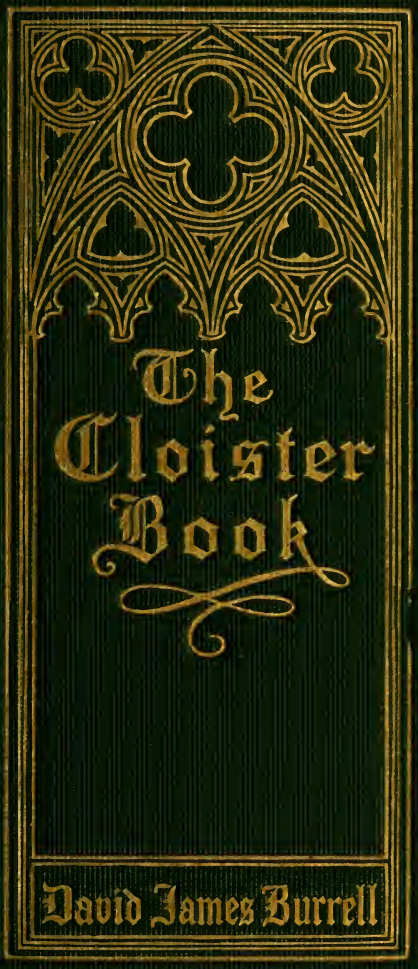
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THE CLOISTER BOOK

FOR

Shut-in Worshipers and Pastorless Congregations

BY

DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D., LL.D.
Minister to the Marble Collegiate Church, New York.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
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DEDICATION

It has been one of the pleasures of my ministry to keep in touch, by means of a weekly sermon known as "The Marble Collegiate Pulpit," with many parishioners near and far who by reason of infirmity or homes apart have been deprived of church privileges. To such as these—my Cloistered Congregation—this book is dedicated, in the hope that it may comfort them in lonely hours and mayhap lighten some of the burdens of their secluded lives.

THE PLAN

HEREIN will be found a complete Order of Service for twenty-six Sabbaths, so arranged that *those who are deprived of sanctuary privileges* may have not only the Sermon, but appropriate Prayers, Scripture Lessons and Hymns.

It is hoped that many of *the aged, sick and those otherwise disabled or far removed from opportunities of worship* may thus be enabled at their homes to unite in spirit with those who are privileged to sit together at appointed times in the blessed fellowship of the House of God.

The book may be found useful, also, in conducting the Worship of *Congregations that are without Pastors,* the Order of Service being so arranged that any Church Officer or other suitable person can lead it.

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FIRST SERVICE

In the Cleft of the Rock

1. *INVOCATION*

FATHER in heaven, I* thank thee for this hour. May I, in this sacred hour, have fellowship with those who, in the sanctuaries of the world, draw near to thee. Bless them and bless me; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN†:* "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Exodus 33.
Revelation 1.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, give me a vision of thyself to-day. For this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Help me to hide in the cleft of the rock and hear, if nothing more, the rustle of thy garment as thou passest by. Unveil thy beauty in the face of thine only-begotten Son. Show me thy love, the love that passeth

*In the service of the congregation the plural pronoun should be used throughout.

†This hymn, like others in the book, should be sung or read in full. The hymns used in these Services may be found in almost any of the hymn-books. They are all in "The Good News," published by the American Tract Society, 25 cents, postpaid.

knowledge; thy justice and righteousness which are as the high mountains; thy holiness, before which angels and archangels cover their faces. Help me in view of thyself to abhor my sins and find the healing comfort of thy grace. Make me grateful for all thy mercies and patient under thy chastening hand. If ever life seems hard and lonely, show me the things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Make me brave to live and willing, in thy time, to enter on the life eternal. Enlarge my heart to think of others. Bless all whose lot is harder than mine. Remember those who have no Gospel. Reclaim the wandering. Glorify thyself in thy church and in the triumphs of thy grace; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Oh, could I speak the matchless worth."

6. *OFFERING**

7. *THE SERMON*

In the Cleft of the Rock

"And Moses said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And the Lord said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee. . . . And I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." (Ex. 33: 18-22.)

We are at our highest and best when in communion with God. Just here is the secret of Moses'

*"On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. 16:2.)

power; as it is written "The Lord spake to Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend." No man was ever bolder at the throne of the heavenly grace than this man whose name is a proverb for meekness. He made no scruple to present his strong arguments when he drew near to take hold upon the strength of God.

Yet here is the record of three distinct refusals on the part of God to grant the prayers of Moses; in each of which we shall find that his prayer was answered, after all, in the very best way.

(1) The people had sinned in the matter of the golden calf, and the Lord's anger had gone forth against them. Then Moses made his intercession: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold! Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book!" The Lord neither forgave their sin, at this juncture, nor consented to blot Moses out of his book; but, requiring him to resume his place as their leader, he renewed his promise to bring them into the land of which he had said to Abraham, "Unto thy seed will I give it."

(2) And again Moses prayed, "See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way." It was apparently his desire to have the future mapped out before him; but, instead of revealing his pathway through the wilderness, the Lord said, "My presence shall

go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Whereupon the pillar of cloud, which had been removed, took its position again above the camp as the manifest token of the presence of God.

(3) Now comes this great prayer of Moses: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" It is important to know precisely what he meant. He had heard God's voice at the burning bush when he received his commission, "I-AM-THAT-I-AM hath sent you." He had seen God's hand in nature, in the picturesque beauty of the Nile and the sunsets above the mountains, and had thus "looked through nature up to nature's God." He had pondered the stately steppings of Providence in human events; for to him had fallen the singular lot of recording the first twenty centuries of history. All this, however, did not satisfy him. He longed to see the essential glory of God, the glory of which the Shekinah hovering above the camp was a visible symbol. His request at this point was unreasonable; and in the nature of the case it was impossible to grant it.

The answer was, "Thou canst not see my face; for no man can see me and live. But I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and cover thee with my hand, and I will make my goodness pass before thee." It might have gratified the curiosity of Moses to see the divine glory had that been possible; but it would have been of no practical value to him. What he really needed to see was the goodness of God. In fact, this is the divine glory in so far as it concerns the welfare of men.

So, taking his place in the cleft of the rock and covered by the divine hand, the man of equal meekness and boldness stood awaiting the revelation. And what occurred? A momentary gleam of light, perhaps a rustle as of royal robes. What had he learned? This: that "God is love," because his presence was with him.

We may interpret this vision by that of Isaiah in the temple. He "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, his train filling the temple and seraphim surrounding him with the cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!'" And when he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips and mine eyes have seen the King," an angel purged his lips as with a living coal from the altar in token of the forgiveness of his sins.

And we may interpret the vision of Isaiah, in turn, by that of John the Evangelist in Patmos. He saw One walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks "like unto the Son of Man," clothed in the majesty of power, with a countenance like the sun shining in his strength. "And when I saw him," he wrote, "I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

In other words, the Lord of these visions was Christ; and the glory which was seen was the glory of the divine goodness as manifest in him who died and rose again for us men and our salvation.

It is written of Christ, "He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person;" and again, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" and again, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

By this we are given to understand that to know God is impossible except as he has revealed himself in his incarnate Son. All efforts to discover him by what is called "the scientific method" are unavailing. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Can one measure the ocean in a gourd, or gather the radiance of the sun into the focus of a burning-glass, or photograph the universe on the retina of a human eye? No more can the finite grasp the infinite; no more can man whose breath is in his nostrils apprehend the glory of the ineffable One. But in the Incarnation he stoops to reveal himself to us.

On a ceiling in one of the palaces of Rome is Guido's picture of the Aurora. As the spectator looks upward his eyes are dazzled and the figures swim before him; but a horizontal mirror has been constructed, so that at his convenience he may contemplate a reflection of its beauty. So does God bow down in the person of his incarnate Son to bring himself within our scope of vision.

And in this he meets our highest needs. So much of the divine glory is thus revealed as is necessary to our spiritual and eternal welfare. We know

now that God is love because we perceive that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

I. *We want a Saviour.*

We are conscious of sin and of its penalty resting upon us. To use the significant word of Jesus, we are "lost." We are lost to God, to self-respect, to character, to usefulness, to eternal life. We are not so lost, however, as not to be salvable. No doctrine of total depravity can be true which does not recognize our consciousness of a lingering spark of hope and the possibility of better things. It is said that lost children in the Pyrenees are always sought for by their parents on the heights. They intuitively take the upward paths. So we look unto the hills, from whence cometh our help. Our instinct is to call upon God. We climb the steep pathway of repentance until we come to the vision of the Cross; and there we discover the truth of those wonderful words in the parable of the Prodigal Son: "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

II. *We want a Lord and Master;* one who shall direct, control and defend us in the front of temptation and duty.

We look toward the future as Moses did toward the forty years in the wilderness, crying, "O Lord, show me thy way!" He answered, "My presence shall go with thee." It is the very word of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." And that should amply satisfy us.

So on I go, not knowing;
I would not if I might;
I'd rather go in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light.
I'd rather walk with him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

III. *We want a Comforter in trouble.*

And here again the glory of the divine goodness is revealed in Christ, who is "a strength to the poor and to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." Pain, sorrow, bereavement, disappointment, discouragement are the allotment of human life. The essential glory of God affords no comfort in our somber hours. "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" cried Job. He did find him at length and exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" Then all was well with him. Paul was able and willing to bear his thorn in the flesh when Christ said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Mary and Martha were reconciled to their sorrow when the messenger came to say, "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

IV. *We want a Helper in the swellings of Jordan.*

The test of our religion is at the death-bed. John Wesley said to his brother Charles, "Our people die well." You will scarcely find a sublimer portion of Scripture than the death-song of Moses as he climbed the heights: "Lord, thou hast been

our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God! Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." We may not go as Moses did along the upward path to vanish in the heavens; but as we pass through the Valley of the Shadow the rod and staff of our Helper will comfort us.

V. *And we need an Advocate to plead for us on the great day.*

Alas for those who appear in Judgment with their sins unshriven! Of these the merciful Master said, "They shall call upon the rocks and the hills to fall upon them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne." But blessed is the man who has committed himself to the divine goodness as manifest in Christ who died for us. He has gone on before, through the rent veil, into the Holiest of All, where he awaits us; and at our coming he will say, "Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead!" So we journey through life, like Oriental pilgrims who come to their destination at nightfall to find the gates closed until the day break. Then the gates roll back, and they pass in.

