful and mortifying at the time, let out some bubble of pride or self-will which it was very desirable to be rid of?

Let us study two or three of the simple but essential conditions of success in the struggle of life.

And surely one of these is genuineness. This is of supreme importance, for final and permanent success depends far more on what we are than on what we do. A clear perception of our own individuality is necessary to the highest sincerity and genuineness. As Dr. Cuckson, of Boston, recently

said: "The dimensions of our inner life are determined by the scale to which they are set. We are all character builders and the quantity and quality of our personality depend altogether upon the ideals to which we shape it. If the ideal be poor the life will be poor; and if the ideal be complete the life will be rich and full. If the dominating aim of our existence be unsteady, with no clearness of purpose and definiteness of outline, the life will correspond to it and be as shapeless as a jellyfish. The individuality that has no characteristics has no character. It is like a marsh that is full of snakes and tadpoles. Much determined force is indispensable to the making of manly or womanly character."

It is this power to shape our own personality and in some measure control our own destiny that transforms the world and ennobles both the individual and the collective life of humanity. Our first ambition ought to be to build a character which shall be distinctively our own for all time. If we cherish our individuality in this way, refusing to allow it to be swamped by custom or warped and twisted out of shape by fashion, we will not feel ourselves to be mere machines, but the free children of God. A very interesting illustration of the possibility of building up such a character occurred a few days since, when an English correspondent of a New York newspaper, who has never been friendly to Mr. Gladstone, but often distinctly unfriendly, speaking of some reprehensible methods of the leading English politicians of to-day, called attention by way of contrast to the lofty character of

political discussions to which Mr. Gladstone has always held himself, no matter how strong the provocation to do otherwise. And this was equally true of Mr. Gladstone, he says, when he was prime minister and when he was not. The attitude of dignified reserve is not, with him, an official attitude. It is individual and spontaneous. He has a high sense of what is due to himself and from himself. The public came to expect it from him just as much because he was Mr. Gladstone as they expected it of others because they hold an office and a position which make them the representatives of England and of what is best and noblest in English public life. That is a great thing to be able to say about any man ; and that which makes it great is possible to every one of us—to refuse to do a mean thing, not because you might be found out in it or it would disgrace you, but because it is beneath you and contrary to the great honest substratum of your character.

Nothing in the long run is so fatal to true success as lack of genuine simplicity and straightforwardness of character. James Russell Lowell puts this verse tersely :

“I’m older’n you, an’ I’ve seen things an’ men ;
 An’ my experunce—tell ye wut it’s ben :
 Folks thet worked thorough was the ones that thriv,
 But bad work follers ye ez long’s ye live ;
 You can’t get red on’t ; jest ez sure ez sin,
 It’s allers askin’ to be done agin.”

The great test of character is fidelity in the hidden life and in the little things of life.

Close akin to this is another characteristic of suc-

cess in life's struggle, and that is an uncompromising antagonism to evil of every sort. And everything must be regarded as evil for us that stands in the way of our highest life. It is not necessary that a thing should be wrong in itself; if it stands in the way of the highest and holiest life for us it becomes at once our most deadly enemy and should be shown by us no quarter whatever. Over in Norwich, Conn., there grows what is claimed to be the largest wistaria vine in the country. At its base it is a foot in diameter. A little above the ground its trunk divides, and it throws one branch for over a hundred feet around the front of a handsome mansion. The other branch, which divides into three huge strands, each four inches thick, trails along a garden fence for twenty feet and then enters what was once the most magnificent and stately elm on the street. Noting the great snaky vine from the street, if you have a keen imagination, it is easy to arouse within yourself an impression that it is a veritable serpent that has just leaped upon the tree, infolding it in a deathly constriction. And if you notice the effect of this beautiful vine on the tree the impression is heightened, for its strong coil is choking the life out of the tree. As the years have gone on it has flung fold after fold about the trunk and branches, ever and anon cutting deep circular furrows into the bark, and finally, lifting its huge green crest high above the elm's crown, gathers it into its embrace. The tree was naturally very thrifty and luxuriant, but it already shows plentiful tokens that its beautiful, but powerful, enemy is throttling it. The tips of its

lower boughs are dry and dead, and aloft its foliage is sear and yellow. Before another year it doubtless will be dead, and the vegetable serpent may feast at will on its leafless carcass.

This is a faithful illustration of what we see constantly occurring in the story of the men and women whom we know. How many times we see men forming habits or friendships or society or business connections which at first seem only to decorate and beautify their lives, as the beautiful wistaria blossoms did the great elm tree. But after a while, as we watch them, we see that this new association or friendship or habit, which was intended only to beautify or adorn, begins to control and tyrannize, wrapping fold on fold about our friend or neighbor, until all that we loved and admired in him is throttled to death. Alas, how many times we see the spiritual life choked out in this way! Do not fail to heed the lesson. You cannot afford to let business or politics or society or anything else, though it come in the form of "an angel of light," throttle within you your spiritual fellowship with God.

We need also to be on our guard against tempting God by thrusting ourselves into the midst of the fires of temptation. How foolish for us to pray "Lead us not into temptation" and then go, fast as our steps can carry us, to where we know that the "sin which doth so easily beset us" will be flaunted in our face. The newspapers brought us the other morning the story of the silly girl at Coney Island who came near being killed, and will probably die, from an attempt in a public performance to kiss the lips of a big Asiatic lion. The great brute, which

had hitherto seemed tame enough, was aroused to anger and seized and mangled her with cruel ferocity. Silly and presumptuous as that seems, many men and women about us are not more wise when they daily kiss the lips, as it were, of habits and associations which, however harmless they may seem for a while, will inevitably at last bury their deadly fangs in their presumptuous victims. We have daily need to pray, with David, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

But we must not forget that the true struggle for life is a battle of faith. "Fight the good fight of faith" is Paul's ringing appeal. Many people fail in the struggle for life through a lack of the faith element which gives the daring and courage that is the very lifeblood of heroes. It is related that in one of the battles of the American Revolution General Lee had been ordered by General Washington to open the attack, which for some cause he failed to do. General Washington reprimanded him by inquiring what untimely prudence prevented him from carrying out the orders of his superior. "I know of no man," said Lee, "who has more of that rascally virtue than yourself." How many of us fail because of a possession of too much of the "rascally" virtue! That high faith in God which makes every man that possesses it seem rash to worldlings who know nothing of God's presence and blessing is the great propelling power of a genuine Christian life. John Wesley said, "May God deliver me and all that seek him in sincerity from what the world calls Christian prudence!"

This genuine, uncompromising atmosphere of the

soul does, naturally, lay hold on eternal life. It lifts one out of the merely material and temporal, and makes men who delve among the dusty details of common things to breathe the high air of lofty purpose. Bishop Lawrence, a few days since, at the Harvard College commencement, with keen foresight into the needs of the day, warned the young men going out this year from that great institution against what he aptly calls the "stolid commercial spirit" of the time. And I doubt not that some who hear me need the same warning. How many men there are who used to have noble ideals and spiritual aspirations, who to-day find themselves deadened by this same "stolid commercial spirit." The changes of the market, the newspaper seven days in the week, the interest in politics, and the small talk of the day enwrap them, until they become one of those stolid, uninteresting commercial machines which you may meet so often in the office or the club. The only way to escape this is to fight sincerely and honestly "the good fight of faith." The man who makes all the ordinary things of life subservient to that fight is kept heroic and eager by the romance of spirituality which enters into life's commonest deeds. For no man can live on the religious experiences of his childhood or youth. Your religion, if it is to be worth anything to you, must come out of the living present and must throb in the blood of your daily life.

A man who had charge of a surveying party in the forests of Florida relates that one day they were resting at noon, when one of the men exclaimed, "I would give fifty cents a swallow for all the water

I could drink." He expressed the sentiments of the others. All were very thirsty, and there was not a spring or stream anywhere in the vicinity. While the men were thus talking the chief surveyor saw a crow put his bill into a cluster of broad long leaves growing on the side of a tall cypress. The leaves were those of a peculiar air plant. They are green and bulge out at the bottom, forming an inverted bell. The smaller end is held to the tree by roots grappling the bark. It feeds on the air and water that it catches and holds. Thus the air plant becomes a sort of cistern. The surveyor sprang to his feet with a laugh. "Boys," he said, "that old crow is wiser than every one of us." "How so?" they asked. "Why, he knows that there are a hundred thousand water tanks in this forest." "Where?" they cried, in amazement. For reply, the surveyor cut an air plant in two and drained nearly a pint of pure, cold water from it. The men did not suffer for water after that, for every tree in the forest had at least one air plant, and almost every air plant contained a drink of water.

Does this not give a true picture of the possibilities of human life about us? Many are perishing of cruel thirst who have dwelt in the world's desert and sought far and wide over its burning sands; but, in spite of wealth and culture and all that the world is able to give them, they are fairly yawning themselves out of existence, driven by a burning thirst that the earth has not been able to quench. And yet all about them, in the everyday contact of common living, it has been possible for them, if they had been guided by heavenly wisdom, to tap the

fountains of the water of life of which, if a man drink, says Christ, he shall thirst no more.

Here, then, is the secret of laying hold "upon eternal life." Eternal life is to be born within us. It is not some ready-made gift that is to be bestowed upon us at death; it is to be born in us here and now. We are to live in its enjoyment. We are to exult in its atmosphere day by day. We are to be nerved by it for heroic and courageous deeds. Ah, this it is which dignifies and glorifies the struggle for life.

Mrs. Farningham sings a song of her "Companions" which crystallizes what we have been studying together:

" My care
Goes with me everywhere ;
The broken lights upon the sea,
The star lamps shining lustrously,
God's great, wide world of field and moor,
The lofty cliffs that guard the shore—
I turn from all to meet the face
Of one who shows me little grace.
For care
Is with me everywhere.

" And pain,
A guest that will remain,
Sits with me in the house at night,
And comes to me with morning light,
Making a home within my breast,
And stays my work, and breaks my rest,
And makes me weary vigils keep,
Nor lets me for my sowing reap.
For pain
Sleeps but to wake again.

“ But hope
Helps me with these to cope,
And cheery comrades, fair to see
And strong to comfort, live with me ;
Faith bears me upward on its wing,
And sings to me until I sing ;
Peace touches me with tender grace,
And bids pain take a lower place ;
 While love
Stays on, and will not move.

“And One
Whose light is as the sun,
Whose pity never comes too late,
Whose pardon, like himself, is great,
Knows me unworthy, yet no less
Lingers in his sweet gentleness ;
Jesus, my Saviour, takes my care,
And he is with me everywhere,
 For he,
In life and death, abides with me.”

XI.

SELF-TRIUMPH THROUGH SELF-FORGETFULNESS.

"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends."—Job xlii, 10.

THIS Book of Job bears abundant testimony that our world is God's workshop in which he builds human character; that sorrows, trials, and difficulties are only tools which divine wisdom uses for that great end. The fire must often be at a white heat, the anvil broad, and the hammer heavy to mold and fashion the shape which infinite skill and love require. As another has said, we must conquer life before we can conquer death. We must subdue the earth before we are worthy to come into our kingdom in heaven. We must lose self to find God. The great white host which adorned the vision at Patmos recorded in the Book of Revelation came up out of great tribulation. The Bible, human history, and the observation of all thoughtful souls conspire to teach us that

"Life is not an idle ore,
But heated hot with burning fears
And bathed in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the strokes of doom
To shape and use."

And yet off from the broad anvil, and out from under the heavy hammer of the severest trial, Job

came, even in this world, to an experience of sublime joy and serene peace. His diseases were healed, his friends came back to him, his desolate home was filled with the comforts and delights of love, his pastures were covered with flocks and herds, and he came to a ripe old age in the greatest prosperity of his life.

Between the two pictures which stand so strongly in contrast in Job's life—between the night of desolation and the day of triumph—there was a twilight worthy of our study. The climax in Job's life is described in our text. It was reached on that day when, ceasing to think about himself, he became prayerful in behalf of his friends. Job learned at last, what every earnest seeker after truth must learn, that

“The struggle that's only for self
No joy among angels may wake ;
But the brightest of crowns will be given
To those who have suffered and striven
For somebody's sake.”

And so we come to our theme, “Self-triumph through Self-forgetfulness.” Not only Job, but every other soul that, like Job, turns to sincere and earnest work for others, finds that he is rescued thereby from many annoying captivities.

Work for others rescues us from the captivity of overweening personal conceit. Beautifully did the wise old Greeks say that the lovely youth Narcissus resisted every charm, until he came to look in a still, clear pool. It shone like a mirror. In it he saw his own beautiful form and fell in love with it, thinking it a deity. That love, necessarily unre-

quited, was his death, as such self-love must ever be. Such self-love always remains unconscious of its own blindness and busies itself with finding out the faults of others, without attempt to pity, much less to cure, them. No tyrant is more cruel to his abject slave than an overweening conceit is to the soul where it holds dominion. The man who is satisfied with himself is doomed. For him there is no upward climbing, no greater success. The doorways of increased knowledge are blocked by the huge walls of his dogged self-conceit. We are told that, when the Florentine magistrate came to look at Michael Angelo's sublime statue of David, he declared it was splendid with one exception—the nose was too large. The sculptor said it was quite as it should be. But the magistrate was so sure it was too large that the sculptor took hammer and chisel and seemed to reduce it; but in truth he only let fall some chippings he had carried up with him. He had really not touched it. "Now," said the magistrate, "it is perfection." Most of us have met with similar proofs of the egotism of conceit and its blind folly. Perhaps our friends have seen the same in us, and we may be very sure our enemies have.

But when we turn from ourselves and devote our thought and care to the help of others we drop into our proper place in the circle of the universe. We find that we are of like passions and tempers and infirmities with other people, and that on its own ground the most ordinary little child may teach us, despite all our self-sufficient wisdom. It is only by sympathetic devotion to others that we may enter into that brotherly fellowship with our fellow-

men by which we may really be taught the great lessons of human life. Carlyle never wrote a truer sentence than this: "When the heart is dead the eye cannot see." The editor of the *Outlook*, in a recent article, says, with great earnestness and truth, that we know men only as our sympathies clear our mental vision. We deal justly with our fellows only as we are alive to each man's limitations, as well as to his possibilities. Sympathy is the key that opens the heart of king and beggar. Sympathy is the touchstone of life. Without it man is a drudge—only a slave to his necessities. Work without love is bondage. The man who works without the mainspring of sympathy loses the beauty of life and is deprived of the inspiration of success. Sympathy, and not ambition, is the foundation of true living. Josephine Pollard sings with true poetic insight:

"I sent an eagle from my ark,
 When all around was dull and dark,
 And watched it as it took its flight
 Onward and upward to a height
 Supremely grand; its wings, outspread,
 Make a black canopy o'erhead,
 Through which no ray of comfort stole,
 Nor promise of a peaceful goal.

"I sent a dove from out the ark,
 When all around was dull and dark,
 And watched it as it soared on high,
 Its white wings brightening the sky—
 As if heaven's gates stood wide apart;
 Until the radiance reached my heart,
 And on the pinions of a dove
 I found the anchorage of love.

“Too oft ambition clouds the gaze,
Removes the sunshine from life's ways,
And, like an eagle, in its flight
Is lost upon some giddy height;
While on white wings the carrier dove
Bears the poor, burdened soul above,
Into an atmosphere of peace,
Where all these surging billows cease.”

Work for others rescues us from the slavish monotony of life. A little street waif was once taken to the house of a great English lady, and the childish eyes, that were accustomed to look so sharply after daily bread, were dazzled by signs of splendor on every hand. “Can you get everything you want?” the child asked of the mistress of the mansion. “Yes, I think so,” was the reply. “Can you buy anything you would like to have?” The lady answered, “Yes.” And the child, who was of a meditative turn of mind, looked at her half pityingly and said, “Don't you find it dull?” To the little, keen mind, accustomed to live, like the birds in the park, from day to day and to rejoice over enough to eat with the appetite born of rarity, the aspect of continual plenty, desires all gratified by possession, contained an idea of monotony that seemed almost wearisome.

Many a man and many a woman, with wealth and culture and all things that the thoughtless multitude envy, have died of pure monotony. Wholly selfish, given up to a life of simply taking care of self, many a man has considered it not worth while and has died the death of the suicide, fairly yawning himself out of existence. Many a parent, strug-

gling against poverty and other ills in order to keep together and educate a large family, has failed to appreciate how richly they were really blessed of God, and that this work for others, which filled heart and hands with care, has in it a joy that would seem a very oasis in the desert to many a childless woman and lonely man, dying of the monotonous rounds of their selfish lives. There is an old poem with enough of human nature in it to deserve to be always kept new. It tells how a father and mother, who found it very hard to make two ends meet in caring for a large family of children, refused the offer of a rich friend's comfortable provision for them, on the condition that they should in return give him one of their children. It is the mother who tells the story :

“‘Which shall it be? Which shall it be?’

I looked at John—John looked at me

(Dear, patient John, who loves me yet,

As well as though my locks were jet).

And when I found that I must speak,

My voice seemed strangely low and weak :

‘Tell me again what Robert said.’

And then I, listening, bent my head.

‘This is his letter : “ I will give

A house and land while you shall live,

If, in return, from out your seven,

One child to me for aye is given.”’

I looked at John's old garments worn ;

I thought of all that John had borne

Of poverty and work and care,

Which I, though willing, could not share ;

I thought of seven mouths to feed,

Of seven little children's need,

And then of this. ‘Come, John,’ said I,

‘We'll choose among them as they lie

Asleep.' So, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band—
First to the cradle lightly stepped,
Where Lillian, the baby, slept,
A glory 'gainst the pillow white.
Softly the father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily said, 'Not her, not her.'
We stooped beside the trundle-bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Athwart the boyish faces there,
In sleep so pitiful and fair ;
I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek
A tear, undried, e'er John could speak.
'He's but a baby, too,' said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.
Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace.
'No, for a thousand crowns, not him,'
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.
Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one—
Could he be spared? 'Nay, He who gave
Bid us befriend him to his grave ;
Only a mother's heart can be
Patient enough for such as he ;
And so,' said John, 'I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer.'
Then stole we softly up above
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
'Perhaps for her 'twould better be,'
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in willful way
And shook his head, 'Nay, love, not thee,'
The while my heart beat audibly.
Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad,

So like his father. 'No, John, no—
 I cannot, will not let him go.'
 And so we wrote, in courteous way,
 We could not give one child away ;
 And afterward toil lighter seemed,
 Thinking of that of which we dreamed,
 Happy in truth that not one face
 Was missed from its accustomed place ;
 Thankful to work for all the seven,
 Trusting the rest to One in heaven !”

Working for others rescues us from the slavery of covetousness. Some people are nothing more or less than great human sponges, that absorb everything they touch, but never of their own accord yield anything up. If they ever give up anything it is because they are squeezed so hard they cannot help themselves. Some people are like a great spider, who builds his web so broad and runs his snares out so on every hand that he catches every fly that comes in his corner of the room, but no fly who gets in ever gets out. So these people have snares by which they draw in and absorb, but are always ready and eager for more, always selfish, covetous, and miserly. As some one has well written, there are people who display wonderful absorbing qualities in the home. They absorb the loving attention and thoughtful care of wife and mother, brothers and sisters, or children, and give out nothing in return but unkind words and cold indifference. When they enter the family circle the atmosphere always drops below zero. They seem to draw out of it all its warmth and life ; but no evidence of the existence of such qualities appears in their natures. They just absorb, and that is all. Many professing Christians

have remarkable absorbing power. Blessings are theirs day by day, and God's love and goodness are about them everywhere, like the very atmosphere. They drink these things into their being as plants do the sunshine, and yet nothing appears to prove the gift. No grateful prayers arise from their lips, no thanks are returned for the bounty God bestows. They take in all the happiness and prosperity that comes along, but give out nothing in like kind—no sympathy, no charity, no mercy, no kindness, no love. They just absorb, but nothing more.

God save us from being simply sponges in the world and in the Church. But you may rest assured there is only one way he will do it, and that is by setting you to work to distribute what he gives to you for the good of others. All the manifold blessings which God bestows upon us are intended to be a blessing to others as well as ourselves. Not one ought to be selfishly appropriated. Paul teaches us that God gives us divine comfort in sorrow, not for ourselves alone, but that we may know how to comfort others. How definitely is this expressed in his splendid words, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Phillips Brooks, commenting on this scripture, says that no man has come to true greatness who has not felt in some degree that his life belongs to his race, and that what God gives him he gives him for mankind. The truth is, we are at our best when we try to be our best,

not for ourselves alone, but for our brethren; and we take God's gifts most completely for ourselves when we realize that he sends them to us for the benefit of our fellows.

Work for others does also some positive things for us. First, it beautifies the character. A prettily dressed little American boy was walking along the streets of Paris one day when, as he tried to cross the crowded boulevard, he was knocked down by the pole of a carriage. In a moment a crowd had collected; but the first upon the spot was a little crossing sweeper, ragged and dirty, who had seen the danger and had sprung to help the little boy almost before the pole touched him. Tenderly and carefully the street boy raised the rich man's son in his arms, carried him through the crowd, and into a drug store near by. It was found that the boy was not much hurt. And soon the crowd dispersed. The druggist bound up the boy's wounds, the little crossing sweeper standing by in sympathy; and when the work was done he ran out, paid the boy's fare, and told the conductor where to stop. As the omnibus rolled away and the crossing sweeper turned back to his work a gentleman who had been looking on spoke to him, offering him six cents. "Here, my boy," said he, "you can't afford to pay that rich child's fare. Let me give it back to you." The crossing sweeper put his hand behind him. "O, no," said he, "for there wouldn't be any charm."

He meant that the charm of having done the kindness would all be lost to him if it cost him nothing, and he was quite right. The poor little

crossing sweeper understood that the true secret of happiness was in giving or in doing good. Nothing adds so much to the real beauty of a character or a life as that supreme humility and self-sacrifice which cheerfully, gladly goes down to help and bless those who need; and the lowlier and more helpless the sufferers may be whom we are permitted to serve the more beautiful it is, the nearer the likeness to Him who is the "chiefest among ten thousand" and the One "altogether lovely." Perhaps you remember the quaint verses that were current in the press some half dozen years ago, entitled "De Massa ob de Sheepfol' :

" De Massa ob de sheepfol',
 Dat guard de sheepfol' bin,
 Look out in de gloomerin' meadows,
 Whar de long night rain begin—
 So he call to the hirelin' shepa'd,
 ' Is my sheep, is dey all come in ?'