We conclude that the longing to know God and behold his glory is satisfied in the vision of his goodness in Christ.

So far as we are concerned, the divine glory is

fully revealed in the cross of his beloved Son. And that this was what Moses saw and really desired to see is made clear by what occurred fifteen hundred years later, in the Mount of Transfiguration, where he reappeared and spake with Jesus "of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." He had spent the intervening period in heaven, where it would seem that the divine glory in the atonement had thus impressed itself upon him.

But this vision of Christ, that is of God's glory in his goodness, is possible only to those who, like Moses in the boldness of devout meekness, are willing to hide themselves in the cleft of the rock and permit God's hand to cover them. This was the thought of Augustus Toplady when he borrowed the symbolism of Moses' vision for his historic hymn. As a young man, oppressed with the burden of sin and remorse, while on a journey in Ireland he came at evening to a barn where a group of peasants were engaged in worship. He paused in the doorway and heard the testimony of the preacher to the saving power of Christ. That was the hour of Toplady's surrender to Christ, which he commemorated in these words:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me!
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

8. *PRAYER*

O God, if it be not possible for eyes like mine to gaze undazzled on thy full majesty, grant me a glimpse, though it be but a momentary glimpse, of thyself as thou hast tempered thy glory in the person of thy Son. Oh, to see Christ, my Saviour, the fulness of the Godhead bodily! And oh, to see him now! Grant it for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Awake, my soul, to joyful lays."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen.

SECOND SERVICE

The Vision in the Mount of God

1. *INVOCATION*

O God who dwellest not in temples made with hands, help me to worship thee in the beauty of holiness. Make this place a mount of vision and an altar of consecration; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "To-day the Saviour calls."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Genesis 22:1-19.
John 8:31-59.

4. *PRAYER*

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help. Let me not forget thy goodness, O Lord, in the constant gifts of thy providence and grace. For life and all that makes life worth living, for home and kinship and friendship and the fellowship of saints, I thank thee. Blessed be thy name for the assurance that thou art an High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of my infirmities. Enable me to realize that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in me. Be pleased to pardon my sins, for thy great mercy's sake. I am a great sinner; but thou, O God of the Cross, art a great Saviour! Bless with me all those who worship to-day in the churches of the whole world. Keep them loyal to thy law and true to thy Gospel. And hasten the time when sinners everywhere shall be converted and every knee shall bow in worship before thee; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Joy to the world, the Lord is come."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Vision in the Mount of God

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." (Gen. 22: 14.)

In the home at Beersheba the weary traveller had settled down to rest. He had been a pilgrim and a sojourner since the day when he left Ur of the Chaldees at the command, "Go forth unto a country that I shall show you." How grateful, at last, to sit with his happy household under his own vine and fig tree!

The family was knit together in the fellowship of faith. Abraham, because a great believer, was called "Father of the Faithful" and "Friend of

God." His wife, Sarah, though a weak woman in many ways, was also counted worthy of a place in the roll-call of heroes, "because she judged Him faithful who had promised." It is true her faith had broken down once; when an angel appeared at the doorway of the tent in Mamre and said to Abraham, "Lo, Sarah thy wife shall bear a son." A sound of incredulous laughter from within the tent told that Sarah had overheard it. The child of promise was now in the home at Beersheba; Isaac, "son of laughter." How they loved him, the child of their old age, in whom centered the promise of the covenant, "As the stars of heaven, so shall thy seed be!"

A cloud now hung over this happy home. The Voice that Abraham had never disregarded had said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering!" The faith of the Father of the Faithful had now to be put to its ultimate test. It must go through the crucible that it might come forth as gold seven times tried.

Oh, the long, long night that followed! It would appear that not a word was spoken to Sarah, lest the heart of the fond mother might break. In solitude the patriarch faced his ordeal. He might ask of himself a thousand questions, but only one could weigh in his decision, "Was it really the voice of God?" That settled, there was nothing left but to obey.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and . . . went unto the place of which God had told him." Here are volumes in a sentence. Not many tragedies are so briefly told.

It was a three days' journey from Beersheba to the heights of Jebus. Many a man had travelled those fifty miles afoot, but never one so wearily as this man. The gold-seeker traverses deserts and climbs mountains joyously to find his Ophir; but one will faint in going a mile with sorrow at the end of it.

It would appear that on the first day, as they skirted the edge of the wilderness, no word was spoken. The look on the father's face, perhaps, forbade all converse, betraying the fierce struggle within.

On the second day, as they climbed the foothills, the silence was broken: "My father, where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

On the third day at sunrise they came in sight of the mountain. A rabbinical legend says that it was marked by the Shekinah, the mysterious cloud of the divine presence. It was the same cloud that had hung so darkly over the home at Beersheba. So they came to the appointed place; the altar was built, Isaac was laid upon it, and Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay him!

We pause here to ask, Why must this be? Had not the faith of Abraham been sufficiently tried? Not so. It remained to be seen whether he really believed in God, in a God who would and could interpose, even in the direst extremity, to help him. The faith which brought him to the summit of Moriah was to be rewarded with a vision which is explained in the name Jehovah-jireh; that is, "The Lord will provide."

The ultimate test of faith is here, *Do we believe in Providence?* In these days of free-lance theology we all hold to some sort of God; but the crucial question is, Do we believe in a God who can intervene to help us? This is the vision of faith. The proverb runs, "In the mountain of the Lord it shall be seen." This is what Abraham saw: Providence—a God who knew, who cared, who made bare his arm to help him.

I. *To discover this is to find relief in the common cares and perplexities of life.*

The law runs on this wise: "Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest shall not fail." The question is between that law and the miracle of the loaves. Suppose seed-time and harvest should fail, what then? If the hungry cry for bread, is there a prayer-answering God who will supply it? Is the miracle possible? For every answer to prayer is in the nature of a miracle, since it is a special providence.

The tendency of present thought is along the lines of evolution; that is, the calm and uninter-

rupted working of natural laws. But the hungry and the naked are among us, and the law has not supplied their need. What now? Prayer and the miracle! To those who go about the streets with thin lips murmuring "food" and "raiment," the Great Teacher speaks: "Is it food that ye need? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Is it raiment that ye need? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Here is comfort unspeakable for those who have no meal in the barrel nor oil in the cruse. This is what faith sees in the Mount of Vision:

> It may not be your way,
> It may not be my way,
> And yet in his own way
> The Lord will provide.

II. *And here is strength, also, for such as are passing through the deeper troubles of life,* who are moved to cry, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me!"

The law in this case is that which the Stoics formulated and the materialistic evolutionists of

our time emphasize, namely, "What can't be cured must be endured." The question is between the operation of that law and the proverb, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Is it true that God is "a strength to the poor and to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, *when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall"?*

It was this problem which Job answered when, sitting amid the ruins of his prosperity, forsaken by his friends and tortured with physical pain, he cried, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!"

This was the truth which God revealed to Daniel when, faithful in the teeth of danger, he said, "My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me," to which the chronicler adds, "No manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."

And this was the vision which came to Paul after a life spent in perils oft by land and sea. A dim-eyed, pain-racked prisoner in chains, he found it possible to say, "I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

This truth of Providence is the last and crowning vision of faith. None but those who have climbed the mountain of sacrifice and built the altar of Jehovah-jireh can sing:

Pain's furnace heat within me quivers;
God's breath upon the fire doth blow;
And all the heart within me shivers
And trembles in the fiery glow;
And yet I whisper, "As God will,"
And in his fiercest fires hold still.

III. *The climax of this truth is realized in times of spiritual distress.* For, when all is said, the deepest longing of the average man is a spiritual longing, which expresses itself on this wise, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The law here is, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap;" and, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The question is between that law and the Gospel, which is the highest expression of special Providence; its terms being, "God can and does interpose to save a sinner from the shame, the bondage and the penalty of sin."

The key to the vision in Mount Moriah is in the words of Christ: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). The Gospel was what Abraham saw in the Mount of God. A man of like passions with other men, a conscious sinner, having within a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and desiring to know, above all things, how God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, he found his answer in a foregleam of the atonement. *He saw Christ afar off!*

In the outline of this narrative we behold a wonderful parallel to the story of the Cross. As

Abraham set out in the early morning with Isaac his son to go unto the mount of sacrifice, so did Christ come in the fulness of time to become a whole burnt-offering for sin.

It is written that in the three days' journey from Beersheba to Mount Moriah "they went both of them together." So went the Father and the Son together all the way to Calvary. It was not three days but thirty weary years of journeying toward the altar of sacrifice; and all the while Jesus could say, "I am not alone; the Father is with me."

In the grief that burdened the heart of Abraham we discern a faint figure of the Father's pain in parting with his only-begotten Son. There are those who say, "God cannot suffer, because he hath neither body, parts nor passions." But who shall thus hang the plummet or lay the measuring line to the word "so" in the saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son"? The message that came to Abraham was like a merciless beating upon his heart-strings: "Take now thy son —thine only son—Isaac, the son of laughter—thy son whom thou lovest—and offer him!" The night while he pondered on that needs-be must be measured over against the eternity in which God contemplated the giving of his only Son. And there is a terrific suggestion of heroic grief in the fact that Abraham carried in one hand the knife and in the other the brazier. Inasmuch as there was no escape from the necessity laid upon him, it behooved him thus to face it.

And observe also the acquiescence of Isaac, who "bare the wood of the burnt offering." So Christ gave himself. During all the years of his ministry he was under the shadow of the Cross. His life's journey was over Via Dolorosa. He knew what awaited him; he "set his face steadfastly" toward it.

The agony of the hour when the final revelation was made to Isaac is passed over in silence. It was on the third day when Abraham said to his servants, "Tarry ye here while I and the lad go yonder." Then somewhere as they climbed the mountain path, Abraham said, (Oh, who shall tell the heart-breaking sorrow of it?) "My son, thou art the lamb for sacrifice! It must needs be!" So at the gateway of Gethsemane Jesus said to his disciples, "Tarry ye here, while I go yonder:" and passing into the deeper shadows of the Garden he faced the full, final, overwhelming announcement of the necessity that was put upon him. He was not alone in that supreme hour; the Father was with him. All that was human in him cried out against the cup of purple death that was pressed to his lips: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this pass from me!" Then came the great, final surrender, "Thy will be done!" Thus he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

But here the similitude breaks down. There is, indeed, no analogy to any of the great mysteries of faith: none for the Trinity; none for the Incarnation; none for the Atonement. The object-lesson

on Mount Moriah was closed when Abraham stood with his uplifted knife. The Voice said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad!" The ram caught in the thicket must needs be brought in to complete the figure of the sacrifice. On Calvary the uplifted hand was not stayed. Christ suffered on, despite the fact that his enemies were crying, "If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross!" and that legions of angels were hovering there to rescue him. He suffered on until the Gospel found its consummation in a full atonement, when with a loud voice he cried, "It is finished!"

This is the vision of Providence which Abraham saw. Not until a man perceives the full significance of the atonement as a divine interposition in our behalf does he know the real meaning of Providence. "In the mountain of the Lord it shall be seen!" What shall be seen? This, that the arm of the Lord is not "shortened that it cannot save." Here is the truth which so-called science calls "foolishness," because it is an apparent contravention of the uninterrupted processes of natural law. Yet just here is the very heart of the Gospel. As it is written, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

But who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The arm of the Lord, thrust in to solve the problem of insensate

law *vs.* Providence, is Christ himself, the Incarnation of omnipotent grace—this is God's arm made bare in the atonement. Abraham saw this afar off. To us, it is presented as an historic fact, accentuated by the story of nineteen centuries of Christian civilization. And still there are those who refuse to believe in Providence! "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

An old Jewish proverb runs, "The secret of Messiah is the secret of man." To see this vision in the mountain is to solve the problem of life. But spiritual things are spiritually discerned. He alone that hath eyes of faith can see it.

8. *PRAYER*

Be pleased, O Lord, to bless this hour of worship and meditation in thy Word. May it minister to my comfort and spiritual growth. Abide with me during the remainder of this Sabbath, and help me to rejoice in thee; through Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Redeemer. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

THIRD SERVICE

The Living, Present Christ

1. *INVOCATION*

GOD of all grace and consolation, who on the Day of Pentecost didst send down thy Spirit upon a multitude, be pleased now to bestow thy grace on a lone worshiper who approaches thee. Help me to realize thy presence in this place and worship thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "O God, our help in ages past."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 16.
Matthew 28:1-20.

4. *PRAYER*

Blessed God, I thank thee for the Gospel. How graciously thou didst bow the heavens to come down unto us in the mystery of the Incarnation! Thou didst tabernacle in flesh, so that thou mightst be able to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Thou didst speak as never man spake of the great problems of the eternal life. Thou didst go about doing good, healing the sick, comforting the

bereaved and directing penitent souls in the way of pardon and peace. And, best of all, thou didst take upon thyself the burden of our sins, bearing them in thine own body on the tree. Then, triumphing over death, thou didst ascend up on high, taking captivity captive; and thou livest forevermore to make intercession for us. But thy dwelling place is not in heaven alone; thou hast left a great promise, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you; and lo! I am with you alway." Let me, Lord, claim the fulfilment of that promise now. Come to me! Manifest thy presence unto me: for in thy presence is fulness of joy. And not to me only, but to all those who tarry in thy courts to-day, show thyself the Saviour of sinners and the mighty Friend of saints. Prosper thy cause throughout the world; and hasten thy coming in the triumphs of thy grace; for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Living, Present Christ

"Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." (John 20: 18.)

I am divided betwixt two as to the good fortune which befell the angel who descended from heaven and rolled away the stone, and that of the woman who was sent to say to the disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed!"

All heaven, no doubt, was full of volunteers when God said, "Who will go to break the seal of the sepulcher, put principalities and powers to shame and release my well-beloved Son?" The name of the angel who received the commission is not given; but O fortunate angel! He sped on wings of light to his joyous task. We know not by what swift flight such celestial beings surmount the difficulties of time and space; but it would appear that the interstellar distances are traversed in the twinkling of an eye.

It was the darkest hour of the night. In Joseph's garden the sentinels were pacing to and fro. The moment was at hand! What sudden light is this? The guards are fallen upon their faces as dead men. The angel touches the stone, and it rolls away. He loosens the shroud, unwinds the napkin from the wounded brow, and lo, Jesus comes forth! His chariot waits. He mounts aloft. God is gone up with a shout! From the distance comes the song, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!"

A little later a woman stood weeping at the empty sepulcher. At the sound of a footstep behind her she turned; and, supposing it to be the

gardener, she said, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." Jesus called her by name, "Mary!" and she fell at his feet, crying, "Rabboni!" It was then he gave her the commission, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." O fortunate woman! She ran to tell the tidings: "The Lord is risen indeed!"

This is our message to-day. They say we are living in "an age of doubt"; but too often the alleged doubt is crass unbelief: and that is not peculiar to any age. The spirit of materialism is all about us. It rests on a so-called "science" which rejects the supernatural and receives nothing to which the physical senses cannot say Yea and Amen. It reduces all things to matter; and then—by a change more singular than any of the metamorphoses of Ovid—translates it in terms of idealism and denies that matter has any reality at all! It analyzes the gray substance of the brain and pronounces it to be phosphorus; and then proceeds to analyze its output and pronounces what we call "thought" to be mere atomic friction! It holds the scales, like Epicurus, to weigh the body of a man; and then calls a group of "scientists" from Boston to weigh the immortal soul, as it escapes from the body in the article of dissolution, and sets it down in avoirdupois at somewhat less than an ounce! Such are the strange achievements of "scientific" unbelief in these days.

Is there reality in truth? Is our life mere nitrous oxide or is it the breath of God? Is God himself a fact or a phantasm? Was Christ the divine revealer of things unseen and eternal, or was he a dreamer among the shadows, passing with the long procession of shadowy forms to No-man's Land? Did he or did he not come forth from the sepulcher? This is the touchstone by which the great problems of our time must be solved: *Is Christ dead or alive to-day?*

The world does not believe in life and immortality brought to light in the gospel. The intuition is there. Addison was right:

> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
> Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us!

But against that intuition we must reckon the powers of superior attraction. The carnal outdraws the spiritual. In evidence, mark the quick step in the market-place. See the people who jostle each other along our streets. What is their purpose in life? Is the light in their eyes kindled by a consuming passion for things unseen and eternal? Is it the eagerness of their quest of truth and righteousness that has ploughed these wrinkles on their brows? No; they are chiefly Epicureans, who, if a passing thought of the hereafter comes to them, thrust it away with all possible haste and

go on groping with downcast eyes for yellow dust. Or, if perchance they lift their eyes, it is but to pursue with juvenile zeal the thistle-down of unworthy pleasure. The aphorism of the world's life is just what it was in Athens nineteen hundred years ago: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!"

And having noted the quick step in the market-place, observe the slow step to the grave-yard. The mourners go thither on leaden feet to bewail the dead; and their *miserere,* despite the *Resurgam* which is inscribed upon the sepulcher, is a hopeless farewell. The dead are dead; and the world's tears have no rainbows in them. The sepulcher is sealed and the great stone is ever before it. Thus it will ever be until the truth of the resurrection shall impress itself upon the hearts of all. "If Christ be not raised, . . . then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

Dead men and dead gods go together. The dust that arises from our streets is the dust of past and gone generations. Will they live again? Not unless there is a living God who triumphs over death. The stone on the sepulcher is sealed with the seal of oblivion. The Pantheon stands opposite God's Acre; and that too is sealed with the seal of oblivion. Zeus and Apollo are there; the gods of Walhalla and the dreamy-eyed Buddh. All are dead! They were and are not. The nations bowed at their shrines. Their altars smoked with oblations. Now there is none so poor to do them reverence.

All dead! The Pantheon answers to God's Acre, "Death ends all."

Nay, hear the message: There is one God that liveth and was dead and is alive forevermore! He, having wrought in death his redeeming work, passed through the little wicket-gate, like all gods and men. "Seal up his sepulcher," said the governor, "and make it fast." Seal it up? Seal up the springs of the morning! Seal up the fountains of the mighty deep! Bring hither the waters of the ocean in a calabash! Measure the air in a wine-skin! Who is this that would seal up the Author of life in a sepulcher? Who is this that would "make fast" the tomb of God? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh! The stone is rolled away. The message is gone forth: "He lives!" Did the world know that, the step in the market-place would be slower and the step to the grave-yard would be quicker. Life would be transformed by the thought of "Immanuel, God with us."

The Church, also, needs this message to-day. Is it not written in her creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, who was born, was crucified, dead, buried, and on the third day rose again"? Yes, and measurably the Church believes it. But, after all, a creed on a parchment must be put to the acid test of walk and conversation. How valid is our doctrine of life and immortality? Let us see.

Our Lord reduced the whole law to two commandments. "The first and greatest," he said, "is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart and soul and mind and strength; and the second," he continued, "is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Elsewhere he translates these two commandments into the practical terms of common life when he says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Do we "seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness"? Do we seek it first, first of all? Alas, the handicap of environment is upon us. The lusts of gold and pleasure and sordid ambition control us. It is too much indeed to ask that any should attain unto perfection in this present life; yet our Lord's will was expressed in the statement that being in the world we should not be of it. His kingdom and his righteousness must therefore be above all. The thought of food and raiment and other things that perish with the using, must stand aside when duty leads the way. All other ends and aims must be subordinated to this, "Man's chief end is to glorify God."

And as to that other command, "Go ye, make disciples of all men." Do the followers of Christ realize the emphasis of it? Can we be said to love our neighbor as ourselves while half the world dwells in the regions of darkness and the shadow of death?

It is recorded that Scotland was once saved by an army following a golden urn which contained the embalmed heart of Robert the Bruce. In the

great propaganda of the church is there no better leadership than that of a dead and buried Christ? It behooves us to remember that the Captain of our salvation is the conqueror of death. It is not a name embalmed in memory, but a Leader whose white plume waves before us. The living Christ leads the way!

We serve not under a commission that was uttered nineteen hundred years ago on Olivet, but under the commission of One who speaks here and now, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and evangelize; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is the voice of the living Christ. See him in the forefront! Hear him as he calls, "Follow me!" This is "the philosophy of missions." What shall we do about it?

The heart went out of the disciples when Christ was crucified. John and the three Marys stood on Calvary with their faces fallen upon their breasts. At the window of the upper room there were others who looked off toward the hill, saw the strange darkness and then the returning light, and saw through their tears the dark effigy of the cross against the sky. He whom they had expected to redeem Israel was dead. "I go a-fishing," said Peter; the others said, "We also go with thee." Why not? Their hopes were dashed; their Lord was lying in his grave.