" O, den says de hirelin' shepa'd,
 ' Dey's some dey's black and thin,
 And some dey's po' ol' weddas,
 But de res' dey's all brung in.'

" Den de Massa ob de sheepfol',
 Dat guard de sheepfol' bin,
 Goes down in de gloomerin' meadows,
 Whar de long night rain begin—
 So he le' down de ba's ob de sheepfol',
 Callin' sof', ' Come in, come in,'
 Callin' sof', ' Come in, come in !'

" Den up t'ro' de gloomerin' meadows,
 T'ro' de col' night rain and win',
 And up t'ro' de gloomerin' rain-paf,
 Whar de sleet fa' pie'cin' thin,

De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
 Dey all comes gadderin' in,
 De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
 Dey all comes gadderin' in."

Finally, we have this truth, that in working for others we are enriching our own souls. Even Job's oxen and camels came back to him when, forgetful of his own poverty, he was busy praying for his friends. Dean Swift was once before an immense throng in London to preach a charity sermon. It was very effective, but it was the shortest sermon on record. After slowly reading his text, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord," the dean added, "Now, my brethren, if you are satisfied with the security down with the dust." Underneath his wit was the bed rock of the great law undergirding the universe. It is God, who has been giving out from mind and heart and soul to all the creatures of the universe since the time when the morning stars sang together, who assures that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Sometimes your gift seems to be lost. No record seems to be kept of it. It passes forever out of your sight. Nay, not forever! This life here is not the storehouse of the universe. Such returns as God gives us here are only foretastes of that land where every prayer offered for others is kept as precious perfume. Sometimes, when everything seems to be going away from us in this transitory life, we are ready in our anguish to cry out with the poet,

"Summer wind, let the hawthorns rest,
 Leave the blossom to deck the bough."

But the summer winds answer,

“‘Nay, I scatter them east and west—
Who knows where they are drifting now?’

“Gentle sea, let the white sails stay;
Life is brief, and to part is pain.”

But the waves reply,

“‘Nay, I carry them far away—
Who knows when they may come again?’

“Father Time, let the dreamer be;
Spare the visions that charm my sleep.

‘Nay, I laugh at thy dreams and thee;
Thou shalt lose them and wake to weep.’”

But over them all we are more than conquerors,
and may triumphantly exclaim:

“Wind and billow, and ruthless Time,
All your triumphs shall soon be past.
I am bound for a fairer clime,
Where lost treasures are found at last.

“Blooms of summer, and loves of old,
Hopes that faded and seemed to die,
Things more precious than gems or gold,
God has stored in his house on high.”

XII.

YESTERDAY.

“What hast thou done?”—Gen. iv, 10.

A MAN cannot run away from his shadow, neither can he escape from his yesterday. We cannot go back to efface or obliterate the record; but such as it is it pursues us and refuses to be left behind. The gate into the new year swings on its hinges, and we must pass through. We cannot avoid it if we would, we could not go back if we so desired. But the new year's gate cannot shut out our yesterday. It is ours. It belongs to us. It is a part of us. Herein is the great significance of our individuality.

It must have seemed personal enough when God came to Cain in that early time with this heart-searching question of the text, “What hast thou done?” and the further declaration, “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.” But it is just as personal now. Our personality is not lost because of the multiplication of individuals. We are individuals still. Some one says that there is an infinity of littleness which does more to illustrate and exalt the power of God than the infinity of greatness. Any being with an arm strong enough could chisel the mountains. Anyone with a hand large enough could hold the ocean. But it

is not the strong arm alone nor the great hand alone which could fashion a katydid, or paint a tiger lily. He who does both must combine delicacy the most wonderful with power the most mighty. And such is our God. So long as we can pluck in the wildest mountain gorge a tiny flower that is as perfect in all its parts as the rugged mountain itself we may know that God cares for individuals.

What is an individual? Certainly it cannot be a mere creation of circumstances. Sometimes we say we do not see how a man who has made shipwreck can help being just what he is—that it is only what might have been expected under the circumstances. But why should it have been expected? Only because the person is weak, and not because the circumstances are so strong. There is never a sin we fall into but we might have escaped it. There is never a temptation by which we are ensnared but we see afterward how we might have resisted it. God has given to us a will powerful and indomitable, which, if assisted by his grace that is freely offered us, can override even the most adverse circumstances and make them stepping-stones by which we rise to higher things. It is not true to say about any person that he is in any sense a creature of chance. He is rather the sum total of causes which he himself has set in motion, a result of forces which he has held in his own hand. Often, when men make a conspicuous success in life, we talk about them as “self-made men.” But why should we thus specialize? We all make ourselves. Great orators, great scholars, great poets are no more self-made than great drunkards and great fools. A bank

robber is a self-made thief, and these policemen in New York, whose iniquities are being uncovered, are self-made blackmailers and scoundrels. And every one of us to-day is making himself, and some of us have been at work a good while. We have had other opportunities, we have held clews in our hands. We have made discoveries, we have had strength. Whether we have used these things and profited by them or not, we are self-made. There is no other lesson that needs more constant and persistent emphasis put upon it in our time than this great truth of our personal, individual accountability to God for our daily lives and for the result of them in character.

You remember the Scripture lesson from the thirty-second chapter of the Book of Exodus, which tells the story of how the people became impatient and faithless during the absence of Moses on Mount Sinai, and how Aaron took the gold that the people brought him and made a calf for them to worship. But when Moses came back and reproached him for it Aaron was frightened and stammered out his pitiful excuse: "I said unto them, whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." He did not make the idol. O, no; not by any means! It was the naughty fire that made it. He only threw the gold in, and was not responsible for the results. It was truly a very strange and wonderful thing that it should have run together and become a calf; but it was the fire that did it. Alas, how many pitiful cowards like Aaron there are in the world to-day!

Men do what they know to be wrong. They do it deliberately and knowingly, and then try to throw the blame on somebody or something else.

Mr. D. L. Moody says that he once went from cell to cell in the Sing Sing prison and talked with a large number of the prisoners ; but he found only one man out of the whole lot who confessed that he was guilty and ought to be punished. All the others were, according to their stories, the unfortunate victims of circumstances. One man was drunk, and, meeting another man as he was staggering home, he thought he would play the part of a robber just for fun. So he pointed his pistol at the other man, and the pistol went off of itself and killed him. He did not mean to do it. The pistol was to blame. Another man had been found guilty of forgery ; but he was as innocent as a newborn babe. The pen somehow would write somebody else's name on the paper. The pen was to blame ; he did nothing but hold it.

And this is how it is outside of prison everywhere. A young man breaks his mother's heart by some shameful debauch, and he assures her that he never meant to do anything wrong. Some fellow-student or fellow-clerk led him astray and then left him in the lurch. And if you rise up out of this sort of sin and indulgence and ask a man who has lost his spiritual vitality, his love for the house of God, his delight in the class meeting, his ready word of experience and testimony for Christ, his devotion to winning souls, he will say : " My business has been so engrossing I had to leave too early or get home too late to have family prayers. My health requires

that I should have recreation class meeting nights. I was so exhausted that I found it necessary to sleep late on Sunday morning." And so he will go on for a half hour if need be ; but the result and substance of it all is this, that his heart is cold and indifferent toward God and the church, that the story of Christ's dying love for him no longer awakes tears of gratitude, that the opportunity to seek and save a lost sinner, which makes angels glad, no longer arouses him to enthusiasm. And he is not to blame for it. It was his business, his companions, his surroundings. Like Aaron, he put the gold into the fire, "and there came out this calf." And yet we know that Aaron intended to make a calf from the start ; for after it was molded he fashioned it with a graving tool. And yet he told Moses that the fire made the calf. He invoked the agency of the fire to accomplish his foolish and wicked purpose, and then laid the blame on it.

The truth is that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, men's excuses for their sins are just as bad as Aaron's was. They knew that they were putting themselves in association with persons and things that could not help but deteriorate their moral nature. If a man handles pitch it is his own fault that his hands are soiled. He cannot lay the blame on the pitch, for it is its nature to defile, and he knows it. With many people business association is the fire out of which comes the calf which they worship. They take the pure gold of boyhood and young manhood into some place of business to earn their living. They intend to be honest, but above all they intend to make money. They find that

competition is very keen and sharp on every side. They come to know after a while that certain practices of doubtful honesty are common, customary, and that, in the language of the street, "everybody does so." They yield to the temptation and sacrifice their conscience to custom. They know that what they do is wrong, but they excuse themselves by saying, "It is the fault of the business, and not mine." And so they go on casting their personal guilt upon the scapegoat of circumstances, and half believe in their own false and flimsy excuses.

Phillips Brooks never said anything with more insight into human life, which he knew so well, than this, that there are currents of bad influence flowing always in all directions. There is a perpetual river flowing toward sensuality and vice. There is a river flowing perpetually toward hypocrisy and religious pretense. There is a river always running toward skepticism and infidelity. And when you have once given yourself up to either of these rivers there is enough in the swirl of the waters about your boat and in the stress of the current beneath your keel to make you lose the conscious remembrance that it is by your own will that you are there.

There is no hope for any man or any woman who will thus seek to palliate and excuse personal guilt. If the prodigal in the Saviour's parable had come laying his degradation on the hogs or on his fast friends that brought him into association with them, he would have turned all the father's welcome to bitterness and grief. But when he came crying, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," he showed

that he was earnest and sincere. May God grant us every one, in the church or out of the church, a keen sense of our personal responsibility to God and a conscientious purpose to search our own hearts by the light of God's Spirit!

There is this further thought which I wish to emphasize. The opportunities to do things yesterday closed with yesterday. So each to-day is finishing up a personal record of its own. A story is told of an English minister who, being called to pray by the bedside of a dying man, sought to take him by the hand in token of their agreement in offering united prayer. The sick man withheld his hand, keeping it under the bedclothes, and the minister prayed without it. Presently the man died; and then as his hand was uncovered the mystery was explained. He was holding in his hand with the grasp of death a key—the key of his safe where his money was kept.

A newspaper published in Lewiston, Me., related some time since a similar story, concerning a man in the town of Durham in that State. The man was very penurious and very determined. He died at an advanced age. On his deathbed he kept his right hand closely clasped. As he drew his last breath he tightened his hold. Everybody there knew what he held in that hand. It was the key to the chest in which he kept his gold. As his nerveless hand unclosed the key dropped from his fingers and clattered against the bedside. As if to hold it even after he was dead, the miser had tied the key about his wrist by a strong cord, which he grasped as long as life remained. He could not

take his gold with him, but he kept the key. They buried him as he was, with the key to his money chest tied about his wrist. And what became of the gold? O, the heirs took care of that just the same. They split open the chest with an ax and divided the gold, and let the miser keep the key tied about his wrist. He is moldering in the grave, and the key is rusting beside him. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out of it save the treasures of the soul.

While this man lived, while yesterday was to-day, all power over his wealth was in the hand that could turn that key, and he could have opened that strong box and sent that gold on whatsoever mission of mercy or good he would. But when the iron lock had closed the gate on his yesterday how useless was the rusting key! Dear brothers and sisters, do not put the old story afar off. It has a message for you and for me. Day by day God gives to each one of us a strong box full of wealth, golden opportunities to be patient and kind and charitable and faithful and true, golden words with which to speak messages of brotherly kindness, rapid feet with which to carry messages for the King, to bring cordials of sympathy to the weary and the sick and the troubled. The keys are in our hands. They will unlock the whole storehouse of God "while the day lasts;" but they are useless, rusty things when we turn with them toward yesterday.

Gradually, but certainly, our yesterdays are building a character and dictating a destiny, not for to-day only and for to-morrow, but for the never-ending day after to-morrow. No man ever lived who

was strong enough to save himself from the results which had been builded into character by himself through his own daily life. Alfred Krupp, or Herr Krupp, as he was known, was called the cannon king of Prussia. He was the Tubal-cain of modern times, and his achievements brought him great fame and enormous wealth. But because of an evil temper, which he allowed to grow, in his treatment of his family and of the people who came in contact with him, he became as harsh and vindictive and stubborn and implacable as the iron out of which he forged instruments of death. And, strange to say, this man, who was always devoting his really great mental powers to devise means for the destruction of life, had himself, perhaps, the most terrible fear of death recorded among distinguished men of modern times. A relative of his wife, while on a visit to his home, suddenly fell sick and died. Herr Krupp, when he heard of it, refused to enter his house, but fled to Düsseldorf, and stayed there until the funeral was over. Mrs. Krupp's very natural remonstrance against this conduct so enraged him that she found it impossible to live longer with him. The weakness which sent this "man of iron" flying from a funeral scene grew into the great torment of his life. He never forgave anyone who spoke to him of dying. The greatest manufacturer of death could not bear the thought or mention of death. It was a standing order throughout his vast works that anyone referring to the subject of death in conversation was to be discharged on the spot. As Krupp grew old the horror of the inevitable end constantly haunted him. And finally, when sick-

ness came, all the most famous doctors in the German empire were sent for in turn to attend the unhappy millionaire. The last to be called was Bismarck's physician, Dr. Schweningen. A few days before his death he said to him, "My dear doctor, make me live ten years longer and I will gladly give you a million." How like the dying shriek of Queen Elizabeth, "Millions of money for an inch of time!"

Let me put over against the old Prussian cannon king plain John Dubois, the Pennsylvania lumber king. You may find his name over there yet in the town which his enterprise created. Thousands of men in the great forests and along the rivers gathered and rafted his logs, and many hundreds more in mills and shops worked them into a part of the commerce of the world. Every man in his shops and mills, and most of those in the forests, he personally knew, and he treated them with as much kindness and courtesy as if they were partners in his great business. The most obscure worker among all his employees knew that he had in him a kind friend. Once, when times were hard and the price of lumber fell so low as to cut off all profits in the business, his managers concluded that the men's wages must be reduced and presented to him a schedule of rates. Mr. Dubois looked over the figures, kept them a day and a night, and then told the managers that he could not take anything from the workmen's earnings. "I find on investigation," he said, "that these men have all they can do now to pay for the necessaries of life, and I can stand the loss better than they can."

It is unnecessary to say that such a man never had any labor troubles. When he came to his last illness and found that the end was near his heart was with his men, and he had fifty or more of his overseers summoned to his sick room and talked to them. And the men went away saying that they had never heard such a Christian sermon before in their lives. His only regret was that he had not preached Christ personally as much to the men as he ought. "I am willing to die," he told them; "but if God would give me another year I would spend it in preaching Christ to the men in the mills." These sturdy lumbermen were rugged men, unused to melting moods, but the tears ran down their cheeks while he spoke to them and, calling each one of them by name, with a "God bless you," bade them good-bye. Only three days afterward he quietly breathed his last.

"There was no anguish on his brow,
No terror in his eye."

How strangely fitting and characteristic were the deaths of these men. Terribly so was that of the great artificer of war, who was borne on into the eternal shadows fighting and fearing his fate; but the man of peace, when his time came, had only to fall asleep. How immeasurably greater was he than the other! Brothers and sisters, what kind of character and destiny are your yesterdays building?

I cannot close this sermon, so terribly sad in its heart-searching questions, without throwing out the Gospel line of hope to any that are willing here and now to repent of their sins and lay hold upon the

Saviour. You cannot change the deeds of yesterday—not even the omnipotent hand of the Almighty can do that, not even the compassionate, nail-wounded hand of Jesus the Crucified can do that. But, blessed be God! if we repent of our sins and with open heart confess them “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” and the body of death may be separated from us; and with a new purpose and a new hope, born of a sense of God’s forgiving love, we may enter upon new lives as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

There may be thorns in your past, but over them God will lay the pillow of Jesus’s dying love for your soul. Paxton Hood tells that he visited his beloved friend Benjamin Parsons when he was dying. And that good man said to him, “My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite Power, infinite Love, and infinite Wisdom.” Preaching some time afterward, he related the incident; and some months later he was requested to call upon a young woman who was apparently dying. She said: “I felt I must see you before I die. I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head upon pillows; and as they were taking them away I said, ‘Mayn’t I keep them?’ The surgeon said, ‘No, my dear, we must take them away.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘you can’t take away Benjamin Parsons’s three pillows; I can lay my head on infinite Power, infinite Love, and infinite Wisdom.’”

XIII.

THE CONDITIONS OF WEALTH IN SPIRITUAL
UTTERANCE.

“In everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.”—1 Cor. i, 5.

ONE of the beneficent miracles which brightened the Saviour's path during his short and glorious life in Palestine was that he made the dumb to speak. And Paul proclaims in our text that the Saviour has not yet lost this power; for he declares to these Corinthian Christians, “Ye are enriched by him, in all utterance.” And, indeed, it was given as one of the peculiar characteristics of the pentecostal periods after our Lord's ascension, in the descriptions of the work of the disciples, that “the Spirit gave them utterance.”

It is undoubtedly the desire of our Saviour that we should all be witnesses for him and to him, not only by our actions, but by the marvelous gift of speech and conversation. I think, also, that there can be no doubt that this gift of helpful spiritual utterance is within the reach of every sincere and honest Christian. I do not mean by this that everyone should have the same ability to speak, for there is a great diversity of the measure of gifts given to us in every department of human life; but what I do mean is that it is not necessary for anybody to go

along the King's highway tongue-tied and dumb. I am sure that it is a matter for serious contemplation and for great sorrow that there are such large companies who walk speechless in silent march, like the ghosts of Christians, taking their praiseless way toward the heavenly home. How many there are who are disciples of the Lord Jesus in their intention and purpose, and yet no joyous word of gracious, loving invitation breaks from their silent lips, no glad cry of victory or thanksgiving ever bursts from their muffled mouths.

I should be very sorry if, in trying to help people who honestly feel that they are deficient in expression, I should hurt them; but the company is so large and the duty of breaking, if possible, the silence of any Christian into thankful testimony so great, that I feel it worth the trial. I think it would help a great many people if they would consider this, that the natural ability to be fluent or brilliant in conversation or public speech has very little, if anything, to do with its spiritual effect; and that oftentimes people who have no brilliancy of speech at all and speak with the greatest hesitancy and embarrassment to themselves have, through the spiritual unction which is granted to them in direct answer to prayer, remarkable influence and power in bearing testimony to the Lord Jesus.

I do not doubt there are those now near me who have a sincere longing to be able to bear open testimony to the Saviour who has done so much to bless and gladden their hearts and lives. I have no doubt many here could join in this prayer of Katharine Lente Stevenson:

“ Lord, give me words !

Thy thoughts move in my being's deepest deep

As, 'neath old ocean's calm or storm-tossed main,

The tide swells, though the billows wake or sleep ;

I feel thy pulsings in each swift heartbeat ;

I breathe thee in each breath of joy or pain ;

But, O, to speak thee forth were bliss complete !

Lord, give me words !

“ Lord, give me words !

Heaven's songs echo, ecstatic, on my ear ;

The anthem-swell before the great white throng,

In moments rare, with my soul's soul I hear ;

I catch the song the morning stars glad sing—

The sphere's deep music through each radiant zone.

Could I such symphonies to earth but bring !

Lord, give me words !

“ Lord, give me words !

I grope, blind, in thy being's deep abyss ;

Thou who art light, through my dense darkness shine

One ray of palpable, white, burning bliss !

Give me one song which shall such echoes wake

In other hearts as have been waked in mine !

One strain of perfect concord let me make !

Lord, give me words !

“ Lord, give me words !

I'm dumb ; I have no might to speak thy thoughts ;

My lips have felt no thrill of angel's touch,

With burning coal from life's great altar brought ;

Dumb, voiceless, inarticulate, I grope

About the gates of speech. O Christ, thou pitiedst such ;

Thou once didst touch sealed lips ; grant me, too, hope,

And give me words !”

I am sure that such a prayer is proper and right, and that among the ascension gifts which the Saviour obtained for us, when he led captivity captive

and received gifts for men, was the power to enrich those who love him and who ask for it in utterance. I do not think that your natural gift of utterance has anything to do with it. The less ability you have by nature the more it is possible you may have by God's gift, in spiritual effectiveness. And surely you cannot put this aside and say it cannot mean you because you have such a poverty of utterance, because the very word which is used, "enrichment," signifies that it is bestowed upon people who are now poor. You cannot enrich a man who is already very wealthy. The very word "enrichment" indicates that there have been meagerness, poverty, and severe limitation. But if a man is very poor you can enrich him; and that is just what the Lord Jesus Christ will do for every Christian who, with a sincere heart, seeks for the blessed gift of Christian utterance, the power of great expression by word of the soul's love to Christ and of its perception of his unspeakable love in return. If the desire of your heart is great enough for such an utterance it is surely possible.

How may we obtain this gift of utterance? Very naturally, of course, the man who wrote this first sentence which we are studying is the very best authority to explain to us how we may find it. When we turn over to the second letter of Paul to these Corinthian Christians, we are told what sort of individual Paul expected to find rich in spiritual utterance. In the midst of an exhortation to cultivate the grace of liberality, in the seventh verse of the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians, he says: "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith,

and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." Now if we accept these words of Paul as expressing his mind on the subject it is very easy for us to settle upon some of the definite conditions from which springs a rich spiritual utterance.

First, it springs from a strong faith. "I believed, therefore have I spoken," said a good man of the olden time. The man who doubts is always hesitating and uncertain, and naturally poverty-stricken in helpful speech. A deep, intense faith forces an utterance, as the upswelling fountain forces an outlet for its waters. The man of faith always has an experience to talk about which is rich to hear. I do not mean by faith a mere intellectual assent to some creed, but a vital, acting faith, such as the farmer has in autumn about the coming of winter, which causes him to fill the garner full of stores against the days of storm and cold; such a faith as Dr. Joseph Parker illustrates by the sailor's belief that the river runs to the sea, and that the sea is large enough to sustain his ship. It is acting upon such a faith when he launches his vessel. If the vessel is left standing on the stocks when she is finished, then all his praises of the ocean go for nothing. It would have been better never to have built the ship than to leave her unlaunched—a monument of his scientific belief, but also a testimony to his practical infidelity.