But as they were dragging their nets in the early twilight of the morning they saw One walk-

ing on the shore. They whispered, "It is the Lord." Then Peter, girding his fisher's coat unto him, cast himself into the water and swam to meet him. The fishing days of Peter and his friends were over. Jesus was risen from the dead! The work of the kingdom must henceforth engage their every thought. Thereafter they caught men.

It was the Day of Pentecost. In the power of the Spirit the disciples were speaking with other tongues. The onlookers asked, "What meaneth this?" Some said, "It is the power of new wine." Peter was straightway on his feet at peril of his life. "New wine?" he cried. "Nay, this is the prophecy of Joel, 'It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh!' Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Ye took Jesus of Nazareth and crucified him with wicked hands; and behold, God hath loosed him from the pains of death! He, therefore, being at the right hand of God exalted, hath breathed his Spirit upon us!"

A little later we hear Peter saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again" (as if a begetting into the faith of Christ crucified were not enough) "unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!" The world is to be won by such an apprehension of the doctrine of the living Christ. He, from his high throne in heaven, by the influence of his ever-present Spirit, is conducting the campaign of the

kingdom on earth; and we, as his followers, having passed under his yoke in token of complete subjection, are always, everywhere and under all circumstances to follow him.

We never shall know the real joy of service until we grasp this truth of the living, present, dominant Christ. Till then we must not be expected to "run in the way of his commandments."

The women went to the grave-yard with heavy steps to pay their tribute to Christ crucified; but from the grave-yard they ran to carry the message of Christ living and alive forevermore. The Advent was a season of song; men and angels were singing them. But the joy of the resurrection expressed itself in winged feet. The Marys "ran" and John and Peter "ran" to tell the wonderful news. We, too, shall best emphasize our faith in the great miracle and our consequent joy by "running" to do his will and to repeat the story of his triumph over death and hell.

He is the living Christ! the Christ that "liveth and was dead and is alive forevermore!" the Christ who is "with us even unto the end of the world!" This is the Gospel for these days. O followers of Christ, up with your hearts! *Sursum corda!* This is the truth that gladdens life, that glorifies faith, that makes the Gospel the power of God unto salvation.

It may be that you cherish among your treasures an old letter, brown and thumbed and tear-stained, written by one who passed out of your

life long ago. But what if, as you sit reading it, a hand should be laid upon your shoulder, and, looking up, you should behold the face of the dead and hear him say, "Weep not, I am with you!" The Gospel is such a letter; it is God's message of salvation to you and me. Let us read it to-day in an attitude of expectancy, as if listening for his footstep.

Lift up your eyes; he is here! Does the shut-in worshiper envy the people who are out in the busy world? Is the bed hard, the burden heavy, the lot a lonely one? There is One by the bedside who loves with a love that is wonderful. He speaks! It is the voice of the shepherd come to woo again his bride: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!"

8. *PRAYER*

Bless to my soul, O Lord, this contemplation of the great truth that thou livest and art present with those who love and serve thee. May I be mindful, henceforth, that I am never alone. In the hour of temptation make thyself known to me, as thou didst to the three youths in the fiery furnace. In the dark valley of Sorrow walk thou with me, as thou didst with thy disciples on the way to Emmaus, so that their hearts burned within them.

On the upward path of Duty, when the burden seems greater than I can bear, show thy face, and lo! the yoke will be easy and the burden light. Thy presence is like a girdle about the loins and light to the eyes. If I forget, be pleased to put me in remembrance with the word "Lo, I am with thee!" For thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "From every stormy wind that blows."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen.

FOURTH SERVICE

The Pot of Manna

1. *INVOCATION*

O LORD, whose I am and whom I serve, thou knowest I long to commune with thee. If I cannot meet with thy people in the great assembly, the closet-promise is mine. The door is now shut and thou art here with me. Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth! Give me the word of strength and comfort, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Exodus 16:11-36.
John 6:30-57.

4. *PRAYER*

O God in glory exalted and in mercy ever blessed, I thank thee for thy bountiful providence and thine abounding grace. I am, like all thy people, a pilgrim and stranger in the earth, journeying to a better country, even an heavenly, and to a city that hath foundations, whose builder and Maker is God. The road, thou knowest, is sometimes a weary one; but thou hast graciously provided for all need.

How often, when travel-worn, I have come to some oasis, like Elim, where I have rested in the shadow of thy palms and refreshed myself with the waters of the king's well! Grant such a blessing to-day; and not to me only but to all who, out of sorrow or great need, call upon thee. Make bare thine arm to save sinners. Give light to those who open thy Word. Bestow upon all in authority the will and power to serve in thy fear. Take glory to thyself in the services of thy house everywhere this day; and bless me also, O my Father, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Come, ye disconsolate."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Pot of Manna

"And unto the angel of the Church in Pergamos write, . . . To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2: 12, 17.)

The suggestion of mystery in this "hidden manna" was calculated to arouse the immediate interest of the Christians of Pergamos. For this was known as the City of Mystery. Its tutelary divinity, Æsculapius, was worshiped under the symbol of a serpent. It is said that the porches of his temple were crowded in the night-time with worshipers tarrying there in the hope of having dreams and visions.

Pergamos was the center of the Oriental occultism of those days. Its merchants carried on a profitable business in charms, amulets and cabalistic letters. Its smooth sheep-skins were famous the world over as *pergamenæ-chartæ,* which we have shortened into "parchment."

The teachers of Pergamos gave themselves to the inculcation of what are called esoteric truths; and its people loved nothing better than the discussion of a difficult problem, particularly when spiced with a suggestion of mystery. "I know thy works," said the Lord to the feeble church in Pergamos, "and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith."

He admonished them particularly against "the doctrine of Balaam" and "the heresy of the Nicolaitans"; both of which were practical denials of the Gospel. And then the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

The suggestion of manna would provoke their curiosity. The word "manna" is itself an interrogation, meaning "What is it?" The children of Israel had been only a few weeks in the wilderness when they began to murmur for food. Their meal-bags were empty; what should they do? "Would to God we had died," they mourned, "by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots and when we did eat bread to the full!" Then the Lord said, "I will rain bread

from heaven for you, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no." The next morning the ground was covered as with a snow-fall. The God-given bread was "white and plenteous as hoar frost." There were some who said it tasted "like fresh oil," and others that it tasted like "wafers made with honey." From lip to lip throughout the camp the question passed, *Man-hu?* that is, "What is it?" So came this wonderful bread to be known as manna; and herein it was marked as a divine gift. We understand the works of man, but the works of God ever baffle us. We can analyze an engine; but of energy we say, "What is it?"

The suggestion of mystery in the manna was still further increased by the word "hidden." What are we to understand by the "hidden manna"? The reference is probably to the portion which was put away in the Ark of the Covenant when, at the foot of Mount Sinai, the children of Israel received the Ceremonial Law: "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations" (Ex. 16:33).

There must have been a definite purpose in thus preserving a portion of the manna; and that purpose is profoundly emphasized by the fact that it was laid away in the Ark of the Covenant, which was the center of the rites and ceremonies of the ancient economy and, as the symbol of the divine presence, the most sacred object known to the people of God.

We shall find, I believe, that the manna thus preserved was a mute but eloquent symbol of the two great truths which constitute the sum total of our religion: to wit, providence and grace.

It would appear that it was intended, first of all, to serve as a memorial of providence. The people were never to forget the miraculous provision which had been made for them during their journey in the wilderness.

Silently it fell,
Whence, no man might tell,
Like good dreams from heaven
Unto mortals given,
Like a snowy flock
Of strange sea-birds alighting on a shore of rock;
Silent thus and bright
Fell the manna in the night.

Silently thus and bright,
In our starless night,
God's sweet mercy comes
All about our homes;
Whence, no man can see,
In a soft shower drifting, drifting ceaselessly.
Till the morning light
Falls the manna in the night.

Thus his mercy's crown,
Bread of life, came down;
At our doors it fell,
Whence, no man might tell,
Silent to the ground;
Softly shining thus through the darkness all around,
Snowy, pure, and white,
Fell the manna in the night.

"But this was not a miracle at all," say the mischievous critics of our time. It is affirmed that the manna was simply the exudation of the tamarisk tree; and apparent color is lent to this statement by the fact that the monks of Mount Sinai have long been accustomed to gather and sell the tamarisk gum to tourists under the name of manna.

This explanation of a phenomenon which is affirmed in the Scriptures to have been supernatural is important if true. And it is quite in line with the philosophy of current unbelief which aims to rule the supernatural out of mundane affairs and turn the Deity out of doors, as if we were able to get on without him.

O infidel, great is thy faith!

The suggestion that some millions of people were able to subsist on the honey-dew of the tamarisk, which they gathered along the way, during a period of forty years in the wilderness, puts a burden on our credulity which it is unable to bear. It is precisely as if we were asked to believe that the population of New York City could be sustained for a corresponding period by the walnuts growing on the trees in Central Park. There are those who say that Christians have a considerable amount of faith; but their faith is not sufficient for the demand here put upon it.

Is it not amazing how those who reject revelation are apparently willing to believe almost anything, provided only that it cannot be found in the accredited Word of God?

In fact this gainsaying of the miracle of the manna is only one phase of the current fashion of denying the supernatural *in toto*. The position is that there can be no miracles, because the world is under law. Of course that rules out the efficacy of prayer, the truth of the Scriptures and the divinity of Christ. Farewell to the three great miracles, Incarnation, Atonement and Resurrection!

The omer of manna was intended to confute that very error. The reason given by the Lord for causing it to be placed in the Ark of the Covenant was this, "That ye may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness." In point of fact the pot of manna was so hidden that the people never literally saw it, but they knew it was there; and, as centuries passed, they were assured, by the witness of the Scriptures and the testimony of their fathers, that the miracle of its bestowal was a fact, and they had faith enough to so receive it.

The best answer for Christians to give to all such materialistic denials of spiritual truth is found in personal experience. The denial of the personal God is most effectively met by the statement, "I know him." The denial of prayer by the statement, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard and saved him out of all his trouble." The denial of the divine Christ by the statement, "I have looked on his pierced hands and have received him like Thomas, who cried, 'My Lord and my God!'" The denial of the Atonement by the statement, "I came to him as a sinner, and he said, 'Go in

peace, thy sins be forgiven thee.' " And the denial of providence by the statement, "I have lived under providence all my life; and the God who has brought me thus far, caring for me in thirst and hunger, in sorrow and pain, will bring me to my journey's end."

To eat thus of the hidden manna, consenting to the supernatural by faith and living in its atmosphere, is to abide in peace. Just here is the antidote of fret and worry. The lesson was emphasized by Christ when, to his disciples who were gathered about him, he said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Out of this confidence comes the sweet content that makes life worth living, that smoothes out all wrinkles, and fills our hearts with the peace of God.

The pot of manna was intended, in the second place, to be a prophecy of divine grace. Its place in the Ark of the Covenant allies it with the expectation of the coming of the Messiah. In common with almost everything else in the ceremonial system it pointed forward to him.

Our authority for saying this is the teaching of Christ himself. The Jews on one occasion asked him, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" to which he answered, "This is

the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Whereupon they demanded, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." To this challenge, which was obviously based on the miraculous character of the manna, he replied by making himself the antitype of that miracle, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And further he said, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." And further still, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

It is to be expected that those who deny the miracle of the manna should go on to deny the divine or miraculous in the nature and mission of Christ. And this is precisely what they do. The birth, atonement and resurrection of Christ are all accounted for by them on natural grounds.

This is the so-called "New Theology," which is merely a re-affirmation of the *old infidelity*. It

begins by affirming that "religion is not dogma but life." It admits, what cannot be confuted, that the teaching of Christ furnishes the best Moral Code of the ages. It insists that to "follow in his steps" is the sum total of Christianity; from which it infers that it is a matter of little or no consequence what one believes about him. The result is that Christ himself is clothed in ribald purple and put to an open shame, as a mere man posing in the stolen livery of God, while his teaching is eulogized as the best standard of life.

And this in the house of his professed friends, by those who call themselves Christians, despite the fact that Christ himself said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"!

Here again, the best answer to the denial of the supernatural in grace is personal experience. He stands master of the argument who is able to say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life, declare we unto you." All the sophisms that ever were urged against the reality of the supernatural, in providence and grace alike, have not a feather's weight of force against the word of a believer who can affirm: "I was blind; he put his fingers upon mine eyes, and behold I see!"

The result of such an experience is the assurance of faith. As a belief in providence begets in the believer such an habitual confidence in the divine care that nothing can affright him, so a be-

lief in grace enables him to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

As the anxious thought of food and raiment vanishes when one reflects upon the manna in the Ark of the Covenant, so the fear of to-morrow and of death disappears when one partakes of the living Christ and lives through him.

And this is the promise to him that overcometh; that is, to him who, getting the better of the natural tendency to reject supernatural truth, holds to the two great miracles of providence and grace. The pot of manna is opened to all such believers. God prepares a table before them in the presence of their enemies here and now; but the time is coming when they shall eat of the manna at the King's table.

The men of old said it tasted "like fresh oil" or "wafers made with honey;" but how will it seem when we are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? "Eat, O friends! Yea, drink abundantly, O well beloved!" Shall we believe in providence then? The last tremor of misgiving will vanish when we stand at heaven's gate and looking back on the long journey through the wilderness, remember the provision which he made for us along the way.

Will we believe, then, in the miracle of grace? How can it be otherwise when in communion with him we behold his face, the face that was once "so

marred more than any man's," but is now "as the sun shineth in his strength"? Then we shall be satisfied, saying, "God has verily been the God of providence and grace; and this God is our God forever and ever!"

8. *PRAYER*

Be pleased, O Lord, to feed me with this hidden manna. Enroll my name among the overcomers; that I may be found worthy to eat and drink at the marriage feast in heaven; for Christ's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FIFTH SERVICE

On Serving Christ in a Lonely Place

1. *INVOCATION*

O ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, whose grace hath appeared bringing salvation to all men, help me now to commune with thee in a spirit of reverential love. Let me find light at the entrance of thy Word, comfort in prayer, and joy in thanksgiving;. for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Sweet hour of prayer."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Isaiah 53:1-10.
Acts 8:26-39.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, in whose hands are the destinies of the children of men, show me thy plan and purpose concerning my life and bring me into happy accord with them. I would serve thee, were it possible, in a large and wealthy place; but if it please thee to put and keep me in a small corner, let my light so shine there that all upon whom it falls may be led to glorify thee. Make me willing to suffer as well as to serve; nay, rather to serve thee in suffering.

Make me willing to go or to sit still at thy pleasure, knowing that they also serve who only stand and wait. Bless those, also, who are called to larger fields of privilege and responsibility. Let those who preach the Gospel preach it in simplicity and power; let those who rule administer their office in thy fear; let all thy people, great and small, find their place in thy service and fill it humbly, faithfully and to thy glory; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Jesus, I my cross have taken."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

On Serving Christ in a Lonely Place

"The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and behold—" (Acts 8: 26, 27.)

The scene is in the wilderness; a treeless, lonely place. It is traversed by two roads leading southward. One of these, known as the Jerusalem road, runs through the Jordan valley and then due westward to the sea. The other, the Samaria road, bearing toward the southwest, meets the former near the Philistine border, and together they make the highway to Gaza.

On each of these roads a lone traveller is pur-

suing his journey. One of them rides in a chariot of state; the other goes afoot, with staff in hand. These two are destined to meet at the juncture of the ways. A "chance meeting"? No! "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." Each has heard a Voice from heaven and is following it; and out of their meeting will flow great issues; to one, life and immortality, to the other the generous pleasure of duty done; and from it all, the glory of God.

The man on the Samaria road is Chancellor of the Exchequer of Candace the Queen of Ethiopia. He is a black man, but wise, modest and withal a gentleman; and best of all, he is a truth-seeker.

God had been speaking to him through his Word. In some way a copy of the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Scriptures, had come into his possession; and it had led him out of paganism into Judaism. On becoming a "proselyte of the gate" he had subjected himself to the Jewish form of baptism as an open confession of his devotion to the worship of the true God.

He was now returning from Jerusalem, whither he had gone to attend the Passover. He had heard, while there, the singing of the Messianic Psalms by the great Temple choirs. He had witnessed the sacrifices, in which was set forth mysteriously the doctrine of the blood-atonement, or salvation through the Lamb of God. His heart had been perplexed by dim visions of truth, and he was eager

for more. Who was this Messiah whom they called the Hope of Israel? And what was the far-off meaning of that Pascal Lamb?

It may be that, while tarrying in Jerusalem, he had witnessed the death of Stephen, who, struggling to his knees beneath a shower of stones, looked up with blood-stained face shining like the face of an angel, and cried, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!" Who was that "Son of Man"?

As the Chancellor sat in his chariot the scroll lay unfolded on his knees, and he was reading aloud according to the custom of those days. The place was the fifty-third of Isaiah:

"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken!" "He is depised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

As he read, his brow was knit with perplexity. "What does it mean? Who is this august Figure, marching through the prophecies of the Book? Who is this with a crown on his head and scars in

his hands?" Ah, that is the question of all questions! What think ye of Messiah? Who is he?

In the meantime the other traveller was pursuing his weary way along the Samaria road. He was one of those Christians who had been recently "scattered abroad" by the persecution which arose at Stephen's death. He had found refuge in the city of Samaria. There he preached Christ; and souls were converted, like doves flying to their windows. "And there was great joy in that city." The work increased more and more; so that John and Peter must needs be called to assist in it.

It was just then that God spake to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south by the way which is desert." A strange command; and without a word of explanation. It was short and sharp, like the "March!" of a captain to his men. And Philip's answer was that of one under orders. He might well have hesitated, saying, "Lord, why should I go to the desert? My forte is preaching; and there is nobody in the desert to preach to. And what will the people of Samaria do without me? The revival goes on, and I am the head and front of it!" But not a word of this. "He arose and went." If the order was sharp and imperative, his answer was none the less so. It was like the response one hears on shipboard: "Aye, aye, sir!"

The captain knows, and that is enough. It is written, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way."

So on I go, not knowing;
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light.
I'd rather walk with him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

The two travellers, thus pursuing their way, each under orders, are drawing nearer all the while. The man in the chariot has reached the highway, still reading aloud, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," and still questioning, "Who is he?" Philip the evangelist, trudging on behind, hears that voice ringing over the solitary plains in the clear Eastern air; but there is another which he hears more clearly still, the Voice of the Lord, saying, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot!"

The lines are closing in. The light is breaking on Philip's mind. He begins to see why God sent him down this desert road. Thus it always is. He learns the truth who follows on to know it.

Now look at Philip. He has lost all sense of weariness and is "running" to meet the man in the chariot. He greets him without ceremony, because God has prepared the way before him. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I," replies the Chancellor, "except some one shall guide me?" He thereupon lends a hand to Philip, who, mounting the chariot, sits down beside him.

It is safe to say that Philip had never before

ridden in such state; and probably this Grand Vizier had never before driven with so humble a companion beside him. But neither is thinking of this; it is enough that the truth-seeker has found a teacher. "I pray thee," he inquires, "of whom speaketh the prophet this? Who is this that is wounded for our transgressions? Doth the prophet speak of himself or of some other man?"

The moment of opportunity has come; and Philip, expounding from the same scripture, preaches Jesus to him. The shadows are lifting. The truth-seeker begins to see the meaning of the things that are written. He begins to understand the significance of the sacrifices. The figure of the Mighty One of prophecy is unveiled before him. This Jesus is the Christ! He sees it!

And then, like the man of action that he is, he follows the truth to its logical conclusion: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" On formerly emerging from paganism into Judaism he had been baptized as an avowal of his devotion to the true God; again as a Christian he would come out into the open. He will have opportunity to confess Christ on his return to the Ethiopian court. His request for baptism is the decision of a brave, sincere man; and naught can hinder, since he believes that Jesus is the Christ of God.

The parting of these men was as singular as their meeting. On returning from the brookside to the chariot, Philip was "caught away by the

Spirit of the Lord." A miracle? If necessary, yes! God is the God of miracles. It was as easy for him to remove Philip in a rapture as in any other way. And the Chancellor, being left alone, "went on his way rejoicing." His sins were gone and the new life opened before him.

As he continued his journey, with the scroll of Isaiah before him, he read on, perhaps, into the next chapter: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud! . . . The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. . . . For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Oh, happy day!

Thus the chariot sped on to the Ethiopian capital. The Chancellor had gone forth a Jew; he returned a Christian. No doubt the Voice, which he had thus far followed, spoke again to him: "Tell the strange story to the Queen!" If Eusebius, the early historian, is to be believed, the story was told and the Queen and her courtiers and multitudes of her people were converted to Christ.