Our faith in God is a seagoing ship. It is meant for the wide waters of the great deep. We are to sail out beyond the reach of buoys or lighthouses and take our reckoning from the Star of Bethlehem at

night and from the Sun of righteousness by day. This is a living faith. To simply believe in God in your head, by intellectual assent, is like sitting in a ship that is rotting down by the dock, because she is chained to her moorings. But to believe in God with all your heart, surrendering to him your will and your love, is to cut loose from the moorings and sail out upon the great ocean, trusting him under all circumstances, crying out, with the Old Testament hero, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee," and "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." And, my friends, just as surely as the sailor has a log book full of interesting reminiscences of sky and sea and storm, so the voyager of faith will have a log book full of interesting reminiscences of sea and storm and sky. Not only stories of fightings in the teeth of the gale, but of sweet communion with the dwellers above the sky.

The utterance of such an experimental faith is always rich in influence. It is related that Bishop Kavanaugh was walking one day when he met a prominent physician, who offered him a seat in his carriage. The physician was an infidel, and the conversation turned upon religion. "I am surprised," said the doctor, "that such an intelligent man as you should believe such an old fable as that." The bishop said, "Doctor, suppose years ago some one had recommended to you a prescription for pulmonary consumption, and you had procured the prescription and taken it according to order and had been cured of that terrible disease. What would you say of the man who would not try your

prescription?" "I should say he was a fool." "Twenty-five years ago," said Kavanaugh, "I tried the power of God's grace. It made a different man of me. All these years I have preached salvation, and wherever accepted I have never known it to fail." What could the doctor say to such testimony as that? And such testimonies have more power in turning men from the error of their ways to the personal experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ than anything else.

"How would you prove the divinity of Christ?" said some ministers to a young backwoods preacher whom they were examining. "What?" said he, puzzled by their question. "How would you prove the divinity of Christ?" "Why, he saved my soul," was the triumphant reply. But to give this answer with effectiveness and power one must be saved and know it in his heart and show it in his life; and he then becomes a living epistle, known and read of all men. Nothing could be more fruitless than the hollow expression of faith that has no heart behind it. But with a sincere heart throbbing behind the utterance, it is the very message of God to those who hear.

A rich utterance springs from a full knowledge. It is worth noticing and very significant that, in both these striking statements of Paul in his letters to the Corinthians, knowledge and utterance are closely linked together. Is it not true that many times we are very shy about uttering words about our Saviour when our restraint is, not that we are so timid or diffident, but because our knowledge of the Lord is not very recent? A lamp always gives a poor

light, no matter how good the wick or how clear the chimney, when the oil is out. The Lord will not quench smoking flax, he will be very tender with a wick that is out of order, but there is no possibility of getting light where there is no oil. The lamp ceases to have utterance because all its stores of utterance are impoverished. Of course we cannot expect to express life when we haven't it. The root of all effective spiritual utterance is a knowledge of God, a rich acquaintance with spiritual things.

It is natural when anything is over full that it will overflow. The mouth speaks out of the abundance of what is in the heart. That is the Saviour's own figure. And so we will very naturally talk about the things we know most about and are most interested in. General Grant was once criticised by a public man as an ignoramus, who knew nothing about anything except horses. When the accusation was brought to the attention of the silent man of Appomattox he remarked that, when it was necessary for him to hold conversation with others, he always tried to find out the one subject on which they were most intelligent and endeavor to adapt himself to the occasion. If one is wrapped up in business, that is what one will naturally talk about. Where one's treasure is there one's heart will be, and the utterance will give expression to what is in the heart. We may force ourselves to talk about other things, but helpful utterance will always be linked with knowledge. An empty head or an empty heart cannot give out intellectual or spiritual riches, any more than an empty vault can give out gold or an empty reservoir send out cooling streams

of water. If we are to have a rich spiritual utterance we must have a heart full of rich treasure. We must enrich our storehouse with the knowledge of God, through his word and through his revelation of himself to our hearts and to other Christians.

Are there not those here who might have well said to the Lord, as they sat down here to enter upon this service: "O Lord, I confess unto thee that I have given very little time indeed to the study of thy word during the last year, but I have never failed to read the daily paper. I have not delighted in thy law by day or night, but I kept well up on the discussions on the strike and the revelations of the Lexow Committee. I have not failed to search diligently the columns of the *Tribune*, or the *Herald*, the *World*, or the *Eagle*, or the *Standard-Union*. Lord, do I not deserve some credit for this? If, alas, thy word has not been steadily a light unto my feet, still the electric lights of men have thrown a moonlight splendor over my entire inner consciousness. I do not perceive very clearly thy presence in my daily life, and I do not greatly enjoy the more spiritual services of thy house, but I still cling to the orthodox faith of the fathers and desire to be counted among thy followers." I wonder if that would not be a pretty correct statement of the condition of some hearts?

And if there are any here who have given themselves up to read the Sunday paper this morning as a prelude to coming to the worship of God, then your minds are probably in a still worse condition. Did you ever in the summer time, when you were out in the country, put on your best clothes on

Sunday morning and go out for a stroll through the pastures and woods, and come through a miserable patch of weeds or walk home by a dusty road, and find when you got home that your clothes were covered with dust and cockle burs and discolored with all sorts of weeds and dirt? If so, your outward condition at such a time for appearance in the house of God would be something to compare with the inward condition of a man's mind and heart who has been reading the secular Sunday paper on Sunday morning, and comes to church to undertake to worship God with all the dust and cockle burs and gossips and scandals—the most trashy and the least valuable of all the utterances of the daily press—obtruding themselves in his mind and heart. No wonder that such a person has nothing helpful to say in a spiritual meeting. Depend upon it that if you are to be helpful in spiritual utterance your heart must be a treasure house of spiritual knowledge.

A rich utterance springs from a diligent soul. No lips were ever so rich in utterance as those of Jesus Christ, and none was ever so sleeplessly diligent as he. In three short years he so touched the life of his time, indeed so impressed the heart of humanity itself, that he becomes more powerful in the world every year; and his utterances made to those simple peasants in Palestine have become the richest and sweetest utterances of all languages to ever-increasing millions in all parts of the world. He went about doing good; and out of this daily service, as he went on his mission of mercy and salvation, the rich utterances which revealed the heart of God sprang as naturally to his lips as any other

conversations that are recorded in human history. If we shall go about doing good as did our Master, filling our lives with gracious deeds, carrying on our hearts the sorrows and the weaknesses of the oppressed and infirm, working in fellowship with God, seeking to bring gladness to the disconsolate and the weary, rich spiritual utterance will come to us that will be full of blessing to those who hear it.

A Christian merchant in New York city was one day passing out of a warehouse where he had been doing some business, when he met near the door one of the clerks with whom he was acquainted. He was in a great hurry, but he took the time to lay his hand gently on the young man's shoulder and say kindly and earnestly, "My dear ——, you ought to be with us." He passed on, not knowing at the time whether any impression had been made by the remark. But the gentle utterance, given power by the Holy Spirit, found its way to the heart of the young man, and in a little while he was with them in heavenly fellowship.

Finally, a rich utterance springs from a generous soul. A half-hearted, hesitating service is generally irksome and unprofitable to everybody connected with it. This is just as true about religion as it is about anything else. A man who dallies with his religious privileges and is half afraid to commit himself to the Lord or to the devil is in the condition of those people about whom the Saviour speaks, in the Book of Revelation, and of whom he says, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." You must give your whole heart and life to the Lord if you would

have rich spiritual experience, a joyous Christian life, and a spiritual ability in conversation to make the heavenly visions that come to you a blessing to others. It is not so much the amount of your gifts that makes you valuable to the church or to the world as that, first of all, you give yourself. If you do that, no matter how small the self seems to be that you have to give, God will enlarge and bless your soul and fill it with rich treasures that shall overflow to bless all other lives.

Some one says, very beautifully, that the smallest bar of song breathed into the world adds its sweetness to the world's music. The right thing you did yesterday made the world a little better, made it easier, too, for other people to do right. The unselfish deed you did last week made the forces of love on the earth a little stronger, and made it easier for others to be unselfish. Rest assured that no matter how small our message, how trite or commonplace it seems, the world cannot afford to miss hearing it. The least lovely thing done leaves a touch of new beauty somewhere.

“ There's never a rose in all the world
But makes some green spray sweeter ;
There's never a wind in all the sky
But makes some bird wing fleeter ;
There's never a star but brings to heaven
Some silver radiance tender ;
And never a rosy cloud but helps
To crown the sunset splendor ;
No robin but may thrill some heart,
His dawn-light gladness voicing.
God gives us all some small, sweet way
To set the world rejoicing.”

XIV.

DANTE'S STAIRCASE FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE.

"He that is holy."—Rev. iii, 7.

"God be merciful to me a sinner."—Luke xviii, 13.

"We have redemption through his blood."—Eph. i, 7.

I HAVE brought these three suggestive scriptures together that we might study them in connection with a very vivid picture, which is given in Dante's "Purgatory," of the three steps in a staircase from despair to hope. The great poet brings his pilgrim in sight of the gate of diamond that leads into the place where souls may be cleansed from sin and fitted for Paradise. To this gate,

"With frontispiece of diamond and gold embellished,"

there is a mysterious staircase, the composition of whose steps is very minutely described. Dante says :

"Thither did we approach ; and the first stair
Was marble white, so polished and so smooth
I mirrored myself therein as I appear.
The second, tinct of deeper hue than pers,
Was of calcinèd and uneven stone,
Cracked all asunder, lengthwise and across.
The third, that uppermost rests massively,
Porphyry seemed to me, as flaming red
As blood that from a vein is spurting forth."

In the notes to Longfellow's version, from which I make this quotation, we are told that the first

stair is confession ; the second, contrition ; and the third, penance. No doubt these notes are in harmony with mediæval ideas ; but it seems to me that Dr. Talbot W. Chambers and other students are far more true to the natural suggestion in these lines, when they give to them the interpretation which I have intimated in the three scriptures which I have brought together.

First, is the block of white marble forming the first step, polished with such perfection that, like a mirror, it reflected fully the images of those who set their feet upon it. Surely this must picture the perfect holiness of the divine nature, in whose pure heart when the most self-righteous man sees himself mirrored he is horrified at his own sins and iniquities. It is easy for a man to compare himself with other sinful people about him, until he is flattered at the idea that he is equal to or better than the average of his neighbors ; but when he brings himself face to face with Jesus Christ and looks into that holy mirror, showing what manhood ought to be and can be by divine help, he is shocked to see how dwarfed and marred he is. That must have been what the psalmist means when, in the ninetieth psalm he says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

How often you hear it said about a picture or about the complexion of a human face, "It will not bear too strong a light." How many times in these recent days of investigation into the iniquitous government of our cities it is said about this or that man or transaction, "It will not bear being brought

to the light." And many a man whose conduct has passed the ordinary scrutiny of his fellows has, when brought into the clear, searching light of the righteous demands of law, been disgraced and overthrown. So the saintly Dr. Edward Payson says that, if we would see our sins as they really are, if we would see their number, blackness, and criminality, and the malignity and desert of every sin, we must see them in the light of God's purity and righteousness by which our sins must be judged. If we would see our sins in their true colors we must bring them into the hallowed place and consider how they will appear when the pure eyes of the Saviour looks on them.

Job experienced this and describes it when he says to God: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It was after Zacchæus had looked into the searching eyes of Christ and into the perfect honesty of that noble heart that he became so ashamed of his own fraud and, full of repentance, exclaimed, "The half of my goods I give to the poor; and wherever I have taken wrongfully from any man I will make a fourfold restitution." Saul was proud and bigoted and self-righteous; but when the brightness of the glory of Jesus Christ shone around him on his way to Damascus he saw the ugliness of his heart, that it was full of hate and anger and bigotry, when brought alongside of the gentle purity and tenderness of Jesus. In the light of that vision it seemed to him that he was the greatest sinner that ever lived in the world. And long years afterward, writ-

ing to Timothy, he says—and nobody can doubt that he meant every word of it—“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

The trouble with a great many people who are finding fault with the Scripture doctrine so clearly declared everywhere—that God hates sin and must and will punish it wherever found, and that the sinner finally impenitent will bring everlasting doom upon his soul—is that they do not recognize what a horrible thing sin is. O my friends, do not be deceived. Do not measure yourselves by the imperfect characters about you, but measure by that one perfect character who has worn humanity—the Lord Jesus Christ. I wish you could stand at Dante’s first stair and see yourselves mirrored as you are ; see every ambition and lust and appetite, and see how it links you with all the horrid brood of iniquity. You would be shocked and horrified, but it might be your salvation. Some time you will have a look like that. I pray God it may not be too late for you to benefit by it !

At Grand Rapids, recently, the cash till of a certain business firm was frequently tampered with and money extracted. The cashier determined on a novel thief-catching experiment. He arranged a kodak upon a convenient shelf near the desk, and also fixed a pan of powder close by. A set of electric wires was arranged so that a slight pull upon the cash drawer set off the powder, and by means of the flash light so obtained an instantaneous photograph could be taken. The trap was set for a

Saturday night, and it worked to perfection. When the plate from the kodak was developed it showed a good photograph of three boys in the act of opening the cash drawer. The police were called in, and after a search the boys were arrested. They denied everything at first, feeling sure that there was no evidence against them ; but when confronted with the photograph they were overwhelmed with amazement, broke down completely, and confessed all. God has so arranged everything in this world that it makes a record ; and no Edison has ever been able to make an instrument so perfect in its power to record sound or touch or form or fact as the memory which you carry in your own heart. And you may depend upon it that some time you shall have to face this record, face it in the dazzling light of the great white throne ; and we shall have no disposition to deny anything, for it will be only necessary to bring out the records from that wonderful picture gallery in our own memory. How much wiser it is to search our own hearts now in the light of God's face, to come now and look into this holy mirror when, instead of meaning our doom, it may be the first step in the stairway toward our salvation. There is nobody in this world to be so pitied as the self-righteous soul deceiving his own heart. Lucy Larcom sings the scriptural truth very clearly :

“ Have pity, Lord, upon the poor,
 The poor who think themselves the rich,
 Who only of this world are sure
 And know not of the treasury which
 Thy children hold, who with thee stay
 And share thy glory day by day.

“ Have pity, Lord, on hearts that lie
 Wrapped in a selfish peace, asleep ;
That will not wake at misery’s cry,
 That can be glad while others weep,
That shut thy holy light away
And dream that their own night is day.

“ Have pity, Lord, on us, the blind,
 Who lead thy groping souls astray ;
On us, the proud, whose foolish minds
 Will not believe in thee, the Way !
Pity us, humble us, till we,
As little children, follow thee !

“ Have pity, Lord, upon us all,
 Us sinners, judging others’ sins,
Scoffing at stumblers while we fall.
 O loving Lord, whoever wins
A place beside thee in thy heaven
Must win it as a soul forgiven.”

The second step, which Dante’s pilgrim climbed toward hope was a dark stone, cracked lengthwise and broken across through its whole mass. What a suggestive figure this with which to compare a broken heart and contrite spirit wrung with a sense of sin. The poor publican, standing in the temple, not daring so much as to lift his eyes toward heaven, but with sobs that shake his rugged frame and tears that tell of the deep agony of his heart, crying out, “ God be merciful to me a sinner,” is the natural picture that rises to our mind from the study of this second step in Dante’s stair. Or you see poor Peter, trying to walk on the boisterous waves of Galilee to meet the Saviour, feeling himself sinking and drowning, and crying out to the Lord, “ Save me, I perish ! ”

When one gets a clear view of himself and sees that he is a poor, miserable sinner his heart is broken down before God's great love and mercy in offering to save him, and there is born a real repentance, which not only makes him loathe his sin—for many a man does that and goes on committing his sin over and over—but makes him turn away from his sin and cry out to the Lord for mercy and salvation. He is like the people on the day of Pentecost who, when Peter accused them of being a part of the mob that hounded Jesus to his crucifixion, saw their sin so clearly and were so heart-broken over it that they did not think of resenting his words, but cried out in agony, "What shall we do to be saved?"

In the Middle Ages, when lords and knights were at war with each other, one of them resolved to avenge himself upon a neighbor who had offended him. It happened that on the very evening when he had made this resolution he heard that his enemy was to pass near his castle, and with only a few men with him. It was a good opportunity to take his revenge, and he determined not to let it pass. He spoke of his plan in the presence of his chaplain, who tried in vain to persuade him to give it up. The good man spoke of the sin he was about to commit, but his words had no effect. At last he said: "My lord, since I cannot persuade you to give up this plan of yours, will you, at least, consent to come with me to the chapel, that we may pray together before you go?" The duke consented, and the chaplain and he knelt together in prayer. Then the mercy-loving Christian said to

the revengeful warrior: "Will you repeat after me, sentence by sentence, the prayer which our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught to his disciples?" "I will do it," replied the duke. The chaplain said a sentence, and the duke repeated it, till he came to the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." There the duke was silent. "My lord duke, you are silent," said the chaplain. "Will you be so good as to continue to repeat the words after me, if you dare say so? 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'" "I cannot," replied the duke. "Well, God cannot forgive you, for he has said so. He himself has given this prayer. Therefore, you must either give up your revenge or give up saying this prayer; for to ask God to pardon you as you pardon others is to ask him to take vengeance on you for all your sins. Go now, my lord, and meet your victim. God will meet you at the great day of judgment." The iron will of the duke was broken. "No," said he; "I will finish my prayer. My God, my Father, pardon me; forgive me as I forgive him who has offended me." "Amen!" said the chaplain. "Amen!" repeated the duke, who had for the first time in his life understood the true meaning of the Lord's Prayer.

I pray God, if you are a sinner against him to-night, that you may not only see the fact in the mirror of his pure heart and righteous word, but that your heart may be broken down in the presence of your sin, and that thus you may climb the second step toward salvation.

The third step, upon which stood both feet of the

angel who guarded the entrance, was a solid block of porphyry, red as the blood that spurts forth from the smitten vein. Surely we can see nothing else in this but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, shed as an atonement for us. This vein of crimson blood of sacrifice runs through the whole Bible everywhere, and Jesus came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. "We have redemption through his blood."

Some people claim that their æsthetic natures recoil from the idea of this giving of the blood of the Lord Jesus for us. They say it makes them think about the shambles and horrifies them. Strange that it never horrifies them anywhere else. Everything that is most heroic, that is noblest and most splendid, in human life is in perfect harmony with it. The most æsthetic of these kid-gloved theologians never thinks of the shambles when he recalls the fact that the mother gives of her own blood and perils her own life to bring her child into the world. It does not occur to him, perhaps, to think of the shambles when some fireman in the lurid glare of the midnight flames, finding the ladder too short to reach the window above him where human beings are about to perish, clings with his feet to the top rung of the ladder, presses his bleeding fingers into some crevice of the wall over his head, and makes of his own broad shoulders a human bridge by which the perishing may climb to life and safety. It is only when the great heart of God, longing for his children lost in sin, crying out after them, gives his Son to suffer and die for the lost, to be born under the law that he might ransom those that were

under the law, and to shed his blood as a sacrifice for perishing sinners—it is only then that such a man thinks of the shambles.

This wonderful, precious doctrine of the atonement through Jesus Christ is in harmony with all that we know of the character of God, is in harmony with his universe, in harmony with all that is best and truest in human nature. It is the Strong baring his shoulders to carry the burdens of the weak; it is the Highest stooping to save the lowest; it is the Best coming to ransom the bad. O, this is a conception of a God about whose neck I can throw my arms, and upon whose bosom I can pillow my head! On this blood-red stone I can plant my feet and know that this is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

Not in our goodness, but in his goodness, is our hope. A minister of the Gospel was once asked to visit a poor dying woman. The messenger, being ignorant, could give no account of her state, except that she was a very good woman and very happy, and was now at the end of a well-spent life and, therefore, sure of going to heaven. The minister went, saw she was very ill, and after a few kindly inquiries about her bodily condition, said, “Well, I understand you are in a very peaceful state of mind, depending upon a well-spent life.” The dying woman looked hard at him and said, “Yes, I am in the enjoyment of peace, and that from a well-spent life, but it is the well-spent life of Jesus—not my doings, but his; not my merits, but his blood.”

I offer you that atonement as your only sure foundation of hope. You may be saved, not be-

cause of any good thing that you have done, but because Jesus has died to redeem you. If you will accept his atonement by repentance and faith you may have salvation. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And if you will, as you realize your sin, but place your feet on this stair of flaming red porphyry, crimsoned by the blood of the Saviour, the doorway of hope shall be wide open to you, and it shall lead, not as Dante dreamed, into a long state of painful discipline, but into love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost.

Remember that it is not enough to know you are a sinner; it is not enough to confess it, to be sorry for it, and to have many longing wishes and desires for a pure life. Neither can any ceremony or observance or sacrament by any means save you. You must really climb the stairway to hope. You must repent of your sins, and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your atonement for sins, and rest your weary heart upon him as your Saviour. That you may do here and now. In your heart of hearts you may accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your atonement, as your Redeemer. There may be many other things you will have to do, confessions you will need to make, restitution, it may be, where you have wronged others; but if you will right here and now repent of your sin and turn away from it and accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour God will trust you, he will take you at your word, he will pardon your sins, and will give you the witness of the Spirit in your heart that you are a child of God.

XV.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

“Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man ; and he saw : and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”—2 Kings vi, 16, 17.

THE King of Syria was at war with Israel, but the King of Israel had a tremendous reinforcement in the person of Elisha, the man of God. God revealed to Elisha the purposes of the King of Syria, and he was thus able again and again to save the army of Israel from destruction. After this had happened a good many times and the King of Syria, who prided himself on his military foresight, had been thwarted frequently, he came to the conclusion that some of his officers must be traitors ; and so he called a council of war and said to them, “Will ye not show me which of us is for the King of Israel ?” But one of his staff officers had found out what was the matter, and said, “There are none of us traitors, your majesty ; but the fact is that Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, has a habit of telling the King of Israel the plans which you discuss with us in your bedchamber.” As soon as the king heard this he was determined to capture Elisha. His action in this matter is a signal illustration of the ordinary blindness and ignorance of worldly men concerning spiritual things.

But he began immediately to lay his plans, and sent out his spies to find Elisha, that he might send and take him. Finally they brought word to him that the prophet was in Dothan. As soon as this news came he marshaled a great army, with horses and chariots and a great host of infantry, and sent them forth in the night to surround the little town of Dothan and make sure of the capture of this troublesome prophet.