So that desert journey was not for naught. The meeting of these men was no chance meeting by the way. God knew what he was doing when he bade Philip leave the work in Samaria and go down through the wilderness. Blessed is the man whose

will is so brought into harmony with the divine will that, hearing, he obeys! Ah, if only we would let God have his way with us!

Did Philip and the Chancellor ever meet again? Probably not on earth; not on the desert road. But surely they met in the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." And, doubtless, there they spoke of the providence that had brought them together, like ships that pass in the night, and of the Voices that had spoken to them so strangely and in such divers ways.

The lesson is a plain one. Listen! "There are so many voices, and none of them is without signification."

Time was when God spake to his people in dreams and visions of the night; who shall say that he does not speak in like manner now? To the Treasurer of Queen Candace he spoke through his written Word; and blessed is the man who, reading, can thus hear him. To Philip in Samaria he spoke by the voice of an angel, saying. "Arise and go!" And when he reached the highway it was the voice of the Spirit that said again, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot."

God has so many voices! He speaks in nature; he speaks through conscience to the inner man; he speaks in the notes of the church bell, calling, "Come! Come! Come, and worship me!" He speaks in the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. And the secret of life is in knowing his Voice when we hear it.

We may not limit the methods of his speech; nor may we always be able to explain them. There is in Scripture, as in art, a blending of lights and shadows. God works in *chiaroscuro;* and wise is the man who can leave the shadow where God leaves it. The fact, however, is clear and indisputable; God speaks to men. You and I have heard him. All good impulses and high aspirations are as Voices of God. The vital question is not how he speaks, but shall we straightway heed him?

If he bids us remain in Samaria, so be it. If he bids us go down to Gaza by the way that is desert, so be it. "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, I'll do what you want me to do." But alas for us when we interpose questions and murmurings and persist in taking our own way!

The habit of heeding is the pathway of life; and the secret of character is to run when he bids us.

I said, "Let me walk in the field;"
  He said, "Nay, walk in the town."
I said, "There are no flowers there;"
  He said, "No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the skies are black;
  There is nothing but noise and din;"
But he wept as he sent me back.
  "There is more," he said; "there is sin."

I said, "But the air is thick;
  And fogs are veiling the sun;"
He answered, "Yet souls are sick,
  And souls in the dark undone."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say;"
He answered me, "Choose to-night,
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given;
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your guide."

I cast one look at the field,
Then set my face to the town.
He said, "My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into his hand went mine,
And into my heart came he,
And I walked in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see.

8. *PRAYER*

Be pleased, O Lord, to make and keep me content, wherever my lot may be. Help me to stand in my appointed place, serving faithfully and doing good as I have opportunity, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SIXTH SERVICE

The Lone Burden-Bearer

1. *INVOCATION*

ON this thy holy day, O Lord, be pleased to lift upon me the light of thy countenance and give me peace. Let this hour be full of thy presence and this place as the gateway of heaven. Refresh my soul, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "All hail the power of Jesus' name."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Isaiah 53.
Acts 8:1-40.

4. *PRAYER*

O Merciful God, I thank thee for the blessings of thy providence and grace. I acknowledge my ill desert and ingratitude, and humbly crave the pardon of my sins. Blessed be thy name for the ransom paid on Calvary. Help me to believe in the saving power of thy blood and gratefully to accept it. And then enable me to live as one whose sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Make clear the path of duty before me. Save me from the eternal

shame of having lived a useless life. Put me in the place of service appointed for me and make me willing to fill it. Bless my kinsfolk, friends and neighbors. Bless all those, throughout the world, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And bless the impenitent; show thy loving kindness in such a manner that they shall be conquered by it. Bless the preaching of the Gospel to-day. Let truth be exalted and error brought to naught. Save sinners and sanctify thy people. Protect our country. Guide all rulers and magistrates by thy counsel; and hasten the time when thy will shall be done and thy kingdom shall stretch from the river unto the ends of the earth. These things I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be everlasting praise. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Am I a soldier of the Cross?"

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Lone Burden-Bearer

"I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" (Acts 8:34.)

The man whom we saw in our last sermon is riding slowly in his chariot on the desert road; on his knees is a copy of the Septuagint or Greek

version of the Old Testament; in the background is a footman, worn and dusty. Such is the scene. It is a *tableau vivant* of The Problem of Life.

I. *The Question.*

In the perplexed face of the charioteer we read the question of all questions; to wit, "What shall I do to be saved?"

He is no ordinary man. The fact that he is Chancellor of the Queen of Ethiopia marks him as a gentleman of culture. The open scroll, brought from Jerusalem, certifies to his knowledge of the Greek tongue. But despite his rank and learning he knows no way of deliverance from the burden of sin.

The consciousness of sin is universal. "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In this consciousness is involved the inevitableness of penalty: "The soul that sinneth it shall die!" This death is alienation from God; for without holiness "no man shall see the Lord." And unless the sin be somehow removed, the alienation must be forever.

Such is the burden, a burden so heavy that unless we be relieved it will crush the life out of us. What shall remove it?

Cain, fleeing from the scene of his blood guiltiness, cried, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

David, when brought to a realizing sense of his iniquity, staggered up the stairway to his chamber on the housetop, moaning, "Lord, cast me not

away from thy presence; my sin is ever before me!"

Paul, comparing his pain under similar circumstances to the most frightful form of Roman punishment, in which the criminal was cast into the sea with a corpse bound to his neck, cries in a very passion of despair, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

The soul of this charioteer is troubled by the same question; the great, universal question as to salvation from sin and from the penalty which, in the course of nature, inevitably follows it.

II. *The Enigmatical Answer.*

The charioteer had vainly sought an answer to that question at the shrines of his pagan gods. There was "no voice nor answer nor any that regarded." He had therefore turned to Israel and, espousing the worship of Jehovah, was known as a "proselyte of the gate." He was just now returning from Jerusalem whither he had gone, after his custom, to attend one of the annual feasts.

In the observance of the feast he had found a vague and shadowy answer to the great question. All through the sacred ceremonies there walked the dim outline of One who should come in the fulness of time to expiate sin. He saw it in the Paschal Lamb, type of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He saw it in the scape-goat, laden with the guilt of the people and sent forth "by the hand of a fit man" into the Land of Oblivion. He saw it in the blood streaming over al-

tars and sprinkled everywhere, on tent-doors and mercy seat and bowed suppliants; blood, blood, blood, without the shedding of which there is no remission of sin.

He heard the prophecy of the Coming One in the Messianic Psalms and Visions which were responsively chanted by priests and worshipers at the feast; "A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call his name Immanuel," God with us; one destined to be scorned and rejected, betrayed and slain; "cut off, but not for himself;" "treading the wine-press alone;" enduring "the chastisement of our peace," and thus bearing away the world's sin. Glorious Saviour! Lone Burden-Bearer! "Hope of Israel!"

But who is this hiding, like the Shunammite shepherd, behind the lattice of type and prophecy? And where shall the seeker find him?

The scroll from which the charioteer was reading was open at the place in the Prophecy of Isaiah where it is written: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken! He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are

healed." As he read, the look of perplexity in the face of the charioteer deepened. O profound enigma! Would that he might find this Atlas with the world's guilt upon him!

And he will find him. He is certain to find him. For the good God never yet left an honest truth-seeker in the dark. "The seeking sinner finds a seeking Saviour." Yet must he needs be in earnest; for the promise is, "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And he must, moreover, seek without prejudice; for a prejudgment is like a hoodwink over the eyes. The Jews had been awaiting their Messiah for centuries; nevertheless when he came unto his own "his own received him not" because they had prejudged the case. They were expecting him in kingly guise and never dreamed of him this way. They read their Scriptures with holden eyes; as he himself said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye might have life!"

All through the corridors of the Sacred Book he walks, this lone Burden-Bearer, in psalm and chronicle, in type and prophecy, veiled yet revealed to those who sincerely desire him. And blessed are they who, having eyes, are willing to see!

III. *The Interpretation.*

It was God's pleasure to reveal the truth by the lips of the dusty traveller who, with staff in hand, followed the chariot that day. This was Philip

the Evangelist, who had recently been summoned to leave the city of Samaria, where a great revival was under way, and "go toward the south by the way which is desert." It seemed a strange command, but he was now to comprehend it. The Voice says, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot;" and he "runs" to obey. He hears the charioteer reading from the open scroll and asks:

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

"How can I," replies the Chancellor, "except some man should guide me?"

This is enough. Philip mounts the chariot and the two are bending over the parchment.

"I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man?"

The way is open, and Philip preaches Christ. The enigma is solved. The silhouette of the lone Burden-Bearer is filled out. The seeking sinner finds the seeking Saviour! All is clear; Jesus of Nazareth is the antitype and fulfillment of the types and prophecies. He is the lone Burden-Bearer, and the burden he carries is the burden of our sins.

"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

"If thou believest, thou mayest."

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

So instantly does the truth-finder seek a confession of faith! So straightway goes the soul of the saved to the service of the Saviour! And this is life; this is salvation; this is the beginning of hea-

ven on earth. There is nothing in this life higher or beyond it.

In the answer of Philip to the Chancellor's question, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" we have the key to the Old Testament. That Book is empty and meaningless without Christ. He fits into its types and prophecies like an indenture. Its interpretation as a whole is briefly comprehended in the words which furnished the postulate of Paul's preaching, "This Jesus is the Christ."

And this interpretation is verified in the teaching of Christ himself. To the woman of Samaria, who expressed a pathetic longing for the coming of Messiah, he said plainly, "I that speak unto thee am he." All through his ministry he emphasized that claim; and after his resurrection, as he journeyed to Emmaus with two of his disciples, whose "eyes were holden that they should not know him," he, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself;" that is, he showed them how he himself was the long-looked-for Messiah who was to bear the world's sin.

This interpretation is borne out also in the passion of Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane he bowed his shoulders to the burden, "sweating as it were great drops of blood," yet acquiescing in the vicarious plan of salvation in the words "Father, thy will be done." On Via Dolorosa he staggered under his burden, sin upon sin, like Ossa piled on Pelion; as it is written, "He hath made him to be

sin for us, who knew no sin." On the cross he groaned three mortal hours under that same burden until his great heart broke beneath it. Thus "he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows;" thus he "was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities;" thus "the chastisement of our peace was upon him;" and all to the end that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This interpretation is further verified in the personal experience of a great multitude whom no man can number, some translated to the heavens and uniting in the hymn, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," others on earth singing as they journey, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!"

In the Pilgrim's Progress it is written: "I saw in my dream that burdened Christian did run with great difficulty because of the load on his back. But at length he came at a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.' Then he stood still a while, to look and wonder; for it was very sur-

prising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks. Then he gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing,

"Thus far did I come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! Blest sepulchre! Blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

The benefit of the vicarious work of Jesus is not forced upon us. In the nature of the case that is impossible, since we are endowed with sovereign wills. But it is offered freely to all who are willing to receive it. Faith is appropriation. "I will!" is the shibboleth of life. It is for every man to say for himself whether he will bear his own burden under the law or lay it upon Christ, his willing substitute, and thus be saved by grace.

There are those who say of this Burden-Bearer, "He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4); that is, his sufferings were such as come in the course of providence to every man. This is the most calamitous of heresies, because it makes Christ die for himself alone and leaves the burden of our sins upon us; whereas "he bare our griefs and carried our sorrows," so that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him."

Happy is the man who perceives this truth; and thrice blessed is he who by faith appropriates it. His burden of sin is loosed from his shoulders; wherefore let him, like the Pilgrim, "give three leaps for joy and go on singing," singing to the gates of heaven and then forevermore singing to the praise of him who has borne away our sorrows and crowned us with eternal life.

8. *PRAYER*

O Christ, my Saviour, who didst bear the burden of my sins until thy great heart was broken under it, break my cold heart by giving me a clear vision of thy love. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Here, Lord, I give myself to thee, 'tis all that I can do. Take me, use me, glorify thyself in and through me, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Jesus, lover of my soul."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now may God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SEVENTH SERVICE

The Bosom Friend of Jesus

1. *INVOCATION*

O BLESSED LORD, enable me to worship thee in the beauty of holiness. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight. Open thy Word before me; help me to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it. And manifest thy presence unto me for thy Name's sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Come, thou Fount of every blessing."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 23.
John 17.

4. *PRAYER*

O thou who didst bow the heavens and come down to manifest God, enable me to know thee. For to know thee is to know God; and to know God is life eternal. Take me, to-day, into the secret place of thy Tabernacle and commune with me. I do not ask to know about thee, but to know thee, face to face; to become acquainted with thee as one friend

with another. Thou hast invited such intimacy. Thou didst permit the beloved disciple to recline with his head upon thy bosom. Bring me also into vital union with thyself. Blend my being with thine so that I may be able to say, "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." Remove every obstacle or difficulty that separates my soul from thee. Give me a spirit of entire and absolute surrender to thee. O Lamb of God, I come! Receive me. Encompass me with thy love. Hold me so fast that I cannot sin. Ravish my heart so that my highest joy shall be to serve and follow thee. Possess me so that I shall nevermore be able to doubt or worry, but only to believe and trust. And the glory of my life and my salvation shall be thine forever. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "I heard the voice of Jesus say."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Bosom Friend of Jesus

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved." (John 13: 23.)

In the building of character there are three necessary things, to wit: love to God, loyalty to truth and consecration to duty. In John, the bosom friend of Jesus, we find a splendid illustra-

tion of these constituent factors in the making of a man.

In a cottage close to the water's edge of Lake Tiberias dwelt the fisherman Zebedee with his wife Salome, and their sons James and John. It was a Jewish home; and the lads had accordingly been instructed by their parents in the fundamental truths of Scripture. They had attended the village schools; and there, under the tuition of the rabbis, had made themselves familiar with the Law and the Prophets, particularly with the great truth which was called "The Hope of Israel," namely, the expected coming of the Christ. Thrice every year they were taken up to Jerusalem by their father to attend the great national festivals. There they saw the burning of the sacrifices, those flaming prophecies of the Lamb of God, heard the stately chanting of the Messianic Psalms and stood in Solomon's Porch beneath the vine with its golden clusters typifying the glory of his reign. So they learned to watch for the appearing of the Son of Man.

The elder of these brothers, James, was energetic and fearless, loving to be abroad on the lake when the winds came rushing through the narrow defiles and lashed its waters into fury. Not so the younger; his happiest days were when the lake was restful and untroubled. Yet in his gentle spirit there was a slumbering fire; and the time was coming when he would show himself not a dreamer among the shadows but a man among men.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" And the two brothers went over to the Fords of the Jordan to see and hear him. There, among the rocks by the swift river, stood the hermit priest in the midst of an eager multitude. His preaching ran on this wise: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord! For the time is at hand. I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh One after me whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire!" The brothers were thrilled with expectancy, believing that the fulfilment of the long cherished Hope of Israel was near.

One day as they were standing with the multitude on the river's bank, the Baptist pointed to a solitary figure passing near by, and said: "Behold the Lamb of God!" They followed him at once, saying, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" He answered, "Come and see." And they abode with him that day.

Oh, wonderful day and night! Did ever a soul hold tryst with Jesus and not discover that he was the veritable Son of God? But the brothers could not tarry. It was the season of summer toil; and returning to Capernaum they betook themselves to their boats and nets.

One morning, as they were seated on the shore mending their nets, he stood beside them, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This was their formal calling to the apostolate. And they arose and followed him.

Then for three eventful years they were with him in his ministry. They saw his wonderful works and heard him speak of the eternal verities as never man spake. The keynote of his preaching was The Kingdom. It was little wonder that they expected him to set up an earthly throne.

On one occasion their mother Salome asked of Jesus that her sons might sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left in his Kingdom. He answered, "Ye know not what ye ask"; and, turning to them, he said, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with my baptism?" They answered, "We can," little dreaming how that wish was to be fulfilled.

So they continued to follow him. They were with him in his itineraries among the villages. They were with him in the glory of his transfiguration, when his garments were white and glistening and his face shone as the sun shineth in its strength. They were with him in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem when the company going before and coming after cried "Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!" They were with him in the upper room on the night of his last farewell. They were with him in the shadow of the olive trees of Gethsemane when he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" They saw him nailed to the cross; and they saw him when, with the glory of resurrection on his face, he arose from

the midst of his disciples on Olivet and the heavens opened to receive him.

Ten years passed; and the sword of Agrippa was unsheathed against the followers of Christ. The elder of the brothers was apprehended and sentenced to death. He was led out beyond the walls; there was a swift flash of the axe and his head rolled from the block. He had his wish: the purple cup was drained. He was baptized with the baptism of his Master's blood.

But John lived on. Nero kindled his living torches; but the fire passed him by. Titus marched against Jerusalem and, reducing it, reared a frightful line of crosses on the surrounding hills; but this calamity also passed him by. One by one, the members of the apostolic circle went their way; until John, who had been the Benjamin of the twelve, was left alone as the Patriarch of the Churches. He reached an age so extreme that he must needs be borne in a litter to meet his congregation in Ephesus, over whom he would lift his hands, saying simply, "Little children, love one another!"

He had three names: Christophilus, Theologos and Boanerge, which mean literally Lover of Christ, Teacher of God and Son of Thunder; but which may be more broadly rendered, Apostle of Love, Apostle of Faith and Apostle of Works. In these three names are designated the factors which go together in the making of a well-rounded Christian, or, in other words, a symmetrical man.

I. *He was called the Apostle of Love.*

And this by virtue of the fact that he was the bosom friend of Jesus. It is recorded of him that he was "that disciple whom Jesus loved." But the love was mutual; not only did Christ love him, but he loved Christ as well.

We have the voucher or memorial of that mutual love in the Fourth Gospel.

But why should there be a Fourth Gospel? Three biographies of Jesus had already been written by Matthew, Mark and Luke; written by them respectively as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

The purpose of this Fourth Gospel is set forth by the writer himself where he says: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

The historic symbol of the Fourth Gospel is the eagle; the reason being that the genius of its inspired author soars more loftily than others toward the throne of God.

The central truth of this Gospel is in the affirmation, "This Jesus is the Son of God." It would be difficult to find elsewhere in literature a more majestic utterance than that which introduces the Prologue: "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God; . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This is a truth which staggers the intellect until love makes it clear. How natural that

one who leaned upon the bosom of Christ should write thus concerning him! He had heard the beating of his Master's heart, and he knew it to be the infinite heart of God.

But love is an emotion; and however important as the groundwork of faith, if it abide alone it is not strength but weakness; a weakness that strong men smile at. Wherefore we move on to consider the more strenuous side of the character of this man.

II. *He was the Apostle of Faith.*

More than that he was the defender of the faith which, by his Master, had been "delivered to the saints once for all."

It is a mistake to imagine that ours is pre-eminently an age of doubt. In fact, every age is an age of doubt. There are no new heresies under the sun.

All the forms of unbelief with which we are familiar were current in the early Church. As pastor in Ephesus, this man had been called upon to face the Gnostics and Nicolaitans and Neo-Platonists; and they had found him a foeman worthy of their steel.

In the year 52 Paul went up to Jerusalem to attend a Council called to remonstrate against certain forms of heresy which were gaining headway in the Church; and in making mention of that visit he speaks of John as one of the "pillars of the Church," who had given him the right hand of fellowship.

We may imagine Paul and John standing side by side in that Council, and clasping hands as kindred spirits in defense of the truth. Paul, in his manner of thinking, was a Scholastic, as John was a Mystic; but their shields overlapped in loyal defense of the faith.

The expression of John's orthodoxy is found in his three Epistles, in which he bears militant witness to the doctrines of Christ. We should expect this Apostle of Love to be a liberal; and so he was. He was liberal toward every form of truth and righteousness; but by the same token he was an uncompromising foe of error. In his Epistles there is no mumbling of words or mincing of phrases. He characterizes the man who is false to his profession as "a liar"; the man who hates his fellows as "a murderer"; and the man who denies the virgin birth of Jesus as "antichrist." To the Elect Lady he writes, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house neither bid him godspeed; for he that biddeth him godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds."

But love *plus* faith is not enough. One thing more must be added: since " faith without works is dead."

III. *He was called the Apostle of Works.*

If love be true and faith be genuine, they will inevitably prompt to energy and noble deeds. An Apostle of Love who is a Defender of the Faith must also be a Son of Thunder.

It is related of John, in his early zeal, that when

the people of a certain village refused to entertain Jesus, his indignation was such that he would have called down fire from heaven upon them. As time passed this zeal was greatly tempered but never quenched. He might have written the hymn attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi:

Love sets my heart on fire!
The love of Christ has wrought
Such zeal I cannot tire;
It reigns in every thought;
Love sets my heart on fire!