And it came to pass the next morning, when Elisha's private secretary went out to take his morning walk and look about, he beheld to his astonishment and fear the town surrounded on every side by a great army, accompanied with horses and chariots of war; and he came back to Elisha in despair, crying, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" And Elisha's answer was the remarkable statement of the text, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

The first great truth suggested to my mind by this graphic picture is this, that spiritual perception depends on harmonious relations to spiritual things. All perception is obedient to this law. The character of the mind and heart dictate what we see in nature. The same picture of forest, mountain, or sea does not always have the same revelation to every observer, by any means. Some one has written with keen intellectual insight,

“ The poem hangs on the berry bush,
When comes the poet's eye ;
The street is one long masquerade,
When Shakespeare passes by.”

But it takes the poetic eye and the dramatic mind to see these things. What we see and observe will always have very close relations, in quality and quantity, to the measure of perceptive capacity we carry with us. I have been reading recently, with a great deal of interest, something of Humboldt's travels in America. He came over to this country and spent only five years on the American continent, before there were any railroads or any rapid methods of transportation ; and yet when he went back it took twenty-eight immense volumes and a half dozen of the best literary men in Europe many years to put on record what he saw over here in five years. Yet you and I know plenty of men who have been here fifty years and could tell a stenographer in half a day all they have ever seen, though they may have traveled from ocean to ocean in a palace car. Thousands of men have gone up Vesuvius and back, and neither they nor the world are any wiser for it. But Humboldt and two of his friends walked up Vesuvius one day, and the world has been richer in knowledge ever since for that one little excursion.

A scratch on a rock in a blueberry patch up in Maine or New Hampshire does not mean anything to the average farmer who wishes the rock would suddenly decay into some kind of fertilizer to make his soil richer ; but Louis Agassiz would come by and see the scratch on the rock, and tell you approx-

imately the date when an iceberg passed that way ages ago or when glaciers once lay there and ground their course southward. So in observations of our fellow-men. We see in men and women about us only those things which we can understand from something that is in us. The nobler we are the clearer we see the germs of nobility and possibility for good in every other human life. Emerson sang

“ Let me go where'er I will,
 I hear a sky-born music still.
 'Tis not in the high stars alone,
 Nor in the cups of budding flowers,
 Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
 Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
 But in the mud and scum of things ;
 There alway something sings.”

But we cannot hear sky-born music unless there be something in us in harmony with it. The keener our own sense the more we appreciate others. See Dr. Howe feeling his way to Laura Bridgman's imprisoned soul, and finding that soul and bringing it forth to the world along the pathway of a single sense—the sense of touch—left in the palm of Laura's hand. That mighty tunnel, twelve miles long, under the St. Gothard Alps was a small achievement compared to the self-denying labor of tunneling back into the darkness along that one blind nerve to find a human soul.

Yet in a moral way, or rather in a spiritual way, that modern miracle of self-denying perseverance needs to be wrought over and over again on all our streets. What Dr. Howe was to Laura Bridgman God desires us to be to spiritually paralyzed and

blinded souls everywhere. Did you ever pause to meditate on the vast stretch of possibility compassed in that declaration of John, where he says that there is given unto us "power to become the sons of God?" I wish you would put the question very solemnly to your own heart while I look you in the face, What is your estimate of humanity? Do the men and women whom you meet in your daily life appeal to you in this way, as beings with power in them to become the sons of God? Are the streets full of souls to you, or are they only full of bodies, more or less clean, more or less satisfactory to your taste, more or less fashionably clothed? O, my brother, do you know there is no such severe judgment seat as a question like that put to your own heart? If, when you walk in and out among men in the street or the car or the store or the church, there is a look of scorn in your eyes, a feeling of indifference or contempt in your heart, at the ignorance or shame or sin of the people whom you meet, then you may be sure that, mortifying as it is to confess it, there is something akin to that which you see in them in your own heart.

When we ourselves are the true sons of God we will see the possibility of divine sonship in all others, and long to fly to the rescue and bring it forth from whatever is hiding or crushing it. Let this proverb ring in your ears, "The best man thinks the best of others." And, when you think of that, do you not think of Jesus's power over the great universal human heart wherever he is proclaimed? He sees more in poor, lost, sinful men than less pure eyes could see. God loves us more than any-

one else, loves us even when we are unlovable to unclarified human eyes, because he sees in "the mud and scum of things" the underlying vein of gold beneath.

So spiritual forces are perceived by spiritual people. Many things are spiritually discerned. Jesus declares that all anxiety and worry about doctrines shall give way before an obedient soul. As nature yields her secrets only to the humble student who seeks to be obedient to her laws, so only they who in humility seek to keep the commandments of God come into relations where God can pour on them the splendor of spiritual illumination.

This further thought is suggested to me by the scripture we are studying—the one impregnable fortress in this world is a perfectly sincere and honest soul whose reliance is in God. Earth has no impregnable fortress. The military world used to think that some of the fortresses were impregnable to attack, but such faith has received a great shock in recent centuries. When I was up along the northern boundary of our country during vacation time I was reminded of my schoolboy interest in the old French city of Quebec. For many years it was believed to be an impregnable fortress; but the intrepid Wolfe, nursing the last spark of life in his enfeebled body, led his little army up the rugged walls of granite to the Heights of Abraham and accomplished its overthrow. But there is one fortress the walls of which no assaulting column can scale, and whose garrison cannot be starved out by any siege—a frank, sincere soul whose trust is in God.

The King of Syria, proud of his military skill and strategy and superior army, had no doubt that this plain, simple-minded prophet would fall an easy prey into his hands. He knew nothing about the armies of heaven encamped about the children of God. The lesson I wish to impress on all our hearts is that we are to expect to be triumphant in this world and in the world to come, not through any finesse or worldly strategy, but by frank, open-hearted trust in our heavenly Father. The plans and policy of the world are often only treacherous quicksands to unwary souls.

When the Kansas Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railroads were being constructed one difficulty of frequent occurrence was met which was unique in railroad history. This was the trouble arising from quicksands. From western Kansas to the Rocky Mountains quicksands are to be found in nearly every stream, no matter how small; and to bridge them successfully requires an expenditure out of all proportion to the size of the stream to be crossed. Pile driving was tried, but the longest piles disappeared without touching bottom. Then filling with earth and stone was attempted and met with equally poor success, as the quicksand was apparently capable of swallowing the Rocky Mountains. The only practical means of crossing the quicksands was to build truss bridges across them.

During the construction of the Kansas Pacific across Colorado, an engine ran off the track at River Bend, about ninety miles from Denver. This engine, a large freight, fell into a quicksand and in twenty minutes had entirely disappeared. Within

two days the company sent out a gang of men and a wrecking train to raise the engine. To their surprise they could not find a trace of it. They sunk magnetized rods to the depth of sixty-five feet, but no engine could be found. It had sunk forever beyond human ken, and from that day to this has not been discovered. How often do we see that incident paralleled in the social and moral life of our time—strong, successful men, seemingly capable of carrying everything before them, suddenly engulfed forever in the treacherous quicksands of the world, the sad victims of policies that proved to be only a refuge of lies! But a sincere and frank soul rests on the Rock of Ages.

The etymologists tell us a very interesting story of the history of that word "sincerity." It comes from two Latin words, *sine* and *cera*—"without cement." And we are assured that its origin was in this wise: In the golden days of Roman prosperity, when her merchants were the richest in the world and lived in marble palaces on the banks of the yellow Tiber, there was great competition in the grandeur and artistic adornment of their dwellings. During their successful wars against Greece there had been carried back to Rome as spoils many of the most precious gems of Grecian art. In this way a taste for sculpture had been awakened, and many young Romans of artistic temperament set themselves to work in the school of design. Good sculptors were quickly developed. But fraud and humbug were as common then as now; and so it came to be quite a common thing for the sculptor, when he came to a flaw in the marble or when his chisel

missed its aim, to take a carefully constructed cement, with which he filled in the chink and so cleverly fixed it as to be imperceptible. This fraud, however, would not stand the test of time, and after a few years heat or damp or accident would affect the cement and it would reveal its presence. This became so common that when new contracts came to be signed for works of art there was always a clause put in that they were to be *sine cera*, or "without cement." What a picture story we have here in a single word, and how infinitely more important in building an immortal character than in the chiseling of lifeless marble!

To be real ought to be our deepest prayer. How often souls are led away in folly from a mania for a conspicuous position, without seeking the reality for which the position stands. There is an old fable about a silly piece of charcoal that aspired to a place beside its crystallized and brilliant brother, the diamond. A good fairy came along and, pitying the ambitious bit of carbon, said, "I will grant you one wish, but remember, only one." The silly thing, instead of wishing to be changed to a diamond, asked at once for a place among the diamonds that adorned the crown of the king. The request was granted. The piece of charcoal was set for one proud moment among the brilliants. But as soon as the king's attendants saw it they brushed it away. If it had only asked to be changed into a real diamond somebody would have seen it shining under foot and picked it up and placed it in the crown; but, aspiring to a position which it could not adorn, it was rejected with contempt and trampled under

foot. Let us first of all try to be wise and good and useful. Then in due time the world will be likely to honor us; but, even if it never should, the Lord will say, "They shall shine in the day when I make up my jewels."

Anschar, the faithful and fearless monk who introduced Christianity into Sweden, was in many respects one of the most lovely and noble characters in the mediæval period. In his rapturous aspiration after personal holiness according to the Christ pattern, he once said: "One miracle I would, if worthy, ask the Lord to grant me; and that is, that by his grace he would make me a good man." Indeed, that is the greatest miracle—to be a good man. It is the blessed privilege of such souls to live in a rare spiritual atmosphere, to come into precious communion with the invisible and eternal. There are high table-lands in some parts of the earth, where the dwellers live in an atmosphere so clear and pure that they are always in sight of great white mountains whose summits pierce the clouds hundreds of miles away. So there are spiritual table-lands up to which God leads those who love him with sincere and trusting hearts.

The Saviour was always trying to impress the disciples with the superior worth and importance of the spiritual world. "Fear not them," he said, "which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." There is a certain comparative sense in which this earthly life is of small importance; but the future is of measureless interest, and it stretches a hand back to write in

large characters everything which has any bearing on the soul's final condition. Brothers and sisters, we ought to meditate more on these spiritual things. A good man recently wrote: "The prevailing type of piety needs the infusion of somewhat more of the temper of heavenly-mindedness into it. There is too much of the clatter of the world in the religious activity of the period, and not enough of the sweet music which is wafted into the sacred spheres where saints and angels strike their harps in the open presence of the Son of God."

It requires this sublime background of the immortal life to give strength and breadth and fullness to human character. This world is too brief and unsatisfactory to make any strong appeal to a man's deeper and holier self. It can wake the passions and ambitions, but it can never make man rise to lofty aspirations and self-denying deeds. If I am only here for a little while and am to have no life beyond, what do I care? What matters it whether men think well of me or not, if to-morrow or the day after I am to fall out of memory and out of consciousness? If all that I acquire and all that I achieve through my ceaseless toil and struggle is to be but like the down of the thistle which the wind drives before it, there is no sufficient motive to develop the highest possibilities of my nature. But if it be true that there is a shore to which we are sailing, if all the mighty currents of the universe are swinging us in that direction and the winds blow without ceasing thitherward, there is aroused within me an irresistible impulse to be ready to land and enter on the new life which is be-

fore me. I am aroused to make preparation and to develop to the last possibility the powers which God has given me; and I can put up with many hardships on the voyage, for all these are, as Paul says, but light afflictions compared with the heavenly land and immortal life to which they are carrying me. It is impossible that I should be as unconcerned and indifferent as though I were to be drowned in the port when I reach it.

O brothers and sisters, it may be that some of us here can already see the lights gleaming on the pier for the landing. And in our best hours, hours of meditation and communion with the highest, there gather about that landing place a throng of blessed faces that once were comrades with us here, but whose sails the heavenly trade winds have wafted more rapidly than ours. Some of these days our ships shall strike the rapid current, and, standing on deck, we shall near the landing place where they wait. How our hearts will throb with glorious emotions as they press to the ship's side to greet us and welcome us to their holy embrace forever!

XVI.

THE DARKNESS BEHIND THE STARS.

"Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness."—Matt. xxii, 13.

A MODERN novelist has aroused a good deal of scientific discussion by a paragraph in one of his books, in which he indicates that the stars of the universe are set in a dark background of what we may conceive as infinite, starless space, into which no light penetrates from the stars of this or any other universe. The trend of scientific discussion seems to be that the novelist is probably correct. The great telescopes which have recently been mounted in different parts of the world have not only increased the number of stars known to exist, but have also convinced the astronomers that they are rapidly approaching the limit of telescopic vision, for the same reason that Alexander wept—because there are no more worlds to conquer. They declare that the most probable hypothesis is that all the stars, clusters, and nebulae visible by aid of the largest telescopes form together one vast system, which constitutes our visible universe, and that this system is surrounded by a starless void, though beyond that there may be other systems. There is still another hypothesis among the scientists, which means, however, practically the same thing so far as it illustrates the thought we have in

hand; it is that the luminiferous ether which extends throughout the visible universe may be confined to this universe, and that beyond these confines the ether may thin out, as the earth's atmosphere does at a certain distance from the earth's surface, finally ceasing to exist altogether and ending in an absolute vacuum, which would, of course, arrest the passage of light from all outer space and thus produce the black background of the heavens, or "The Darkness Behind the Stars."

Whether the astronomers are correct or not in their hypothesis, we are assured that there is an outer darkness into which the immortal soul of man may be driven, as the result of his own willful sin and disobedience against the laws of the higher and nobler realm of the spirit. As the traveler who should turn his back upon the sun and travel on and on, resisting all the attractions that lay hold upon him from that great magnetic center, and persevere in his course would, after a while, be beyond the reach of its light and finally beyond the glimmer of the last flickering star and be lost in the outer darkness where no solar illumination should light his path, so the text we are studying, in harmony with the universal teaching of God's word, as well as the common observation of humanity, teaches us that it is possible for a human soul to turn its face away from the Sun of righteousness, to go out from his glorious presence, to set its will to resist the divine magnetism that appeals to every human heart, and go on and on in a course of sin and disobedience against God, until, one by one, the lights that illuminate our human pathway are left behind, and

the poor lost soul finds itself in the outer darkness where there is "wailing and gnashing of teeth"—strong and graphic expression of that unavailing sorrow and bitter anger which sin causes to be the prevailing atmosphere of the soul which it has mastered.

Our text is a sad incident of a feast—a feast made by a king, where all the guests are supposed to be joyous and happy. It is a wedding feast also. What a tragic background it makes of the joyous appointments of the feast. One cannot meditate upon it just at this time without thinking of that wedding feast of the young czar which has just been going on in Russia, where crowned heads and princes and ambassadors from every land under heaven have been gathered to do honor to Nicholas II and felicitate him on his marriage and on the beginning of his reign. We are told that the eyes of men have seldom looked upon a more gorgeous pageant than that of the imperial wedding; that the most brilliant imagination could not conceive of the splendor of attire and dazzling beauty of the jewels and decorations which the newspaper correspondents declared their inability to describe. Yet to all the glory of the wedding, with its pomp, its ceremony, its brilliant display of wealth and power, there is the dark background of the outer darkness of farthest Siberia, with its prison camps, its exiled Jews, and its banished reformers who sought for freedom of speech and press.

But, whatever of justice or injustice may cause exile into the outer darkness of Russia, nothing but one's own sin can thus exile him from the presence

of the King of the universe in the spiritual realm. The king ordered the man sent out into the outer darkness because he was out of all harmony with the circumstances of the feast. He came not having on the wedding garment. He might have had it, but through some spirit of defiance or indifference he refused to make preparation, so that at last, when lights flashed from the decorated walls and reflected from richly clothed and jeweled guests, there he sat, the one black, uncomfortable spot on the wedding feast. He was cast out because of what he was. It was personal to himself. He had been invited, but he had refused to make the preparation demanded by the invitation.

Dear friends, let us make a very earnest and serious study of this for a moment. You are living in days of invitations. On every hand they are falling upon you from heaven, softly and generously, as the snowflakes fall out of the clouds—invitations to a feast with God, to a great wedding feast between Christ and his church. It is a personal matter. The invitations are to you. What response are you making? Are you preparing the wedding garment? Some travelers tell us that in the Orient, where this parable was given, the king would have had these rich garments ready, so that the guest would only have had to go and adorn himself with one of them. There is a sense in which God has a wedding garment for you, but it is also true that it must be wrought upon by yourself, and that it is by working together with God that the raiment of righteousness is to be provided in which you shall be at peace and crowned with honor at the great

wedding feast. The last poem ever written by Miss Josephine Pollard was on the proverb, "For a web begun, God sends the thread," about which she sings:

"Over and over these words I read,
 And I said to myself, with an easy air,
 'What need to burden myself with care
 If this be true?
 Or attempt to do
 More than my duty? for here is proof
 That we are to hold ourselves aloof,
 Until from the Master we receive
 The thread for the web we are to weave.'

"So, day after day, I sat beside
 The loom, as if both my hands were tied,
 With idle shuttle and slackened warp,
 Useless as strings of an untuned harp;
 For I took no part
 With hand or heart
 In the work of the world. To the cry of need,
 The voice of the children I gave no heed.
 'When the task is ready for me,' I said,
 'God will be sure to supply the thread.'

"I had no strength of my own, I knew,
 No wisdom to guide or skill to do,
 And must wait at ease for the word of command,
 For the message I surely would understand;
 Else all in vain
 Were the stress and strain,
 For the thread would break, and the web be spoiled—
 A poor result for the hours I'd toiled;
 And my heart and my conscience would be at strife
 O'er the broken threads of a wasted life.

"But all at once, like a gem exhumed,
 The word 'begun,' like a light illumed,

From the rest of the text stood boldly out
 (By the finger of God revealed, no doubt);

And shocked and dazed,

Ashamed, amazed,

I saw, as I had not seen before,

The truer meaning the sentence bore,

And read as Belshazzar might have read,

'For a web *begun*, God sends the thread.'

"The man himself, his mind and heart

Toward the holy city, must take a start,

E'er he finds in his hands the mystic clew

That shall lead him life's mazes safely through.

And if loom and reel

And spinning wheel

Idle and empty stand to-day,

We must reason give for the long delay,

Since the voice of the Master has plainly said,

'For a web begun, God sends the thread.' "

The man connected with our text could give no reason. He was speechless. It was not an accident or a mistake, or it might have been explained. The trouble was innate in his own self. And so there is nothing that can excuse us and nothing that can save us except a transformed nature. Sin must be forgiven and blotted out, not only in the ledger of God, but our minds and hearts must be purified from it. It will not do to clothe ourselves in any worldly robes of self-righteousness or culture, while down beneath in the heart, slumbering or dormant or shut down under an iron will, are evil lusts and passions and desires that only wait their opportunity to run wild riot.

Ah, that is the fatal lack of all those reformers who purpose to reform men and women by simply lopping off certain outbreaking exhibitions of sin.

The very heart itself, which is full of dead men's bones and where the hungry tiger of sin waits and lurks for an opportunity to slay again, must be utterly cleansed and purified and kept free from every evil guest. Humboldt, in his travels in South America, tells us that on the great plains where, after a long drought, the genial season of rain arrives there is one of the most marvelous transformations of nature to be found anywhere in the world. The deep azure of the hitherto cloudless sky assumes a lighter hue. Like some distant mountain, a single cloud is seen rising perpendicularly on the southern horizon. Misty vapors collect and gradually overspread the heavens, while distant thunder proclaims the approach of the life-giving rain. Scarcely is the surface of the earth moistened before the teeming steppe becomes covered with a variety of grasses. Excited by the power of light, the herbaceous *mimosa* unfolds its dormant, drooping leaves, hailing, as it were, the rising sun in chorus with the mating song of the birds and the opening flowers of aquatic plants. Horses and oxen, buoyant with life and enjoyment, roam over and crop the plains which only last week were a barren desert. The luxuriant grass hides the beautiful spotted jaguar, who has been hidden away in dark ravines this long time, but now, lurking in safe concealment, darts with a catlike bound on his passing prey. And, down along the morasses, the humid clay, ever and anon, is seen to arise slowly in broad flakes, accompanied by a violent noise as on the eruption of a small mud volcano. When the natives see this they fly from these upheavals for their

very lives, for it means that a colossal water snake or a mailed and scaly and now thoroughly awakened and hungry crocodile, aroused from its long trance by the first fall of rain, is about to burst from his tomb.

Is there not in this graphic picture an honest illustration of what goes on in many human hearts? Men and women, surrounded by controlling conditions under the hot sun of social influence and propriety or held in the grip of public opinion and self-interest, often live lives characterized by a certain kind of dry, outward morality, a negative righteousness, which looks so pleasing in their own eyes and in those of their neighbors, that they are self-deceived and imagine that the old crocodile of lust or the colossal serpent of greed or the deadly jaguar of selfishness has been utterly tramped to death under their strong wills. And then again there comes a time when, under temptation or a removal of restraint, these vile and unholy passions rouse themselves, and hell itself does not seem more foul than the roaring discord of those sinful hearts. God grant everyone to see sin as it is! Nothing is more foolish than to try to cover your sins with a false glamour. Better to look at them in all their inherent ugliness and know the awful danger there is in them, that you may thus turn to One who is strong and mighty to deliver.

We were speaking a few moments ago about the new Czar of Russia. Perhaps one of the most interesting incidents connected with his father, Alexander III, is related in the essays of Vereschagin, the great Russian artist. The painter was a personal

friend of the late czar and served in more than one campaign, being severely wounded while occupying an important post upon a torpedo boat which attacked a Turkish man-of-war. At the close of the war among the Balkans Vereschagin painted an elaborate set of historical compositions, which have been exhibited in this country; and doubtless many of you like myself have been permitted to see them. In these great paintings the czar and his staff and chief lieutenants were made to figure; but, contrary to the method of the romantic school, the paintings in no way resembled the series which, in the galleries of Versailles, commemorate the glories of Napoleon. The czar was not shown as leading his impetuous troops, himself seated upon a fiery charger, leaping upon smoking cannon; but, with photographic fidelity, Alexander III was shown as viewing the cannonading through a telescope from a safe distance, seated upon a camp stool, while "After the Battle" showed the ghastly field of the dead with all its horrible details. When these pictures were first placed on exhibition in St. Petersburg they produced great clamor. Many of the nobility desired to have the painter summoned to answer to a charge of treason. War had never been painted like that before, and the czar was told that if he permitted his subjects to see such representations of the conflicts of arms he might as well disband his army, for he could never recruit it. Alexander III went to the gallery and, after viewing every canvas for himself, said quietly, "That is the truth about war; let Vereschagin tell it." It is said that it is this experience of the czar of what war really was

that made him during his reign "the peacemaker of Europe."

O, that we were able to make men know what sin really is! The old man with white hair and patriarchal beard who stood before us in the prayer meeting on Wednesday night and told us that he was a graduate of Yale, but that drink had taken fortune and friends and manhood's hopes and left him broken and friendless and ragged—ah, he knows something about what sin is! But the young man who has that one rotten spot of self-indulgence in him, but fondly imagines that he is to go on sowing for a little while the wild oats which he will never have to reap—God help us to make him know what sin means now, before he reaches the despairing twilight of the outer darkness!

Mrs. Ballington Booth found a young girl in a dance hall who had still left "a childlike face," with some of the freshness of the country lingering on it, and who responded to her question, "Yes, I came from the country. My mother lives away off in the country. But it's no use thinking about it, because—well, because I am in this life now, and there is an end of it." The bitterness came back into her voice as she pushed away the hand that lay on hers, and she cried out, "No, no, it's no good now; no one would have any use for me after this. Mother! do not talk to me about my mother! She thinks I am at honest work. It would kill her if she knew where I was and what I was. She shall never, never know it;" and the sob in her voice was changed to a harsh, grating laugh, like the laughter of the pit, as she was whirled off in the

dance in the arms of a low, vulgar, drunken man. Poor child, she knew what sin was. God help us to help other girls to know what sin is, before life is made desolate, before the soul is scarred and marred, and the shadows of the outer darkness begin to engulf them!

O, brothers and sisters, you who are conscious tonight that you have turned your backs on the Sun of righteousness and that you are facing toward the outer darkness, I plead with you to go no farther into the dark. Cling to whatever of light and sunshine God gives you. Jesus Christ is our Sun. He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Let no sin take away from you that light.

It is related of one of the soldiers of Pizarro's army that he complained that he had lost in one night's gambling "a large piece of the sun," meaning a plate of gold which he had obtained at the plunder of the temple of Cuzco. Alas, do I not speak to some who have already lost "a large piece of the Sun?" I pray you not to go on until you have lost all, but turn back in penitence and faith toward him who, with boundless love, is seeking to save the lost!

XVII.

THE MIRROR THAT TRANSFORMS THE SOUL.

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.”—James i, 22-26 (Revised Version).

THIS is a strong picture. If, instead of the “man” portrayed by the apostle James, you will write your own name and make the whole picture apply to yourself I am sure your attention and your intense interest will at once be aroused. The character pictured here is not a feeble one, but a strong and masterful individuality; not one who, looking into the glass and seeing himself mirrored there, with all his defects and sins, has a momentary wishing and longing that he might be better and a lingering hope as he turns away that somehow or other, in some vague, unexplained way, an irresistible current of heavenly influence will overwhelm him and make of him the man he dimly recognizes he ought to be. But, instead, there is portrayed before us one who, hearing the word of rebuke and of warning and of promise, does not forget; one who, seeing the hatefulness of his sins, does not turn away, but seeks to look deeper into the mirror of the Gospel, into the law of liberty, to find how he

may be transformed and changed and how, by taking hold of the opportunities that are placed before him, he may, by God's help, work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

We have very clearly stated here the answer to those persons who excuse themselves from forsaking their sins and at once obeying the Lord Jesus Christ and entering upon a Christian life because they say they have certain natural defects. Sometimes it is a hereditary tendency. A man says, "I was born with a quick temper. It has developed in me all the years. It is impossible for me to master and control it!" Another says, "I inherited from my ancestors a thirst for rum and strong drink. It is in my very blood. I cannot hear the clink of the glasses on the bar or see the bottles in the window or smell it on the street, but the old thirst, for which I am not responsible, but which comes down from generations behind me, rages like a mad, hungry tiger in my veins." Another says, "I have a skeptical mind. I am doubtful about everything. It is impossible for me to believe in anything that is supernatural. I cannot believe in anything I cannot see and feel. Sometimes I am scarcely sure of my own consciousness." And still another says, "I am so retiring, so timid. It seems such sacrilege for me to talk to other people about my experiences or to take any public stand in regard to religion."

And so I might use all my time for this discourse repeating, only in substance, the excuses and apologies which men and women make for themselves on every side. But this plain, earnest

scripture looks you straight in the face, my brother, and says, "You are a responsible actor in this matter yourself. You are to be a doer of the word, and not a hearer only, deluding your own soul. You are to look, not at yourself only, but into the perfect law, the law of liberty; and you are not only to look, but you are to continue. You are to be a hearer that does not forget and a doer that worketh." You are not to take your present nature, distorted and marred by sin as it is, as being the nature which God gives you or as representing the natural laws which you are to follow. If our nature is undeveloped and ignorant or mastered by bad habits, then we are to take hold of it by God's help, and we are to cultivate it and develop it and purify it and bring it into such a condition that its natural law will be the law of liberty and the law of righteousness.

In saying this I am in harmony with all the natural world about us. God gives us mountains and plains and rivulets and brooks and rivers, and all the panorama of nature about us, not in a perfect state at all, so far as their relation to us is concerned, but ready to be brought to perfection under our hands. Some one has truly said that every product of nature is like a cocoanut, wherein progressive discovery finds the cup of the new use beneath the oakum exterior of a present one, and within the second use the nutritious use of another, and within the third the sweet milk of a fourth service and joy. We talk about the beautiful things in nature and about God's being the great Artist, which is true; but we must not forget that we, too,

are artists, and that God leaves the finishing touches, wherever they have relation to ourselves, to us. He gives us materials, rather than finished structures. Yonder is a rich plain covered with wild grasses and thorns and wild, unfruitful plants. Man comes with plow and harrow and toil, and wide-stretching fields of wheat or yellow heaps of corn or orchards bending with fragrant apples make it a scene far more beautiful to human eyes than it was before. Only under human cultivation does the soil produce those varieties of sweetness and bloom which give us most delight. The wide-stretching plain, with its rich soil, is only a prophecy of the fields of golden grain and the husbandman's garner. As one says, "Nature includes Raphael, not Raphael nature."

So it is true—and it is a great truth and one we must never allow ourselves to forget—that we are workers together with God in our salvation. We are to be doers of that work. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." God invites, we must respond. The Holy Spirit moves, we must yield. Every opportunity is given for our spiritual culture and development, but if we sit idle sluggards we will be spiritual fools and bankrupts at the end. Free schools, abundant and excellent text-books, and willing and well-trained teachers will not produce a well-educated childhood and youth. There must be the willing pupil, the eager soul seeking after knowledge, the persistent continuing in search of that knowledge, until it not only becomes a part of the treasure and resource of the mind, but has

strengthened the mind itself and enlarged it by the intellectual toil through which it was acquired.

So, my brother, believe me, it is true that the loving fatherhood of God, the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross for your redemption, the tender wooing of the Holy Spirit calling you to repentance, the open Bible with its mirror with which you can look into your own soul, the appeals from the pulpit, and the echoing response from your own conscience—all these are not enough to avail in putting away your sins, in purifying your heart, and in bringing you into peace and harmony with God. You, personally, must be a doer that worketh. Do not, I beg you, let anything stand in the way of the salvation of your soul! Do not say, "I must do this thing in my own way. This earnest and intense presentation of the matter to me only confuses and disquiets me. Why cannot I be a Christian in my own quiet and silent way, without any such open expression of my purpose as you ask?" Ah, I will tell you why. It is because Christ, who died to save you, asks just this open and unqualified obedience and confession of himself. He who fought a lonely battle for you in Gethsemane and on Golgotha asks that you shall have open alliance with his disciples who are fighting a battle to win the world for his crown. He asks it of you, not for his sake, but your own, that you may thus put yourself in such relation to him that he may save you.

I remember a man who once said, about some earnest meetings in which men were finding the Lord Jesus Christ, that he thought they were too

intense and noisy for good taste, and who ventured to say to the man who was leading them that Solomon's temple was built without any noise, not even of a hammer, and he could not see why the spiritual temple could not go up in the same way. The earnest leader exclaimed, "We are not building a temple; we are blasting rocks."

All strong manhood must be produced not by repression, but by expansion. The picture which we are studying does not present to us a man who is to succeed in the Christian life by standing guard always over himself, like a policeman on his beat, trying to keep himself from doing wrong; but he is to so look into the law of liberty and continue therein that he shall be able to enter upon a positive, aggressive life of goodness. Things become easy and natural to us by exercise. That which we do continuously we do without thinking and without any conscious will to do it.

A monument has just been unveiled in Paris in honor of one of the greatest sculptors of modern times, Antoine Louis Barye. A distinguished French orator made an address at the unveiling of this monument. I have been very much impressed, in reading this address, in the analysis which it gives of the great sculptor's success. His intimate friend and eulogist declares that the great secret of his triumph was his patient persistence to acquire perfect knowledge of every object which he undertook to reproduce. He studied so long and carefully the animals in the menagerie that he reached the point of being able to separate in thought the habits contracted in captivity from their habits in

their native wilds. With his mind's eye he saw clearly their characteristics—the apparent indifference under which instinct is always on the watch, their mode of action in obtaining their nourishment, displaying their tactics and their style of combat. It was thus he chose his subjects and began to make his sketches. But this did not satisfy Barye. After he had studied the living animal until he looked at life from its standpoint, he went to the galleries of comparative anatomy. Compasses in hand, he measured the skeletons of the animals he wished to represent, wrote down the dimensions with extreme scrupulousness, and fashioned his work by these measurements and notes. Then, with his perfect knowledge, he went to his work, and the rude material seemed to breathe under his hand. A lion or a tiger fashioned by him when only in the attitude of walking conveys to you, by its very structure and poise, its fatal power to kill. Barye was able to mold these figures with such daring and power, because of his perfect knowledge and familiarity with his subject. Otherwise it would have grown to be a monster under his hands, no matter how much genius he possessed.

Let us learn the lesson of the sculptor—we are to find liberty through law. Nay, more; if we put ourselves to school under God's law, if we yield our hearts in obedience to Christ, our very liberty shall become a law itself, because our law has become liberty. We do what we please because it pleases us to do right. Do not hesitate a moment to undertake a Christian life because you have no con-

scious power within yourself how to overcome the temptations and passions and lusts that hold you helpless. Obey God, do the first thing he asks you, the duty that lies nearest, and you will have begun a year of ever-increasing liberty and power.

Up in an apple orchard on the shores of Lake Erie, last summer, I saw a young robin taking its first lessons in flying. How anxious the old birds were, and how feeble it seemed. It hung quivering and clinging on the edge of the nest, the older birds appealing to it, flying about through the trees to show how easy it was; and the poor little birdling, that really wanted to fly, looked on with envious, but almost despairing, eyes. At last it was aroused to make the attempt, and by springing with the aid of its wings it dropped on a bough a few feet away. And there it rested with its heart in its throat, panting with fear. Ah, it was hard work to that little bird to fly! But hunger, and the persuasion of its parents, and the wonder-world of beauty about it in the orchard trees, and, above all, the flying birds that soared about in such perfect freedom and mastery over the air lured it on, until after a while, gathering strength, it flew again, this time coming ignominiously to the ground. And then, I suppose, it thought more than ever that it was hard business to fly. Then the old mother bird took pity on it and went down and fed it a little and chuckled to it. I don't know what she said; but I suppose she said it was a good little robin to try, and if it would only keep its courage up and keep trying it would soon fly as well as any bird in the orchard. So after a while it flew up to a lower bough, and

then it hopped to another bough, and then it tried another twice as far away and missed it and went to the ground again. And so on and on; but in less than a week it could soar as high and fly as far as its mother. The little robin was living out the picture given in the text—it was a hearer that did not forget and a doer that worked.

What a noble life this is which we are asked to live! How much of inspiration there is in it! Not to spend all our lives trying not to be bad, but to go forth in all the armor of God, with a free and rapturous soul, exulting in the power to be and to do good. And, blessed be God, the world is so arranged and we are so constructed that this holy freedom makes men work more than any slavery that ever existed, and there is joy and singing and gladness about their work. Who toils with such fidelity as the mother caring for her little children, doing for them the most menial duties with gladness, and never asking what the salary is that is attached to the wearing position? Men may say what they please, but the devil has no power in hate and anger that can match Christ's power of love in arousing the soul to devoted service. As George Herbert sings,

“ A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine;
 Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
 Makes that and th' action fine.”

This is the life to which, as an ambassador of Christ, I call you! Not a life of bondage, not a life which shall shut you out from liberty, not a life which shall fence off from you the good things

which make men great. No, no. It was a devil's lie that gave you such an idea of Christianity as that. I offer you a life of glorious freedom, of lofty ambition. For you there shall be no Alps that shall shut you out from the rich Italy of God's highest and noblest experiences reserved for human souls. You shall not go along the path of life galled by chains that fret you and wear upon you; but with free step and exulting soul and singing voice you shall mount upward on the way to everlasting triumph.

Brother, what shall be your response? Remember those terrible words of St. James which follow our text in the next chapter, in which he says, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." How solemn the thought that the final sentence is to be pronounced after all by ourselves! All these things about us that restrain us now—the law of the State and the town, the influence of home, the power of public opinion—all these are only temporary matters; they shall pass away, and after a while we shall stand alone before God, and then we are to be judged by the law that is in our own hearts. We shall be set free to be what we will; and if, during all these years, we have been cherishing evil thoughts and imaginations and impure longings and lusts and ambitions, in that hour they will rise up and judge us.

Well does Phillips Brooks say, in one of his greatest discourses: "How simple and sublime does it make the judgment day. We stand before the great white throne and wait our verdict. We watch the closed lips of the eternal Judge, and our

hearts stand still until those lips shall open and pronounce our fate—heaven or hell. The lips do not open. The Judge just lifts his hand and raises from each soul before him every law of constraint whose pressure has been its education. He lifts the laws of constraint, and their results are manifest. The real intrinsic nature of each soul leaps to the surface. Each soul's law of liberty becomes supreme. And each soul, without one word of condemnation or approval, by its own inner tendency, seeks its own place. They turn and separate, father from child, brother from brother, wife from husband—each with the old habitual restrictions lifted off, turns to its own; one, by an inner power, to the right hand; another, by a like power, to the left; these up to heaven, and these down to hell. Do we need more? It needs no word, no smile, no frown. The freeing of souls is the judging of souls. A liberated nature dictates its own destiny. Could there be a more solemn judgment seat? Is it not a fearful thing to be judged by the law of liberty?"

Toward that day we are hastening. And so I stand and plead with you, with all the earnestness of my soul, that you begin now to be a doer of the word of God; now to yield your heart to the divine hand; now to submit your nature to the cleansing blood of the crucified Saviour; that you now take hold upon the hand of him who, to as many as will receive him, will give "power to become the sons of God."

XVIII.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters ; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths : their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet ; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.”—Psalm cvii, 23-30.

THE whole civilized world has been thinking for the past few weeks a great deal about ships and sailors and passengers, and the interest of humanity has been centered upon the sea. Everything has conspired to make the French steamer *La Gascogne* the center of the world’s interest for many days. First, there came the fearful message to us of the terrible wreck of the *Elbe*, run down in the darkness of early dawn in the North Sea, plunging to the bottom of the ocean with nearly all her passengers. And ere we had time to recover from the shock we began to be anxious for this French steamer, which was overdue. And as the days and nights crept slowly on the interest increased, and the suspense was the most terrible, perhaps, that has ever been felt in regard to any ship in the history of the world. The fearful storms that beat off the coast, endangering even the strongest vessels,

seemed all the more pitiless when we all felt that they were beating in the face of one that was crippled, possibly helpless. But, despite all fears and all storms, *La Gascogne* has come into the desired haven and has brought her cargo and her passengers safely into port, and all the world has rejoiced at the happy result. It is surely a good time for us to pause and remember that we are all voyagers on life's sea. We are all sailors, pushing our way through storm and tempest and calm, hoping to come at last into the desired haven. God grant that it may be so!

There are a few plain, simple lessons that it would be good for us to learn from the voyage of this steamer in which we have been so interested. In the first place, we ought to have impressed on us very deeply the old lesson, that the winds and waves of the sea of life are uncertain and oftentimes very deceitful in their appearance, and that the ocean over which we are sailing is likely to be swept at any time by furious storms. It is not an ocean for toy ships or for anything but the stanchest vessels. There will be many days that are calm, when the winds are soft and gentle, when the sky is blue, and all is propitious; but the fiercest storm may follow in rapid succession.

In the Acts of the Apostles Luke tells us the story of a wonderful voyage taken by Paul. The great preacher had advised against sailing at the time, but the shipowner and the captain thought they knew better than the preacher; and so Luke says that, when "the south wind blew softly," they unloosed their ship and sailed away. But it was not

long until they ran into the teeth of the storm ; and, though they escaped with their lives through Paul's intercession, the ship and cargo were lost. How many of the shipwrecks of human life come about because of confidence placed in south winds that blow softly ! We are to enjoy the soft south winds while they blow, but we must not allow ourselves to be deceived into supposing that there will not be any other kind of winds which our ship must encounter. If the weather be soft and sweet to-day we ought rather to expect that we will have something different to-morrow. The soft south wind of our human experience ought not to be taken as an intimation that such winds will blow forever ; but we ought to use them diligently and get all the good out of them we possibly can while they last, knowing that we cannot expect them to last always, and that a different wind will soon take their place.

If there are any hearers here upon whom the soft south winds are blowing, and who are trusting that they will blow forever, and who are shaping their lives and making their plans and building their character-ships only for soft south winds, I beg that they may hear my warning. You could not make a worse use of prosperity and peace, of health and strength, and of the mercies of God, than to live thus without reference to the storms and tempests that are certain to beset your course ere it is ended. If you stop to think you must realize that it is the highest wisdom to prepare in warm, sunny days, for cold, high winds, for tempests and threatened shipwreck. The good sailor on the sea of human life uses the good gifts of God's love and mercy to make ready

for the time when the wild blizzard shall sweep his deck. I assure you you must have a ship that can stand the storms and outride the gale if you are to bring a precious cargo into the desired haven at last.

The safety of *La Gascogne*, after all, depended upon the fact that she was a staunch ship, that she had been faithfully built, and had strength to stand the storm. There were times when everything depended upon those great, deep-sea anchors which they threw out to hold while they might make repairs to her machinery. How much of the safety of a great ship depends upon the fidelity of unknown workers who never can be thanked or honored like the captain who brings their work safely into port! How few think about honoring the man who was faithful in the making of that anchor!

James Freeman Clarke said he went once into the navy yard at Washington to see the forging of an anchor by a steam hammer weighing between seven and eight tons. The great iron log, a foot thick and twenty feet long, was thrust into the dark mound of coal which covered the raging fires. Presently the windlass heaved it up, blinding bright with a white heat, and it was swung upon the anvil; and then a man turning a winch managed the rise and fall of the enormous hammer, which moved softly down its grooves so as to give gentle blows, or fell with crushing weight upon the red-hot mass, hammering it into solid consistency. The poor iron, if it could only have thought about it, might have considered its lot a hard one. It might have said, "Why was I taken from my mine, where God had put me, to

be melted in a furnace, and then to be thus heated in insufferable fires and crushed by these terrible blows?" And then it might have been answered: "This stern experience is to make you strong and fit you for a great work. You are thus made tenacious and tough in order to become a noble anchor, to hold amid the storm the tossing vessel which has drifted among breakers. On its lee will be the shore, over which, a cable's length off, the waves are bursting mast-high, white with frightful death to passengers and crew. But you, O anchor, made strong by this trial, shall hold them safe, because of the strength you have gained in this hell of fire. Your great flukes will cling firm to the bottom, the vessel will ride safely through the storm held by your unflinching resistance, and the lives of the sailors will be as safe as though they were sleeping in their own quiet homes, where their anxious wives look through the windows into the terrible night."

If there are any listening to me who are now in the experience of making—who are now in the furnace or under the hammer of sorrow and trial, of hard experiences grievous to be borne—I pray God that they may so yield themselves up to the influence of his providence, may so submit themselves to his will, that they may be built up in strength and power and in the great emergencies that shall come in their future course may bring safety, like that great anchor, not to their own souls only, but to all who put their confidence in them!

There is another lesson which ought to come with great comfort to every storm-tossed soul here, and that is the joy and gladness which have filled the

whole world over the safe arrival in port of the French steamer. The coming in of a dozen other steamers about which there had been little, if any, fear was not the cause of one hundredth part as much rejoicing as the coming in of this one steamer that had been in danger. That is in perfect harmony with the whole universe of God. That was what Jesus meant when he said that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

I have read somewhere the story of an afternoon at Havre, the place from whence *La Gascogne* sailed. A fearful gale was blowing from the westward up the English channel directly into this unsheltered port. Great crowds of people had gone down on the long pier to watch the ships come in. The harbor of Havre is made by two stone piers stretching out, one a mile and the other something less, westward into the sea. Along the shore outside these piers are shoals and sand bars; and inside, between them, close to the city, is the excavated harbor, with its splendid granite docks. In the storm the multitude had come down, in spite of the wind that threatened to blow them off their feet and of the spray that, in the fury of the storm, broke over the piers, to see the ships come in out of danger. Such of the Havre-bound ships as were well to the windward were in no great danger, but came on before the gale with their storm sails set, like great white gulls. Now came a French merchantman, now a New York packet ship, and now a full-rigged man of war, all bearing on and bounding over the waves

as though full of free life. One by one they came down, skillfully guided by pilot and helmsman. As they neared the port they reduced even their little canvas, and, riding gracefully on the top of the huge billows, swept in by the pier head and then into the smooth and safe waters of the inner harbor. One might go the world over and live a lifetime and never see a more beautiful sight.

But presently, away to leeward, almost among the sand banks, came a poor, crippled collier, most of her sails torn to shreds and her masts bending under the force of the gale. Once upon a sand bank and her day was over. She fought gallantly for her life. "She can't weather the shoals. She can never fetch the pier head," cried the old tars, turning their eyes from the well-equipped windward vessels to this forlorn craft, struggling at such odds with the winds and waves. Now she seems to be making a little progress, and then the great brute forces of nature bore her away and away again, till she trembled and panted, breathless and baffled, like a living thing hunted and brought to bay. Now, in her efforts to gain the harbor she seemed blown down into the very edge of the breakers; then, by skillful evolutions, her course was changed; or, as the sailors say, she "wore ship" and stood off. But again the wind sent her back, and again she neared the breakers and had to tack once more. By and by the turn of the tide began to help the desperate will of the sailors. Then slowly she drew along toward the port; and as she approached the most dangerous point of the shoals the eyes of every looker-on followed each motion eagerly. One

moment she seemed whelmed in the breakers, but the next she had passed on toward the pier head. When she reached it both men and ship seemed exhausted. But ropes were thrown from the pier and were secured by the sailors; and then, as a thousand hands seized them and drew the poor tempest-worn vessel into the harbor, a multitude of voices shouted a welcome.

There was more rejoicing over the poor collier than over all the others. And that is just the way it will be when we come to reach heaven. One may get there ever so hardly, he may be battered and scarred and stained, with sails torn and ragged; but if he is faithful and perseveres unto the end he shall find all the ransomed throng of the redeemed and all the multitudes of the angelic host ready to welcome him with outstretched hands and songs of victory. The giving up one's heart to God, the escaping from sin and finding forgiveness and salvation, is often aptly compared to the sailor getting into port, where he may ride in peace at anchor. I trust there shall be some who shall find the haven of forgiveness now.

Dr. George Pentecost describes the following scene in one of his services: "Seated in the front row, immediately before the platform, one evening, were three men, who paid the closest attention to the sermon all the way through. Toward the close of his address he was impelled to make a direct appeal to one of these three men—the one who seemed the most interested. So, turning to him, he said, "Young man, are you a Christian?" Almost before he had the words out of his mouth the man

addressed sprang to his feet and answered in a clear, full voice, "Yes, thank God, I am, and have been for the last thirteen months." "Are you a sailor?" Dr. Pentecost asked, for there was something about him that suggested his calling. "Yes," was the response; "and this," pointing to one of the men by his side, "is my first officer, and I am second officer of our ship." "Is your first officer a Christian too?" "O yes, thank God, he is for Christ." Then pointing to the man on the other side, the preacher said, "And how about your shipmate who is sitting by you? Is he a Christian too?" "No, not yet, but I think he is beating up that way."

The preacher's next impulse was to appeal to the man who, in the language of the sailor, was "beating up that way;" so he said, "Come, shipmate, why not drop your anchor and come to rest in the harbor of peace right here, by accepting Christ?" At this the sailor man, with eyes full of tears, shook his head and said, "I am in a fog!" Thank God! in the after meeting that followed he was gently led through the fog to the Lord Jesus Christ and went away with peace in his soul. I have often thought of that expression of the second officer, "He is beating up that way." If there is anybody here who is in that condition, beating your way against the wind with the fog all about him, I pray that he may give up that hopeless task and take the Lord Jesus Christ on board his ship. If he does it will be as it was when the disciples took him into the ship so long ago and found themselves immediately at the land.

XIX.

THE LESSON OF JEHU'S BOW.

“And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength.”—2 Kings ix, 24.

A GROUP of army officers were sitting together in familiar conversation at Ramoth-gilead, when suddenly there came up a young theological student from a school of the prophets that had been founded by Elijah. The young man came hurriedly and stood before Jehu and said, “I have an errand to thee, O captain!” And Jehu inquired, “Unto which of all us?” And the prophet replied, “To thee, O captain.” And Jehu arose and followed him into the house; and when they had reached a private chamber the young prophet took a box of oil which he had carried in his hand, and, to the great astonishment of Jehu, he poured it on the soldier's head and said unto him, “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish.”

Immediately after his message was delivered the young prophet, who I suspect was scared half to death with his own message, opened the door and

fled. It was a perilous time, a time full of doubt and discord, and the officers outside were full of interest as to what was going on within. So when Jehu came forth one shouted out to him, "Is all well? Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" And Jehu, wishing to test them, said, "Ye know the man, and his communication." But they said, "It is false; tell us now." And then Jehu told them all—the wonderful message that had come to him, the rebellion that was thus inaugurated against the house of Ahab, that he himself was chosen to be the leader of it and had but just now been anointed king by the prophet. With whatever great astonishment these men may have listened to the story, there was a scrambling to their feet when he was through. In a moment they had made their decision to stand by the new order of things, and the record says: "Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king."

Now at this time Joram, the King of Israel, was at Jezreel. So Jehu ordered out a chariot and went with all haste to Jezreel to meet his foe. Another king, Azariah, King of Judah, "was come down to see Joram. And there stood a watchman on the tower at Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace? So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the

watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram King of Israel and Ahaziah King of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu?" And Jehu hissed through his teeth, with the ferocity of a tiger, that there would be no peace so long as the abominations of Jezebel continued. And Joram, seeing in an instant that Jehu meant his destruction, turned and fled, crying out, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah." And then Jehu drew a bow with his full strength and smote the king between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down dead in his chariot.

I have not the slightest interest in making any defense of the after conduct of Jehu. You may think just as well or just as badly of him as you please. But we have in the culmination of this story which I have thus briefly sketched for you, mostly from the fascinating Scripture narrative itself, a graphic and suggestive theme. Jehu had some characteristics that belong to all great success.

First, he was a prompt man. He did not wait

for the grass to grow on the road between Ramoth-gilead and Jezreel. He did not wait for the rumor of his having been anointed king to sift itself through the country round about and give a chance for some enemy to arouse a counter conspiracy. He did not delay until Joram the king should hear of it and have a chance to flee to some place of safety or to fortify himself against attack. Jehu was the kind of man who takes time by the forelock. He is in his chariot at once. His face is turned toward his foe. It is to be a life and death grapple. There cannot be two kings in Israel; one of them must die. And so he drives straight to the point where danger lies and where his battle is to be fought. He not only drives, but he does not spare the whip. He drives furiously. He means business. He has thrown himself with all the vigor and intensity of his soul into this thing. And when the time comes for action he does not play with the tragic business he has on hand. He does not shoot to cripple the king; he draws his bow with his full strength, and the arrow leaves its place with all the tremendous force of his strong right arm, speeding straight to the heart of the doomed man.

Now I want that we should use this picture as a suggestion to us of the duty of the Christian church and as indicating to us the conditions of success in fighting the evil and building up the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. A church ought to pull its bow with full strength, so that it may send its arrows flying with deadly force into the heart of every evil thing in the community. Jehu was anointed to be God's executioner of the wicked house of Ahab.

The Christian church stands in the world to-day anointed and commissioned to fight every evil institution, to conquer every wicked lust and passion, to overthrow and destroy every form of iniquity by which manhood and womanhood are oppressed or degraded. We are not in the world simply to hold a fortress, but to aggressively conquer the world for Jesus Christ. We are to "keep the faith"—but we are to keep it, not in a granary where it may mold, but by sowing it broadcast in the fields of human thought, in the rich soil of human hearts, until it shall bring forth its harvest in glorified human lives.

What are some of the conditions which make it possible for a church to pull its bow with full strength?

First, there must be a loyalty to God on the part of the membership. There must be a devotion to Jesus Christ, as our Leader and our King. Jehu's courage came more than all else from the fact that he was assured that he was fulfilling God's purpose. He had been anointed by the prophet of God. He had been told in the most solemn and emphatic manner that divine justice had ordained the overthrow of the house of Ahab. And thus, as he drove furiously toward Jezreel, his heart was nerved with the conviction that the divine power watched over him and that the strength of God should be with him and give him success. Such a conviction could not but exalt him in his spirit and add fervor to his devotion to his purpose. We need a self-devotion like that to-day—a supreme consecration on the part of every member of the church, pledging us to absolute loyalty to the purpose of God.

Paul, in telling the Corinthians about the wonderful prosperity of the Macedonian Christians, says that they "first gave their own selves to the Lord." That is what we must do if the church is to be in this city the mighty force for righteousness which God expects of us. Mr. Beecher once said that the trouble with some people was that they wanted religion as a sort of spiritual orchestra to hover over them in the clouds and make sweet music for them, while their real life was in the dirt. Do not be thus self-deceived. The church is worthless to you unless it does something more than charm your ears. Its greater purpose is to renovate your heart, to purify your soul, to harness you to the great purposes which God has for you in the world, to bring you into fellowship with Jesus Christ, to nerve your arm with courage to do heroic and noble deeds. And just in proportion as that spirit possesses the church the church ceases to be a social or a religious club and comes to be, in deed and in truth, a church of the living God.

A church, in order to give full force to its arrows of action and deed, must be united and harmonious in its enthusiastic loyalty to Christ. Love for Jesus Christ in the hearts of the people must be such a warm and real fact that it will overcome all lesser differences and hold the people together as a unit by the force of its heavenly magnetism. If Jehu's captains had been divided and quarrelsome it would have been useless to have anointed him king. But, whatever may have been their private differences of opinion, they dropped everything else to shout for Jehu. Every man was in his place, with his trumpet

in his hands and the cry on his lips, "Jehu is king!"

So the strong church that nothing can resist is the church whose membership is full of enthusiastic and united love for Christ. We are not all alike. In a large church there will be great diversity of opinion as to methods and the minor details of the church work; but, if a church is to be strong in its great mission of fighting evil to the death and winning souls to the standard of Jesus Christ, all private differences of opinion must give way before the common good of all and in the presence of supreme loyalty to the Christ, who is our Saviour and Redeemer.

Dr. David H. Moore, of the *Western Christian Advocate*, finds a striking editorial sermon in the pathetic surprise and grief of the Chinese emperor at the universal defeat of his armies. The newspapers tell of his interview with his council in which his breaking heart sobbed out its anguish. He had provided his officers with careful training for the exigencies of war, furnished unstinted treasure to pay his soldiers, equipped them with the most improved weapons, and provisioned them for the severest and most prolonged campaign. But when the hour of trial came his soldiers were sent to slaughter or ignominious defeat bearing arms of obsolete patterns to stand up against the latest rifles and machine guns, and many of his officers turned traitors or cowards. Where he had a right to expect unity he found division; where abundance, poverty; where splendidly equipped and disciplined soldiery, a starving, ill-assorted, spiritless rabble.

May we not find in this a lesson for ourselves? In

our great contest with the hosts of sin, what does our King find in his church? He has done all for us that it is possible for unlimited power and wisdom and love to do. The Holy Spirit is offered to everyone that will ask in sincerity. All power in heaven and earth is pledged to us if we fight loyally for him. Are we faithful to this divine Leader? If, like the Chinese officers, instead of being loyal to our great opportunity, we give way to self-indulgence, seeking only our own ease and our own comfort, how certainly the church will come, in its battle against sin, to disaster and ruin! On the other hand, if we are true to him we will find that no opposition that can be brought against us can prosper, and we shall be able to pluck new honors and many crowns with which to adorn our Lord.

A church cannot pull a bow with its full strength unless there is a general disposition on the part of its membership to work to the full amount of their ability. A church is a combination, a consolidation of added forces. It is like the current of a river—each stream which comes down from the hills, having its own little history and story, adds its full force of momentum and power to the great river with which it casts its lot. It may be that when mill wheels are turned, when cities are supplied with water, and great ships are borne on its bosom, no one stream can tell or boast that it was its power that accomplished the result; and yet all alike work together to fulfill the great mission. So a church is strong only as its membership is strong. If individuals of the church are weak in courage, nerveless in purpose, cold and lukewarm in devo-

tion, given up to worldliness and indifference, the whole body of the church must feel the effect of it and be largely weakened and hurt by it. This is true of every department of church work. The mighty force of the church which comes from the union of the many cannot pull its bow with full strength unless the individuals composing the many shall each give their full quota of power. The influence of the individual, even in a large company of people, is almost impossible to compute. It may seem to be a comparatively weak and unknown factor, but the influence for good or bad may be tremendous. Mrs. Belle Chase sings this marvelous power of influence with true poetic insight :

“One morn, from careless lips,
 In thoughtless haste,
 A harsh word fell.
By swift North wind 'twas quickly caught ;
Scarce thinking of the harm he wrought,
Upon his blighting wings he bore
The thoughtless word from shore to shore ;
Above the listening towns he flew,
Until, at night, the whole world knew
 The sorry tale.

“One morn, from smiling lips,
 A glad song rang,
 Of sweet good will.
The West wind heard the sweet refrain,
And quickly caught the lovely strain.
To suffering souls, by sorrow bowed,
Through lanes she flew, and city's crowd,
With healing balm for error's wound,
Until at night, the whole world round
 Could sing the song.”

This contribution of one's full share of force must extend itself to temporal, as well as spiritual, things if the church is to draw its bow with its full strength. Many people in a large church, who are not able to give what seem to them large sums, excuse themselves from all share in bearing the financial burden of the church, until the church is crippled for lack of the money which would be abundant in the treasury if all shared with equal fidelity in its support. Young man and young woman, you should be specially aroused by our theme this morning to discipline yourselves in youth, while perhaps the sums you are able to give, either financially, socially, or spiritually, seem very small to you, yet to give what you are able to give with the same fidelity and devotion, and with the same feeling of conscientious responsibility as the steward of God's good things, as you would if you were able to give largely. We hear a great deal of talk, and rightly, about the duty of very gifted and talented men and women or very rich people to hold their gifts and talents and riches as God's stewards; but is it not just as true that the man who has one talent—whether it be influence or position or money—is just as truly accountable to God for his use of it as the man who has ten? The strong church is where rich and poor, old and young, strong and weak, stand side by side in blessed fellowship, each doing what he can, each adding a little, more or less, according to ability, to make that strong right arm of power which draws the bow of the church's influence to its full strength.

The church becomes sacred and precious to us in

proportion as we give ourselves to it. That time-worn phrase, "I belong to the church," may mean very much or very little to you. How much it means to some families! I know I look into the faces of some of you here to whom the church of God is the most precious thing in all the world. Your home life, your social life, your personal religious experience, all the tender ties of fellowship, human and divine, have been woven together in the life of the church. Dr. J. W. Chadwick sings a sweet little song entitled, "The Golden Robin's Nest:"

"The golden robin came to build his nest
High in the elm tree's ever nodding crest;
All the long day, upon his task intent,
Backward and forward busily he went,

"Gathering from far and near the tiny shreds
That birdies weave for little birdies' beds;
Now bits of grass, now bits of vagrant string,
And now some queerer, dearer sort of thing.

"For on the lawn, where he was wont to come
In search of stuff to build his pretty home,
We dropped one day a lock of golden hair,
Which our wee darling easily could spare;

"And, close beside it, tenderly we placed
A lock that had the stooping shoulders graced
Of her old grandsire; it was white as snow,
Or cherry trees when they are all ablow.

"Then throve the golden robin's work apace;
Hundreds of times he sought the lucky place
Where sure, he thought, in his bird fashion dim,
Wondrous provision had been made for him.

“ Both locks, the white and golden, disappeared ;
The nest was finished, and the brood was reared ;
And then there came a pleasant summer’s day
When the last golden robin flew away.

“ Erelong, in triumph, from its leafy height,
We bore the nest so wonderfully light,
And saw how prettily the white and gold
Made warp and woof of many a gleaming fold.

“ But when again the golden robins came,
Cleaving the orchards with their breasts aflame,
Grandsire’s white locks and baby’s golden head
Were lying low, both in one grassy bed.

“ And so more dear than ever is the nest
Ta’en from the elm tree’s ever nodding crest.
Little the golden robin thought how rare
A thing he wrought with white and golden hair.”

The church of God is the nesting place where God weaves together the sweetest and most sacred memories of our human lives. Ah, I do not believe you all appreciate how much the church really means to you. Recall, I pray you, while I speak, its countless mercies. Many of you were brought to its sacred altars by saintly hands that have ceased to work on earth. You have grown up there. You, in turn, have brought your little children there for baptism. When they have grown to manhood or womanhood you have seen them wedded there at God’s altar. When one has fallen by the wayside you have brought the loved form back again, to pause for an hour in the holy place on its way to the burial. The church! Who can tell what it means to you? It was God’s messenger when you were a poor sinner. ’Twas there

you found the Redeemer. It has comforted you when you were sad ; it has sanctified you when you were glad ; it has nerved your soul anew when you were discouraged ; it has quieted and restrained your feverish unrest when you were successful. The church ! Its hallowed benediction has fallen upon you from the cradle onward through all these years. Your hopes and fears, your joys and sorrows, have all been hallowed by it. And whatever the future holds for you, with its graces of the Spirit and its Easter hopes of everlasting life, has its promise and its foretaste in this sacred place.

XX.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE NAPKIN.

“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.”—Luke xix, 20.

MOST of you remember the story which leads up to the text. The nobleman is going into the far country. He selects ten servants for agents and delivers to each one of them a certain amount, with which he is to trade and make report of results when he shall come again. After a while he comes back, calls his servants together, and demands an accounting. One after another is called, and they report varying degrees of success. One comes up proudly and reports that he has multiplied the original capital ten times. He is applauded and richly rewarded. Another has acquired five times what was committed to him. He, too, receives the praise of his Lord and reward in proportion to his labor. But finally there comes along a man who has not dared to risk the money that had been intrusted to him, and through all the years of his master's absence has kept the capital committed to his care carefully secreted. And so he comes saying, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.” The doom of that man is the tragedy of the parable. These men are intended as representative characters and, taken

together, form a most interesting group of living pictures, full of suggestion as to our responsibility for the capital of human life which is committed to our hands.

The great central truth taught in the parable is that our lives as a whole, with all their gifts of intelligence and ability, of power to acquire and distribute influence, are the capital which is bestowed upon us by our Creator; that if we shall take this capital into the market place it will gather other values to itself, will multiply in our hands, so that after a while, when the great accounting day shall come, we shall not only bring back the original sum with which we were trusted, but shall have multiplied it many times by our industry and devotion.

We are also taught very clearly that it is not necessary to waste our capital or to squander it in riotous living in order to come under the righteous condemnation of God. Simply to fail to use what has been committed to us, to shirk the responsibility of our manhood or womanhood, and to hide away the gifts which have been bestowed upon us—this is to sin against God's wisdom and goodness and direct commandment. Growth is the law of life; development is the order of our being; fruit-bearing is the test of our fidelity.

Let us study some of the napkins which are in common use in our time in covering up the gold of human life and hiding it out of sight and out of usefulness.

There is the napkin of distrust and doubt. This man's distrust came from a prejudiced, jaundiced idea of his master. If he had known his master

better he would have known that he could forgive anything easier than indolence. So, if you ask me what a man shall do if he has doubts about Christianity I say, Become better acquainted with Jesus Christ. Christianity is a personal system. It clings about Jesus Christ. No man can espouse Christianity with great zest until he comes into close fellowship with Jesus. Christ disarms the most prejudiced man who studies carefully his character and life. The indifferent Lew Wallace becomes the reverent disciple through the studies necessary to write *Ben-Hur*. Leckey, the rationalist, is compelled to say that Christianity presented "to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and condition; has been, not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists." Thomas doubted in the absence of Christ, but in his presence was convinced of his divine lordship. And Jesus remarked upon his confession of him, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And multitudes every day who draw near to Christ by repentance and faith are coming into that blessedness and entering into holy communion and fellowship with him.

This napkin of distrust and doubt always leads to a second covering, akin to itself, or rather a resultant—hopelessness. The inevitable tendency of sin is to drive the sinning soul to hopelessness and despair. The man who has lost faith in his power to do right and in the presence of God to help him is naturally hopeless for the race and for himself. Sin not only disturbs the conscience, but it robs the heart of courage and destroys the light of hope. One of the saddest things in the world is the hopelessness of it. Men are dying all about us because of broken hearts. Men are committing suicide because they are in despair. The poor materialism of our time has no hope for men; and the heart, conscious of its own sin and unworthiness, breaks without hope. Christ came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

The Gospel message comes to sinners as a life-boat comes to the poor shipwrecked sailors in the midst of the storm. How bright this old Bible is with lighthouses of hope! Listen to some of them: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "We

give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

But some troubled, perplexed soul, half smothered under the napkin of distrust and despair, says, "It is well enough to quote hopeful scriptures to people who are looking out on joyous futures; but mine looks so black." Yes, black to you, no doubt, when you are trying to look at it through a napkin; but bright enough if you will look at it through the lens of God's promise. Our good neighbor, Dr. Cuyler, tells about a painting called "Cloudland," which he saw in one of the German picture galleries. It hangs at the end of a long gallery and, at first sight, looks like a huge, repulsive daub of confused color, without form or comeliness. As you walk toward it, however, the picture begins to take shape. It proves to be a mass of exquisite little cherub faces, like those at the head of the canvas in Raphael's "Madonna di San Sisto." When you come close to the picture you see an innumerable company of little angels and cherubim. How often a soul, frightened by trial, sees nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and crushed hopes! But if that soul, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, would only come close to God it would soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of

mercy. In one cherub face it would see, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Another angel would say, "All things work together for good to them that love God." And from still another sweet face the heavenly benediction would come, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . Where I am, there ye shall be also."

One of the most beautiful pictures of courage and sweetness under trying circumstances is presented in a little book, published some three or four years since, entitled *A Little White Shadow*. This striking title was suggested by a remark made by an artist who was looking out one day from the heights of an island in one of the beautiful bays on the coast of the Mediterranean not far from Naples. The bay was lying below under the intense, white light of the midday sun, and the artist remarked, "Even the shadows are white at this hour of the day." The story goes on to describe a woman whose name in the little town is on everybody's lips, but whose figure is never seen on any of the island roads. Madame Teresa never comes down the beautiful paths, because up in a villa on the rocks, surrounded by an uninclosed rose garden, she has been shut up within four walls these thirty years, never a moment without pain; but whoever goes to her room, full of birds and flowers and portraits, finds nothing there but courage, good cheer, and kindness. Day by day and year by year the little madame has lain on her couch, looking out of her window upon the world from which she is shut off;

always serene, full of gentleness, and abounding in good works. No one on the island seems to lead so active a life as she, so constantly do her thoughts travel to every household, so accurate is her knowledge of everyone's needs, so constant is her tact and sympathy, so varied and delicate are her beneficences and service. Looking out one day at twilight, when some one suggested that lights should be brought, Madame Teresa laughed and said that she was never alone. "It is always noon with me; when shadows come and I do not like them I always think of bright lights;" and immediately there flashed into the mind of the visitor the phrase of the artist—"A little white shadow." At the elevation of faith and resignation which Madame Teresa had reached even the shadows were white.

How blessed is the influence and how inspiring the teaching of such a life! How easy it would have been for her to hide away her talent in a napkin and excuse herself for doing so. But how infinitely wiser for her to refuse to permit herself to become idle or morbid and sad. She simply changed the class of her interests. If she could not invest her pound any longer in one way she put it out to interest among another circle of exchangers. Having lost the power of being of service longer with hands and feet, she cultivated with more earnestness the gift of thoughtfulness, the power of sympathetic fellowship, and the sweetness of spirit which enabled her to act through others. Let us learn the lesson of this sweet life. When we can no longer do one thing well let us seek out what is left, let us strengthen those things which remain.

Then there is the napkin of selfishness. Selfishness is a stem around which many sins and vices cluster. The idolatry of self is the heaviest napkin that ever shut out the light of heaven from deluded human eyes. This napkin usually finds its most common illustration in worldliness. The old parable of the sower which I read for our Scripture lesson is illustrated over and over again. The soil is rich, the seed is good, the promise of youth is splendid; but the thorns choke it out. Worldliness chokes the life out of many a soul. And what a miserable exchange it is! The story is told of a certain duke who had a passion for costly diamonds. His house resembled a castle, rather than a mansion, and it was surrounded with a lofty wall over which no one could climb without giving an alarm. His treasure was kept in a safe let into the wall in his bedroom, so that it could not be reached without first awaking or murdering the owner; the safe was so constructed that it could not be forced without discharging four guns and setting an alarm bell ringing in every room. His bedroom, like a prisoner's cell, had but one small window; and the bolt and lock of the massive door were of the stoutest iron. In addition to these precautions, a case containing twelve loaded revolvers stood beside his bed. Instead of crying out, like the psalmist, "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" he might have said, "Diamonds are my portion; therefore do I fear."

Let us take off the napkin of worldliness and bring our capital out into the market place of the world's need. Possibly I am speaking to some

worldly-minded father or mother. If so, let me impress upon you the awful tragedy that may come from the wrapping up of the spiritual possibilities of your home in any napkin of the world's making. No one can overestimate the blessed influence of simple, straightforward Christianity in the home. A man who has been of great value and blessing to the world relates that, on one of his visits to his old home years after he had left it, he was put to sleep in the spare chamber. In the morning he opened the closet door, and a scene met his gaze which brought the tears to his eyes in a moment. There, in the center of the closet, stood a chair, and before that chair was a cushion in which there were deep prints, where some one, evidently, was accustomed to kneel in secret worship. It all flashed over him in an instant. It was the secret sanctuary of his own blessed mother, who had prayed all her ten children into the kingdom. What a hallowed spot it seemed to him! A thrill of sacred awe came over him, and a voice almost seemed to say, as it did to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." O mother, if you would be remembered by your children with a benediction like that you must begin at once. There is no time in this short life to be lost. A lovely old lady lay in a casket, ready for burial. A niece, looking upon the placid features, remarked, "I hope I shall have as beautiful an old age as Aunt Catherine." To which a sister made wise reply, "It is none too soon to begin."

But I dare not close our study without calling

your attention faithfully to the tragic ending of our text. The tragedy is here, and it is in real life as well. Our text will not let us forget that we hold our destiny, after all, in our own hands. God will not ruthlessly break down our wills. He will call after us; he will warn us through the conscience; he will impress us by the still, small voice; he will send us the Bible and the ministry of reconciliation; he will call us by his providences, wrought out in joy and grief; but we also have something to do. We ourselves must take off the unworthy napkin. We must rouse ourselves to action, to a sense of our accountability to God, and faithfully, by his help, fulfill the mission he has given to us. If we do not, if we reject all, if we allow our pound, committed to us, to remain wrapped up in distrust or selfishness or worldliness or sin of any kind, the tragedy comes at last. The pound is taken from us, and, speechless and undone, we are cast out in sorrow and despair.

XXI.

A HAUNTED SOUL.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”—Matt. xii, 43-45.

WHO of us has not shivered at weird stories of haunted houses—superstitious legends of how the ghosts of some old murder-making feud or the victims of some cruel injustice come back again to make queer noises and strange lights and disturb the slumber and the peace of later dwellers in what was once the theater of their own exploits? But we are coming at this time to the study of a haunted house which does not rest for its interest upon either superstition or legend, or even divine revelation; we are to study what is patent to the observation and intelligence of every one of us.

The scripture we are studying undoubtedly had special reference to the very people to whom Christ was speaking; but it is a picture of universal application and is illustrated as frequently to-day as in any time in the past. It is put before us in one of those straightforward and interesting figures which Christ so often uses. An evil spirit possesses a house, which in the last sentence of our text Christ

explains very clearly to be a human soul. By some power—it may be the conscience aroused by the Holy Spirit, it may be some revelation of diviner and better things possible for the soul, it may be some devout and earnest pleading of godly friends—for some reason the man rouses all that is within him and expels the evil spirit. Cast out, the evil spirit seeks rest, hunts for a home, lurks about for a while in desert places, finds no rest, and comes back again to see what has transpired in his absence. And when he comes back, doubtless expecting to find the house tenanted and strongly guarded and some new dweller possessing all the rooms and appointments of the soul, the evil spirit finds, with devilish joy and, no doubt, at the same time with astonishment, that the house is empty. There is no tenant there, no light in the window no music from the piano, no fire in the kitchen, no indication of life anywhere; but, instead, the house is swept and furnished, garnished and decorated, as if in invitation to some energetic personality to come and take possession and intrench himself and be at home. With alacrity the exiled spirit accepts the invitation; but, having learned cunning through past experience, he does not trust himself alone, lest he be again overthrown, but goes and invites seven other more bold and impudent and vicious spirits than himself, and the eight come back and enter in and hold revel in that man's soul. And we can understand why Jesus says, "The last state of that man is worse than the first."

Dr. Henry Melville, the great English preacher, interprets this first evil spirit to be that ruling evil

passion or master disposition to sin which tempts every soul. He declares that every individual among us is tempted by nature to some one kind of sin, which, according to St. Paul's expression, is "the sin which doth so easily beset us;" that the greatest difficulty which Christianity encounters in our salvation is in grappling with the master passion, in the overcoming of the besetting sin, whether it be a sin of the flesh or a sin of the intellect; and that the battle royal in every one of our lives between good and evil will be at that one weak point in our nature. Thus, if a voluptuous man shall resolve to cease his sin and lead a pure life his hardest after task will be in resisting the lust of the flesh; while the proud man or the man of envious disposition will find that his main battle must be waged with pride or with envy. And the devil, who once had undisputed possession of the man and who knows, therefore, the quarter in which he is most assailable, will direct his temptations against the vulnerable point and will persistently seek to make a breach where he once held the broadest highway.

To my mind the great lesson we have to study at this time is this: that an empty life is always in danger, that you have done a very small thing when you have gotten a man to cease sinning only, and that you have no assurance whatever that any reformation will be lasting unless you have brought in a new tenant to take possession of the man's soul. And, if it did last, what a poor, meaningless thing a human life is that is not possessed by any supreme and holy purpose for good! An empty life is itself a sinful life. All you have to do to de-

stroy the burrs of a flour mill is to let it run empty without any grist. You and I are mills made that way. We can never run when empty without disaster. Every little while you see people who have run empty, intellectually and spiritually, until they are like two worn-out old millstones whetting against each other all the time, wearing out themselves and the church. They make famous prayer meeting bores and cranks that can dry up the spirituality of almost any meeting if they have half a chance. And the worst of it is that they often claim to have a monopoly of the spirituality of the church; but somehow no flour comes out of their mill, and no souls are won to Christ by them. In politics they call them political hacks, because they have had no great load of political or statesmanlike truth of their own to express and carry forward, but, like a public hack, back themselves up to everything that offers on the street of political life.

I repeat it, that an empty life is always dangerous. It is not only of no value, but it is ready for anybody to move in. An empty house gets the windows knocked out by the hoodlums, or the tramps move in and defile it and do outrage there. So an empty heart is a temptation to every lawless evil spirit to enter in and hold revel. I have no doubt at all that a large part of the shameful scandals which end in divorce and murder and suicide among some of the richest of society's so-called leaders in our time come from the very idleness and emptiness and uselessness of their lives.

Bishop Henry C. Potter, of New York, preaching on this subject some time ago, said that, as

wealth increased and people came to live more luxuriously and there came to be a large number of persons, both men and women, who had but little to do, a condition of affairs was produced which would naturally breed every imaginable evil that can afflict society or ruin the individual soul. Let wealth and luxury and indolence grow together, and you have a nest in which a whole brood of vices will soon and swiftly be hatched. How our daily papers make us blush sometimes at the hideous illustrations of the truth of this. Here is a home clouded or shattered by the shame of a wretched intrigue; another, that is stung and wounded by the cruelty of a causeless calumny; and still another, dishonored and disbanded by foolish and criminal extravagance. And you can find the secret of every one of them in the emptiness and idleness of the circle in which they, like poor moths, have burned themselves to death. Much of the crime and baseness of our time, we would find if we could trace it back to its beginning, was conceived because life was "empty, swept, and garnished," and because there had entered—just because it was so empty, its hands so idle and unemployed, its heart so uninterested and indifferent—a whole legion of devils to drag it down to hell.

Only this past week the collector of customs of New York city, in published interviews, declares that many of the leading women of the richest and most noted society of New York city are the most ready to perjure themselves in order to bring in contraband goods for their neighbors. A case is given of a young woman, very prominent in the social

world, about whom the customhouse officials were informed by cable that she was on her way home with many rich gowns and valuable articles which were dutiable and which friends had asked her to bring in order that they might be obtained minus the duty. The officer in charge was informed of the facts and told to question her very severely and give her every possible chance to tell the truth. When the steamer arrived the officer met the woman and received her declaration. Not a single article was declared. He handed it back to her and requested her earnestly to go over in her mind everything that her trunks contained.

“Are you positively sure that everything in it is for your personal use?” he asked. The woman was indignant. “Of course it is. How dare you ask me such a question?” “Well,” he replied, “you may keep this declaration until I return.” In a few moments the officer again put the formal questions to her more earnestly than before.

This time the young woman was grieved. “I shall report this to the officials,” she exclaimed. “They have already reported it to me,” the officer replied. That was too much for her, and she broke down and confessed. The officer collected six hundred dollars duty on the contents of her trunk.

Now that young woman was only the fruit on the tree. She was an apple of Sodom, grown on the tree of modern fashionable society, where to eat and to drink, to keep oneself sleek and fat and well groomed, and to dress and array the body are the chief and only aims in human life. Such a life has always produced crime and wickedness and corrup-

tion—everywhere, in every age; and the laws of human nature have not changed or ceased to operate to-day.

“But,” you say, “you are shooting wide of the mark now; that does not appeal to me. I have to work early and late. My hands are full enough, surely.” Yes, your hands may be; but what about your soul? Who possesses it? Who is supreme master there? “Well,” one says, “I have long since ceased to follow the besetting sin of my youth, and I am determined, especially as this new year comes in, to refrain from everything that seems wrong to me. Surely you can’t ask anything better than that.” Ah, but God does ask something better than that of you, and the requirements of your own nature ask something better than that. Do you remember the Pharisee and the publican that went up into the temple to pray, and the Pharisee lifted his face toward heaven and said, “O Lord, I thank thee I am not like some other people. I pay tithes of all I possess; that is, I pay my taxes—and that is a great deal better than many people do nowadays—and I live an exceedingly respectable life. I thank thee that I am so much better than this miserable publican here.” And yet that man did not go down justified from the temple. What was the trouble? Why, taken at his own estimate, he had only an empty house, swept and garnished indeed; but no good and noble spirit possessed him.

O brothers and sisters, I thank God that I have something better than a mere haunted house to preach to you! Here it is that our holy Christianity rises infinitely above all the philosophies and formal

moralties of the world. You have heard sermons about conversion ; here is what it means, plainly and simply, the old tenant is cast out, with all his vicious friends and unholy visitors ; and a new tenant comes in and dwells there, to fill the old house full of the happy strains of a new music, to light the windows with a new glow that shines from heaven, instead of from the pit, to bring new guests into the rooms that have been so long defiled and outraged. Around that broad hearthstone of the soul, where pride and envy and hatred, or lust and sensuality, have held revel, lo, now comes the Master, with his friends—love and peace and gentleness and meekness and joy and goodness—to hold their blessed fellowship. They hold council day by day together, not only how they may strengthen the old house against attack, not only how they may make the locks sure and the gate latch hold, or the watch dogs alert, or the policemen honest ; ah, no ! a more blessed thing than that—they spend those hours of communion, first, in devising means by which they may make the old house new, by which they may repair the damage the wicked revelers have wrought in it, how they may make it again a thing of beauty and gladness, a joy to all that shall behold it, and a welcome place for every rightful guest. Not only so, but in those hours of communion they study how they may make this new temple of the living God a place of encouragement for the weary, of refreshment for those who are discouraged, a beacon light for the storm-tossed mariner, a light amid the world's darkness that cannot be hid. It is to this we call you.

And if there be any here who have, some time, known something of this sweet experience, but whose coldness or indifference has driven out the heavenly tenants, I beg of him to call them back now. It is always a sad thing to find that a man's Christian testimony is only a reminiscence of by-gone joys, while, in the meantime, the heart has grown selfish and proud. Present experience is, after all, the test of our relation to God, and the measure of our real usefulness. The story is told of a farmer who attended a sale of horses and was shown one of which the owner said, "This has been a splendid roadster." Then another was brought out, and of him it was said, "He will make a good worker when he is grown." But the old farmer impatiently exclaimed, "I don't want to see your 'have beens' or 'will bes;' bring out something that is!" So, in seeking after those who are to help bring about the kingdom of God and win souls to Christ, we want those who are now on fire with a holy passion for souls, who are now letting their light shine so that all may see their good works and glorify God.

In Australia there are some plants that grow in the water and are so full of light at night that they give the impression of little islands on fire, and a naturalist says that he hung some specimens of this plant up in his sitting room to dry, and for several nights they served as a light to read by; but he remarks significantly that "the luminosity disappeared as the plant dried up." So the power of a Christian to give light disappears as he dries up, as he himself is taken away from the water of life.

Are there fathers and mothers in this church and congregation whose spiritual vitality has so dried up that they no longer give the light of life to their children? Are there professed Christian men here who go about in their business and no man knows that they are Christians, and whose business associates would be astonished if they knew them to be professed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? O, backslider, come back to God!

And so to everyone here who is not a Christian, in that truest and noblest sense which means the incarnation of Christ's spirit in your heart and life, I come with my message. All your good resolutions, your pledges of reform, your determination to live a better life will be worse than idle unless you yield your heart up to the God who made it and to the loving service of the Christ who died to redeem you. Recall the picture we are studying. Here was a man who made a good resolution, who emptied his life for the time of its sin, who swept it and garnished it, possibly with education and polite manners and refinement and all that; but the proper sign to put up over its door was, "Furnished rooms to let." Is that your condition to-night, with all the opportunities you have had? How many sweepers God has had at work to keep your heart swept! Your mother's prayers and all her tender love and pleading, all the associations of the church and Sunday school, the sermons that have aroused your conscience—all these may have kept your heart swept for a time from the greater sins. You have not been without decoration, either. Schools, music, reading, and art have furnished you with

some garnishment of thought. But what a hollow mockery it all is if over your heart's doorway the sign stands, "To let, furnished rooms; a heart that can love and hate, that can hope and fear, an observatory with a telescope through which faith might view the heavens, an immortal spirit gathering tenants for eternity—to let!" Ah, it will not be to let long, for outside the devil lurks and watches and waits. He bides his time. Seven other devils lurk with him. Some day will come when the door is not guarded, and they will enter in, and the last state of your heart will be worse than the first.

But, blessed be God, the devil is not the only tenant that haunts a human soul. Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear."

XXII.

HEAVEN'S PERFUME—GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF
ODORS.

“Golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.”—Rev. v, 8.

LONGFELLOW has sung to us the quaint,
sweet story of Sandalphon, the angel of prayer:

“Have you read in the Talmud of old,
In the legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it—the marvelous story
Of Sandalphon, the angel of glory,
Sandalphon, the angel of prayer?”

“How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the city celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?”

And the singer goes on to tell us how Sandalphon

“stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below ;

“From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer ;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

“ And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
 Into garlands of purple and red ;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the city immortal
 Is wafted the fragrance they shed.”

And the writer of our text saw again when an angel “ came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

Such revelations, however figurative you may regard them, must, at least, be held to indicate God’s regard for the prayers of his reverent, trusting children. There are a hundred questions you might ask me about the philosophy of prayer and about the methods of God’s response to it which I would not be able to answer you ; but I have no more doubt about it as a divinely ordered channel of communication between the heart of God and the hearts of his children than I have of the existence of the law of gravitation. It is idle to say that we cannot trust where we do not know. Just at this time business men are investing more money, perhaps, in the development of machinery and inventions depending upon electricity than in almost anything else. And yet none of them know very much about it, and many of them scarcely anything. When telegraph companies are investing millions of dollars of money in tying continents to-

gether with great cables, and railroad companies are spending millions more in building roads along which is to run the circuit of strange fire, depending entirely for returns from their investments on the fidelity of a force that is almost wholly a stranger to them, it is surely not strange that men and women whose hearts are warmed by the Holy Spirit, who feel themselves uplifted and comforted when they pray to God, find great joy and peace in believing, although there may be many questions about prayer they cannot answer.

If we take up the study of our text in the light, not of philosophy, but of God's revelation of himself to us as a Father, it becomes at once a natural, as well as a helpful, picture. It assures us that the sweetest perfume of the heavenly home is the prayers of God's faithful children. And that is not hard to believe, for it is true of our own homes, imperfect as they are. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, rare pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home having all these is pervaded by an atmosphere as tasteless and as odorless as bouquets of waxen flowers. The sweetest perfume that the home circle ever knows rises from deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The grateful smile, the happy prattle, the artless appeals for help from little children make a rarer odor to the true father or mother than any that gold could buy from oriental perfume merchant. If this be true of us, why shall it not be true of God, who possesses the only perfect parental heart in all the universe?

The figure used is very suggestive and very beau-

tiful. The open vial full of sweet odors exhales sweetness unconsciously and thus pervades the surrounding atmosphere. It overleaps all barriers. So it is undoubtedly true that our unconscious influence, whether for good or evil, is greater than that of which we are conscious. Another has said that it is not so much when we assert that we are conscientious as when we are accidentally discovered doing some conscientious act that the force of our character is felt. A man may talk nobly ; but if he lives in secret an impure life his unconscious influence for evil will destroy the effects of his words. Character influences independently of any professions ; and this influence of character is the heaviest weight in the scale of life. A good life will preach under circumstances where no word is uttered, and will stimulate good in others when they themselves are unconscious of the power that lifts them heavenward. The Holy Spirit, incarnate in men and women, is, I doubt not, the mightiest power God uses in this world for our salvation. Father Taylor, the old Seamen's Bethel preacher of Boston, once impatiently exclaimed, " Folks are better than angels." Lucy Larcom, the poet, felt the same way, for on one occasion, writing a letter to one in sorrow, she wrote these words : " I think I should be homesick in a mansion filled with angels if my own precious friends whom I loved were not within call." It is a glorious thing to live such a life that precious fragrance shall rise from it and be exhaled unconsciously.

There are many kinds of this heavenly perfume. I can only suggest a few of the vials ; but I am sure that

one of them is full of the prayers of children. Christ has made this certain ; for did he not say, " Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ? " Nothing can surpass the sweet trustfulness and faith of children's prayers. To a little child it seems perfectly natural that he should pray to God. A very pretty story is going around, about the little four-year-old son of a member of the Georgia Legislature. Having left the boy in a room of one of the big hotels in the city, with a command to go to bed immediately, the father went down to seek his congenial friends in the office. The bell boys were soon thrown into consternation by the many and various calls to the room in which the little fellow had been left, and quite a number of them were soon collected there. But it was neither ice water nor fire that the little child wanted. He astonished the boys with this unusual request, " Please, sirs, send some one to me to hear me say my prayers. " Childhood ought to be kept thus close to God. A pastor once laid his hand upon a little boy's head in a time of religious revival and said, " Well, my little man, have you found Christ ? " " Why, " the little boy replied, with surprised assurance, " I have never lost him ! " Neither need they ever lose him, if we are faithful to our duty.

How many times the fragrance of a child's devotion is God's way of drawing a whole family heavenward. During a revival in a Michigan town, this last winter, a little girl stood up in the Sunday school with those who promised to stand by the Lord Jesus and work for him. Later in the day,

when she had reached home, the little child said to her mother, "Mamma, we've got to have a blessing asked at our table." "How so, my child?" "Well, I've promised this afternoon to stand by this work and to stand by the Lord. And the preacher said we must pray and thank God for our food; and I think I'll have to do it, as you don't and pa don't. So, if you will speak to pa about it I'll ask the blessing." Well, that was serious. Later, the fact was reported to the husband, who said, "Well, it won't hurt to let the child have her way. We ought to be glad that she is inclined to be religious. We can stand it."

So, at the supper table, the little lass was allowed to take up the task that had been unperformed in that home. She did it about like this: "O Lord, bless us all and have mercy upon us. There's father—he isn't a Christian; and there's mother—she isn't a Christian. Bless them. I've promised to stand by you in this work and to stand by the meetings. Bless me. Amen." By the time the blessing was closed four eyes were filled with tears, and the mother's heart opened immediately for the coming in of the King of glory; and we can believe that, with such a fragrance as that in that home, the father stands with them ere this. I can imagine that, to the great Father's heart, no perfume could be so sweet as a little child's prayer.

Then there are mother's prayers. What an overflowing vial of sweet perfume that must be that holds the prayers of mothers for their children. O, the power of a mother's prayers! How the fragrance of them lingers in the heart after the sound

of them has died out of the ear many years ago! The little sailor lad voiced many a mature man's thought who, when told that he was the only one saved in the wreckage of a great ship, raised both his hands and cried in a loud voice, "My mother has been praying for me, my mother's been praying for me!"

Bishop Vincent gives this very sweet picture of the Sabbath evenings with his mother in his childhood: "Beyond the 'holy place' was the 'holy of holies.' For fifteen years that I can remember, it was my mother's invariable custom to take the children into her own room after the regular Sabbath evening song and prayer. In the darkness, in the twilight, or in the moonlight we followed her. And there, seated together without a light, she would talk in a tender way about eternity and duty, about our faults as children, her anxiety about us, her intense desire for our salvation, how we ought to be more patient with each other, more cheerfully obedient to father, more guarded in our speech. Then we knelt together, and she prayed. And how she could pray! Living with God seven days a week through all the weeks, when she brought us, her children, to the mercy seat on Sabbath evening was not heaven opened, and did not the place seem holy ground, and can anyone wonder that her children cannot recall those scenes without a thrill and a flood of tears and a vow of renewed consecration?" If there be here any mother whose prayers seem not to have been heard or answered, I pray you to persevere, and to be encouraged to a sublimer faith and confidence in God.

Then there are prayers of thanksgiving. I fear they are not so universal as they ought to be. When we recall all the goodness of God we ought to be bubbling over with thanksgiving, like the fountain on the mountain side. A poet whose name I do not know describes a quaint, sweet custom among the herdsmen of the Swiss Alps :

“ The day dies down in a tender glow
From the setting sun on each lofty height ;
And, as the last beam fades away,
A message sounds forth to greet the night.
’Tis the huntsman’s trumpet sounding abroad
From the loftiest peak, ‘ Praise God, the Lord !’

“ Solemnly grand the message sounds
At the death of day and the birth of night ;
When all is silence and sweet repose,
The herdsman up on the loftiest height
Lifts his horn on the hills of God,
And trumpets his message, ‘ Praise God, the Lord !’

“ Then the herdsmen of all the region take
Their horns, one after another, and lift
Their voices up to repeat the call,
Till the echoes fill valley, and cavern, and rift,
One after another, ‘ Praise God, the Lord !’
Till the mountains resound with the name of God.

“ Then a stillness follows ; each one in prayer
Bends his knee, till down from the height
The herdsman sounds his trumpet once more,
Repeated by herdsmen and echoes—‘ Good night !’
And soft through the night on the hills of God
Floats the call, ‘ Good night ’—‘ Praise God, the Lord !’ ”

What a glorious day that will be when wars have ceased, and hatred has been conquered by love, and up from the hilltops of every land on the globe

there shall go the glad cry to greet the dying day, "Praise God, the Lord!"

There is one other vial of perfume which we know is full of sweetest fragrance to our heavenly Father—the vial which holds the prayers of repentance. From what the Saviour has told us we know that this is one of the most highly prized of all the perfumes in heaven. Jesus knew all about heaven; and yet he has not told us a great deal concerning it. His allusions to it are rare, but they are very suggestive. One of them is in that fifteenth chapter of Luke which I read for our Scripture lesson. There Christ draws aside the veil for a moment and reveals to us a splendid scene in heaven, when all the glad bells are ringing, and angels and ransomed saints together tune their harps for rarest music—a time when "there is joy in heaven," "joy in the presence of the angels of God." And the cause of all this wonderful joy is that here, in this poor, sin-cursed world, a sinner is on his knees confessing his sins and pleading for mercy. I pray God there may be some such joy in heaven to-night over some that, here and now while I speak, shall lift their hearts in penitence to God and, with the cross before their eyes, shall cry from the soul's depths, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Our study to-night ought to make it easier for us to come boldly to a throne of grace and ask largely that our joys may be full. We live narrow, half starved lives spiritually many times because our prayers are niggardly, and our faith does not grasp the infinite riches of God's power and love.

I remember reading a little incident a few years since, of a train that was stalled for many hours in a

snowdrift out in Colorado. There was no place to get food for the passengers. Banker Seligman, of New York, and his party were on the train, having their own special sleeping car, their own dining car, and a large store of provisions, and were, therefore, well provided for. The conductor of the train finally went to the banker and told him that there were a number of ladies in the other cars who were in need of food and drink. The banker answered, "Go and set your tables, and I will provide the food." And he set his cooks and servants to work and had a bountiful supply of everything he had in store cooked up, and the passengers feasted. He then turned to the laborers, who had been working manfully, sent his servants with hampers piled full of good things, and every man was waited upon until satisfied.

Now that was a nice thing for that rich man, who could abundantly afford it, to do. And no man was afraid to eat all that was offered, for he knew that the rich banker was able to do all that he proposed. But what is that, my brother, compared with what your heavenly Father is able to do? He opens his hand and feeds every living thing. It was thought to be a great thing for the servants of the rich banker to wait upon the men toiling in the snowdrifts for his comfort, and it was generous as men count generosity; but the infinite God sends swift-winged angels to carry richer food than gold can buy to the poorest soul in the universe that asks. It is the characteristic of a great soul to have great confidence and be willing to receive all that God is willing to give. Do not measure your prayers by your poverty, but by God's unlimited abundance!

XXIII.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE ELOQUENT—THE
MOST PICTURESQUE HISTORICAL FIGURE
IN MODERN TIMES.*

“ Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen ? ”—2 Sam. iii, 38.

IF I were asked what person in the present century had fought against the greatest odds and won the struggle of life at most points I should answer, Frederick Douglass. There is a great deal of talk about self-made men in our time, and we have had an abundance of eloquence concerning Abraham Lincoln's rise from the occupation of rail-splitting to the presidency; concerning General Grant's career, from the tannery till he became the first American citizen; and concerning Garfield's, from the towpath to the White House. But none of these men, nor all of them put together, had to make life's race with such a handicap or facing such odds as Frederick Douglass.

Here is a man, who learned to read and write by studying out the characters made by the carpenters in the Baltimore lumber yards, yet who comes, by his own devoted efforts, to speak the English language with an elegance and an eloquence equal to that of Charles Sumner or Henry Ward Beecher in their best days. Here is a man who did not know

* Abstract of sermon.

who his father was, who saw his mother only a few times—and then by moonlight or by glimpses caught by the light of a tallow dip in a log cabin—yet who came to be the bosom friend of John Bright, the intimate counselor of Abraham Lincoln, the boon companion of Daniel O'Connell and Father Mathew; who came to be loved by Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison; who was held in highest honor and most tender regard by many of the noblest women of both continents; who came to be the undisputed leader of his race, to be known wherever the English language is spoken, and to be respected by the whole civilized world. The story of his life is the most romantic in all modern times. No man who began so low has climbed so high as he.

Frederick Douglass had many elements of greatness, and one of the greatest was his power of grim perseverance. He had the power to patiently, ploddingly whip himself through any hard work that must be done. It was once said by an opponent of Sir Walter Raleigh, "He can toil terribly." Frederick Douglass had, in a remarkable degree, that "terrible," irresistible power of the toiler. Whether it was learning to read and write by the carpenters' marks on sticks of building timber, or plodding after he was a man grown through the grammar of the English language, or setting himself in middle age to acquire that information and knowledge necessary to make him a skillful friend of his people, he had the perseverance, the pluck, and the devotion to toil mercilessly until his task was accomplished.

Frederick Douglass had great ideals. He never compromised with himself for anything less than the best that was possible. Nothing short of being the very best type of man and the most noble orator that it was possible to produce out of his circumstances and gifts satisfied him for a moment. These lofty ideals alone made it possible for him to achieve the great triumphs of his life. For, after all, the greatest triumph of Douglass's life is not to be found in his glorious success as an orator or in his triumphs as a political leader, but in the splendid moral fiber of the man, that enabled him to live a life which is not only a precious heritage to his own race, but an inspiration to men of all races throughout all time. Think of the fearful odds he had to fight against in order to produce such a moral character. Milton says, "It is a long way out of hell up to light." Think of the hell of lust and iniquity into which Douglass was born. He could have said literally, with the psalmist, "In sin did my mother conceive me." He was born in the midst of that enforced tendency to every vicious passion and unholy appetite that springs from the world, the flesh, or the devil; but, in spite of it all, he developed a strong, robust manhood, which he kept clean and spotless throughout half a century lived in the public gaze. Frederick Douglass did no greater thing for his race than that.

Douglass's oratory gained much of its power from the superb manhood that was behind it. I once heard him deliver his great address on John Brown at the Music Hall in Boston. His discussion of the law of retribution was the strongest I

have ever heard. As he stood there on the platform, giving us the evolution of John Brown, he filled one's ideal of the old Hebrew prophets. He reached the climax in these words: "The cry that went up from the startled and terrified inhabitants of Harper's Ferry was but the echo of that other cry which began two hundred years before, when the man hunter first set foot in the quiet African villages. The raid on Harper's Ferry was contracted for when the first slave ship landed on these shores."

"The question has been often asked," said Douglass, in that great address, "why Virginia, with a grand magnanimity, did not spare John Brown? But they had a *thing* down there, and that *thing* could not stand the life of John Brown. Her own Patrick Henry loved liberty for the rich and great; John Brown loved liberty for the poor and lowly. It was not white man dying for white man; it was white man for black." Here the orator's presence and voice became electric. Nothing could surpass the majesty of his appearance as he thrilled our souls with the splendid utterance that followed: "He came down from the heaven of New England liberty to the hell of African slavery! He gave his life as the best gift he could lay on the altar of human liberty!"

Frederick Douglass was a broad-spirited public man. He was too large a man for any bitter, bigoted partisanship. His declaration not long ago, in a letter which has been printed, "I am a Republican, but I am not a 'Republican right or wrong,'" shows the breadth of the man. And it is well to

notice in connection with this fact the marvelous growth, in his own time, of toleration of the freedom of principles and speech. This is illustrated in the adjournment of the North Carolina House of Representatives in his honor on receiving the news of his death.

It was very appropriate that his last appearance in public should have been on the platform of the woman's council on the very day of his death. To no other cause had he given more sincere devotion than to the equality of right and privilege between men and women. I heard him one time ask, with stinging sarcasm, in an address on woman suffrage, in reply to the suggestion that the pool of politics was too dirty to allow women to enter it, "Who made the pool dirty? No woman has been playing in it!" The fact that a bill, now before the New York Legislature, to punish by flogging certain classes of human brutes has been so amended by that august body as to permit a man to beat his wife without danger of punishment, so far as this bill is concerned, very clearly indicates that there is great necessity that Frederick Douglass's mantle shall fall upon younger men. His position that a disfranchised class will always be an oppressed class was well taken. No man doubts for a moment that, if equal suffrage had been granted by the last constitutional convention, the wife beater would have had to take his flogging along with the other brutes.

A career like that of Frederick Douglass is at once an honor and an inspiration to humanity. In such a man the kinship of all races is demonstrated.

In the presence of such a personality all men instinctively agree with John Boyle O'Reilly's song :

“ The trapper died—our hero—and we grieved ;
In every heart in camp the sorrow stirred.
‘ His soul was red ! ’ the Indian cried, bereaved ;
‘ A white man, he ! ’ the grim old Yankee’s word.

“ So, brief and strong, each mourner gave his best—
How kind he was, how brave, how keen to track ;
And as we laid him by the pines to rest,
A negro spoke, with tears, ‘ His heart was black ! ’ ”

XXIV.

A FARSIGHTED RELIGION.

“He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.”—
2 Peter i, 9.

THE interest of our study naturally centers in what is contained in “these things,” for they are the lenses through which we are to obtain far-off views of life and destiny. We have them stated for us with great simplicity in the verses which precede our text. It is interesting to note the suggestion that it is the diligent soul that will be able to use these spiritual glasses. Sleepy eyes never see anything. The victors of life are those who consecrate themselves to earnestness and diligence. The greatest successes are first won in the inner man. The most important battles are first fought on the battlefield of the soul:

“There is an unseen battlefield
In every human breast,
Where two opposing forces meet,
And where they seldom rest.
That field is veiled from mortal sight—
’Tis only seen by One
Who knows alone where victory lies
When each day’s fight is done.”

The first great lens of the Christian soul is faith—a faith like that which Abraham had, who, though he dwelt in a desert, lived in constant view of “a

city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." As Thomas Starr King once eloquently declared, such a faith gilds the horizon of our being with a heavenly glory.

The statement of our text is daily verified in the case of those who, in the absence of this faith, experience a pitiable blankness and barrenness of soul. In the absence of faith, the body weighs us down; we are helpless prisoners in it. We forget our native realm and come easily to believe that the grave is the goal of life. Every argument that can be urged in proof of immortality is of little avail. Even the resurrection of Christ is a wonderful story merely to a thorough sensualist whose aspirations have never reached beyond pleasure and the present, whose meditations, sent forth like doves from the floating ark of life, have never brought back a green and budding promise of the solid land.

To feel a conviction of immortality we must live for it. Let anyone firmly believe that the soul is permanent and live in accordance with that belief, and soon existence will seem permanent too; the world becomes the veil of a brighter glory that lies behind it; the condemnation of unbelief is lifted off, since the mind, conscious of its own rooted being, does not wait for immortality, but is "passed from death unto life." Such a faith renews the youth of the one who obtains his visions of life through it. "They tell me I am growing old," said the great Scotch preacher, Dr. Guthrie, "because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's feet upon my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic

as of yore. But they are mistaken; that is not I. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not I. This is the house in which I live; but I am young— younger now than I ever was before.”

Virtue is the next lens which Peter mentions in his conditions of a farsighted soul. We are to understand by this word “virtue” moral goodness, a conforming of our lives to the requirements of the moral law. The man whose habit it is to live like that will acquire what may be called a moral sense, which gives not only a clear vision of what is right and wrong, but enables the virtuous soul to peer through the fog and sophistry of worldly standards and know intuitively that which is right. It is a very common thing for young people who are beginning to taste the poisonous sweets of sin to imagine that they are very sharp and shrewd; but we may be sure that it is only the truly virtuous soul that is clear-headed.

A world-wide traveler relates that he was sitting one day at table at a restaurant in Paris, when he was unintentionally the hearer of a conversation in a language it was supposed by the speakers he did not understand. A young fellow from London was telling his French tutor of the “very remarkable” conquest he had made upon the boulevards. The “simple youth,” as Solomon calls him, was so charmed with his success in so unexpected a quarter that he poured into the ear of his friend such a romance as might, he believed, constitute the plot of a modern novel. What was his evident surprise to hear from the Parisian, as he pushed back his plate in unconcealed weariness, “My young friend, I

have heard all of that more than a thousand times." And one could see, by the change that came over the countenance of the "young man void of understanding," that he had learned that, instead of being a charmer, he was simply a dupe. And anyone hearing me to-night, who imagines that somehow he can cheat God and sow to the wind and not reap the whirlwind, may be assured that when he is called upon to pay the cost of his sin, as he undoubtedly will be, he will find the bitterest ingredient in the penalty to be the patent proof that, instead of being a world-conqueror, he is only one more fool added to the long succession of fools.

Among the Japanese, the god of thunder is represented by the most frightful features that can be devised for the countenance of any being at all resembling man. And to this creature the name Ema is given. It is a proverb in the Sunrise Kingdom that "when the sinner comes to settle he will see Ema's face." It is only the straightforward, genuine soul that can confront all emergencies and fear nothing. How pitiable is all affectation compared to real genuineness of character!

Henry Clay used to relate a story which, to his mind, illustrated the surpassing tact and natural good manners of American women. During a presidential campaign, after he had addressed a mass meeting in a Kentucky town, one of the neighboring farmers invited him to a dinner at an early date to meet some of the leading Whigs of the country. When the day arrived Mr. Clay rode up to the farmhouse and was surprised to see no stir of preparation; for the hospitable Kentuckians usually

found no banquet too rich for their beloved leader. The farmer's wife, in a homespun gown and white apron, was feeding the chickens. She turned, startled, then approached him smiling. "It is Mr. Clay! Come in. My husband will be here in a moment." She led him directly into her clean, cheerful kitchen and blew the horn to summon her husband and sons, giving them a warning look as they entered.

"I knew," Mr. Clay said, "there was a blunder somewhere. But there was no hint of it in my hostess's manner, as she soon after composedly placed the single dish of food on the table and invited us to be seated. The dish was pig's jowl and cabbage, and was exceedingly well cooked. I never enjoyed a meal more or listened to better talk. When the dinner was over and I was preparing to mount my horse the farmer's wife came out. 'You will dine with us to-morrow and meet the politicians as you promised, Mr. Clay?' she said. 'We are so honored and grateful by your coming to us alone to-day.'" The next day a large company of men sat down to a royal dinner. "But," said Henry Clay, "I enjoyed the jowl and cabbage most. It had the flavor of the finest hospitality."

That was a social triumph of the true lady. She had self-composure, because she had self-respect and was sure of her ground. Real virtue and goodness are like that. They are in the fiber of the very being. There is a certain self-respect of righteousness, a calmness and a composure, a clear-eyedness of virtue, that can never be possessed except by the soul conscious of its genuineness in God's sight.

The apostle points out here two other lenses, knowledge and temperance, that should be acquired by every one of us in the everyday experience and observation of our lives. We ought to be glad, as the years fly and the white hairs and the wrinkles come, that we can win the precious gift of experience from life's treasury and correct by it our false standards and narrow prejudices. The experiences of life which we are passing through are only of value to us because of the knowledge we are able to obtain and make our own as we pass along the journey. If we are really growing with the years we shall know it by the deepening of the channel of experience, the rich treasures of knowledge we have gathered, and the temperance and moderation which we have gained in life's school. One may be as old as Methuselah, but if he has gained no knowledge as he has gone along the way he is yet blind and cannot see afar off. Dr. Barrows beautifully says: "It matters not how rudely the winds of fate may shake the time tree, sweeping down the fairest leaves and buds, if we find something within us unshaken and have made our profit out of every loss, as well as every gain. The main thing, in fact the only thing, is to deepen the channel of experience year by year as we march on, pitching our tent, building our camp fire, and leaving behind us graves and broken hopes, and shattered fortunes, tears, sighs, memories sad and sweet—all that part of us that perishes as we die daily, yet live eternally to God."

Patience is another lens through which we are to behold the beautiful visions that are afar off. There

is no nobler grace than patience. How many of us come to sorrow through our impatience! Mrs. Browning tells, in a poem, the story of a little flower that prayed that it might come out before the other flowers and be in advance of the spring, and said, "How all nature will hail me, how the birds will sing at my advent, how the sun will shine upon me, how the air will stoop and kiss my petals!" And the prayer was granted, and it came before its time, and the snow looked scornfully on it, and said, "Who are you that are like a bit of the snow?" And there were no birds to sing, and the sun hid itself, and the rain was cold and bitter, and the impatient little flower, that begged to be born before its time, died before its time. Patience is serene and beautiful, whether in the palace or the hovel. Bishop Horne says of patience: "Behold her appearance and attire! Her countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven, unspotted by the shadow of a cloud; and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eyebrows sit cheerfulness and joy. Her mouth is lovely in silence; her complexion and color those of innocence and security. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hands she holds a scepter in the form of a cross. She is not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion, but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace."

The next lens in this Christian observatory is godliness. And this is true, whether we take the word to mean that we are to endeavor to become like God, or whether we come to meditate upon

him and see him in all things, great or small, in the world about us. Many a fog-cloud is cleared away when we can see God in everything, when we can sing with the poet,

“ I say it over and over, and yet again to-day ;
It rests my heart as surely as it did yesterday :
‘ It is the Lord’s appointment ! ’
Whatever my work may be,
I am sure, in my heart of hearts,
He has offered it for me.

“ I must say it over and over, and again to-day,
For my work is somewhat different from yesterday :
‘ It is the Lord’s appointment ! ’
It quiets my restless will
Like voice of a tender mother,
And my heart and will are still.

“ I will say it over and over, this and every day,
Whatsoever the Master orders, come what may :
‘ It is the Lord’s appointment ! ’
For only his love can see
What is wisest, best, and right,
What is truly good for me.”

If we rightly appreciate our own relation to God it is easy to look through the next lens, which is brotherly kindness. If you want to find a glass that will show you into the secret depths of the human heart this is the one to use. Bishop Weaver tells the story of a young lawyer, who visited a hospital and sat down by a cot and talked kindly to a poor, miserable wreck. The man drew the bedclothes over his face and wept as if his heart would break. When he could speak he said, “ You are the first man that has spoken a kind word to me, and I can’t

stand it." Men may think and talk as they please ; but observation and experience will teach any man of common sense that the nearest, most direct path to the human heart is brotherly kindness. John Boyle O'Reilly sings :

" ' What is the real good ? '
 I asked in a musing mood.

" Order, said the court ;
 Knowledge, said the school ;
 Truth, said the wise man ;
 Pleasure, said the fool ;
 Beauty, said the page ;
 Freedom, said the dreamer ;
 Home, said the sage ;
 Fame, said the soldier ;
 Equity, the seer.
 Spake my heart full sadly,
 ' The answer is not here.' "

" Then within my bosom
 Softly this I heard :
 ' Each heart holds the secret—
 Kindness is the word.' "

How much we lose in spiritual vision, while trying to illumine the hearts of those we love, through failing to express at a time when it is needed the brotherly kindness that we often feel! Bishop Henry C. Potter relates that several years ago a number of distinguished men gathered in Calvary Church, New York city, to bear their testimony to the life and influence of Dr. Edward A. Washburn. One after another, Phillips Brooks and others like him rose in their places in the crowded church chapel to tell what they owed to the genius, the high spirit,

the unswerving loyalty to duty, the splendid courage, the rare scholarship, the philosophic insight, the prophetic utterance of Dr. Washburn. At last the testimony was done. At the door all the time there had stood a slender woman, who had been during his life nearest to him of whom they had been speaking. "I never shall forget her face," says Bishop Potter, "the passion of it and the pathos of it, nor the power, tender but reproachful, with which she spoke, when at length we were still, 'O, if you all loved Edward so, why didn't you tell him of it while he lived?'"

One who has mastered the spirit of brotherly kindness has already looked through the lens of love—love to God and love to man. John says, "We love him, because he first loved us." It is the knowledge of God's love that wins ours. Without that precious knowledge we may sing, tremblingly,

"O, how I fear thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship thee with humble hope
And penitential tears!"

But when we see God's loving heart we are able to sing with joy,

"Yet do I love thee, too, O Lord!
Almighty as thou art;
For thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart."

If we accustom ourselves to the use of these glorious glasses that belong to the observatory of the soul our hearts shall beat in sympathy with Dr. A.

J. Gordon, who has so recently ceased to sing on earth that he might join the singers on high :

“ I shall see the King in his beauty,
In the land that is far away,
When the shadows at length have lifted,
And the darkness has turned to day.

“ To behold the Chief of ten thousand,
Ah! my soul, this were joy enough ;
’Twill suffice for the bliss of heaven
That the Lamb is the light thereof.”