The monograph of his consuming zeal is in the Book of the Revelation. Its keynote, like that of Christ's own preaching, is The Kingdom. The aged apostle had, however, revised his conception of the Kingdom. He no longer thought of it as a throne set up in a provincial town with an earthly potentate upon it. The Kingdom, as he now understood it, was the center or focal point of history; and its consummation the one "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." The dynasties of the coming centuries were destined to be as streams tributary to it.

He begins thus, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I saw—" And then in quick succession the panorama of visions passes before him: A golden candlestick, and One walking in the midst of it like unto the Son of Man. A great assemblage of the redeemed in heaven, wearing crowns, bearing palms in their hands, and praising him who

hath washed them in his blood. The opening of a Book with seven seals, unveiling the logic of events, which no one is worthy to open except the Son of Man. The marshalling of hosts for the great battle of Armageddon, the white battalion led by Christ, wearing garments dipped in blood, meeting the legions of darkness in mortal fray. A sound of clashing arms, then breaking chains, and, lo! the great dragon is cast into the bottomless pit. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb, at which the Bridegroom brings home his exiled bride "without spot or blemish or any such thing" and, amid the acclamations of the multitude, leads her to his throne. Then the opening of the heavens and the coming down of the Tabernacle of God to a rejuvenated earth: "And he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God!"

As the aged dreamer gazed upon this passing panorama of history the thought which thrilled his heart was that he was a living part of it. He was one of those overcomers who were destined to sit with Jesus on his throne. He had seen a hundred years of faithful service, and was worn out. Every atom of his strength for a long century had been spent in the glorious work; and now amid the last sunburst of visions a Voice is heard, "Behold I come quickly!" to which he answers, "Amen! Even so come, Lord Jesus!"

The flame-tipped pen lies idle on the parchment: the tremulous hands are still; and from the silent

shores of Patmos the soul of "that disciple whom Jesus loved" has gone up to lean again upon his Master's bosom at the feast.

Let us covet earnestly the gifts and graces which are crystallized in his three eloquent names: Lover of Christ, Defender of Truth and Zealous for God. Love is the foundation of all; and from it proceeds the faith which expresses itself in works. So do we grow symmetrically unto the full stature of a man.

Our Lord expressed it thus: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

8. *PRAYER*

I thank thee, blessed Saviour, for thy friendship. And I thank thee for intimations of something even better further on; for eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Help me to be getting ready for these things by following thee closely here and now; for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Saviour, more than life to me."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind in the knowledge of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EIGHTH SERVICE

The Inventory of Grace

1. *INVOCATION*

O God, Father of all goodness, I thank thee for the call to worship. And for the promise of thy presence I thank thee. Let me know and feel that thou art here. Draw me with the cords of love and make me glad as I commune with thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Lord, I hear of showers of blessing."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Isaiah 35.
John 6:1-29.

4. *PRAYER*

O thou blessed God, my Father, Comforter and Saviour, I thank thee for all the benefactions of thy providence and grace. Let thy goodness lead me to repentance. Save me not only from the penalty of sin but from the bondage of it. Lead me into the glorious liberty of thy children, the liberty of truth and righteousness. Defend me from the dan-

ger of conformity to this world and help me to seek the things which are unseen and eternal. Relieve my sorrows, according to thy holy will; and make me ever patient in my narrow place and faithful in serving thee. And whatever I desire for myself I ask, also, for my friends and for all in the household of faith. Bless the community I live in. Bless our country and its rulers. Bless all lands, especially such as lie in pagan darkness and the shadow of death. Give wings to thy Gospel that it may fly to the uttermost parts of the earth; nay, rather, give glad hearts and willing feet to those who are commissioned to declare it. Let all thy servants, even those in humble places, make their influence felt for the upbuilding of thy kingdom by living such lives that unbelievers shall be led to glorify thee; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Alas, and did my Saviour bleed."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Inventory of Grace

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5: 1, 2.)

The apostle Paul has been called "the great

ergoist," because the word "therefore" is of such frequent occurrence in his writings. It is one of the keynotes of his Epistles, as "verily" is in the preaching of Christ. The difference is significant. "Therefore" is the word of argument; while "verily" is the word of authority.

It would have been immeasurably preposterous for Paul to say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you"; but he could say "therefore" with a most natural grace, since he was the most accomplished dialectician of his time. His forte was argument, and in this he was incomparable. His mind worked naturally in direct, progressive and conclusive lines. He began a controversy by laying down his proposition, then marshalled his points in orderly rank and file; and, having forced his opponent's citadel, entered it with a triumphant "therefore."

In the present instance the caption of his argument is Justification by Faith. So far in this Epistle to the Romans his effort has been to establish that doctrine on a firm logical basis; and wisely so, since Justification by Faith is the very heart and center of the religion of Christ. It was called by Luther, *"Articulum Ecclesiæ Stantis aut Cadentis,"* that is, the Doctrine of a Standing or a Falling Church. This was the discovery which the great Reformer made as he was climbing Pilate's Stairway on his knees. He had journeyed to Rome in monastic robe and cowl, a bondslave of penance and ceremonial observances. As he was counting his beads, midway in Sancta Scala, the sunburst came,

and he sprang to his feet, crying, "The just shall live by faith!" That was his first taste of the elixir of life. At that moment the thunders of the Reformation began to rumble around the world.

On the doctrine thus formulated the Protestant Church stands or falls. It was set forth by Jesus, not in terms of argument but of divine authority, on this wise, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Paul, however, reasons his way to this truth as a conclusion; and his "therefore" introduces the practical application.

It is obvious, then, that the content of this "therefore" is for such only as have accepted Christ. The doctrine of Justification by Faith is the postulate; and "therefore" marks the opening of a treasure casket for those who have followed thus far. Blessed is the soul that, "being justified by faith," is entitled to the inheritance of the children of God!

It is the day of all days in human experience when a man worn and weary of "merit making" hears the voice that Luther heard, "The just shall live by faith!" The Christian life begins when one can say:

> I left it all with Jesus long ago;
> All my sin I brought him and my woe;
> When by faith I saw him on the tree,
> Heard his still, small whisper, " 'Tis for thee,"
> From my heart the burden rolled away;
> Happy day! Happy day!

The immediate result is adoption into the household of God; as it is written, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"—heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." This is the first of the treasures in this "therefore" of Paul's, in which we have, as it were, the last will and testament of Jesus in behalf of those who are justified by faith in him.

The early fathers of theology were accustomed to speak of "the threefold state of man," to wit: the state of sin, the state of grace and the state of glory. But as the believer is no longer in bondage under sin, his "threefold state" is rather as follows, the state of peace, the state of grace and the state of glory.

I. *The State of Peace.* "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

Here is a suggestion that the soul was previously at variance with God; as Paul says elsewhere, "You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight."

The man who has not closed in with the overtures of mercy in Christ is at odds with the divine law. If he keeps the Ten Commandments, it is not because he loves them but because he is in bondage under them. And having done his best, he is still bound to confess that he has broken the law. The

penalty of disobedience is upon him; and he knows of no way of escape from it.

He is at odds with God still further in rejecting the divine plan of deliverance from sin. And this is the head and front of his offending. He is not in accord with God's scheme of salvation. To him the cross is "foolishness" and "a stumbling block." The sins that arise from disobedience of the moral law are provided for by the atonement of the cross; but for the crowning sin of sins, namely the rejection of the Cross which is the only doorway of escape from retribution, no provision is made, nor can any be made in the necessity of the case. The mind that is thus insurgent is obviously and forever at enmity against God.

The only reconciliation which has been suggested as possible between a sinful man and his offended God is that which is set forth in the doctrine of Justification by Faith; as it is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

In the word "manuduction," formerly used as a synonym for reconciliation, we find a vivid picture of this truce. The word means literally a hand-clasping. It portrays Christ as a mediator standing between God and the sinner, bringing their hands together in a compact of peace. And it is by virtue of the vicarious wounds in his hands that he is able to do it. So the sinner comes into possession of that last bequest of Jesus, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be

troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is thus that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. *The State of Grace.* "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

The figure here is that of a house, whose threshold the sinner has crossed, taking his place as a member of the household of God.

This House of Grace is the home in which the Christian lives. Its foundation is the Rock of Ages; its dome is in heaven. Its entrance is by that "new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Like the Father's house, it has many rooms; and all of them are tapestried with the beauties of holiness. Over its door is the legend, "The Just shall live by Faith." Its table is spread with a feast of fat things and wine upon the lees; and this feast is furnished with guests clothed in fine linen, clean and white.

And all those guests are sinners, sinners saved by grace. There is not one righteous person among them. Here is the penitent thief, the Magdalene, and Peter who denied his Lord. Here are sinners from every nation and kindred and people and tribe; sinners of every sort and every hue; all saved by grace.

And they are all "solifidians." The word is obsolete; but it was eloquent in its time. It means, depending on faith alone. The guests at this table

claim no personal merit. They recognize the value of morality, but are frank to confess that in their works, however good or many, there is neither expiatory value nor earning capacity. The only meritorious thing they have ever done is to believe in Christ; which is not the purchase price but the condition affixed to the gift of everlasting life. And even that faith is "not their own; it is the gift of God."

It is related that the people, on one occasion, asked of Jesus, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" What they wished to know was, how they might do something that should commend them to God. The answer was very clear and conclusive, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." In other words, the only "good work" which God will recognize as having a commendatory value is faith in the atoning sacrifice of his only begotten and well beloved Son.

Furthermore all who sit at that table in the House of Grace are servants. They are busy for God. All true Christians are under commission; some do more and some less, but all do something. The Christian life does not exhaust itself in the mere saying of prayers and singing of hymns. We speak of our worship in the sanctuary as "service"; but the true service of the Christian is out in the harvest field with sickle in hand and sleeves rolled up.

The "good works" of a Christian are the evi-

dence of his faith because they are an expression of gratitude for the gift of God.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:27.)

So while the members of God's household do not rely on good works, either to expiate the past or to purchase the future life, they are bound nevertheless to perform them to the glory of God.

III. *The State of Glory.* "And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

The word "glory" is short and easy to pronounce; but who shall measure the things comprehended in it?

We have foretastes of glory here and now. In some parts of Scotland the farmer, on selling a piece of property, puts a bit of whin or heather in the hand of the purchaser as "an earnest of the purchased possession." So to believers are granted earnests or foretastes of things awaiting them.

> The men of grace have found
> Glory begun below:
> Celestial fruits on earthly ground
> From faith and love do grow.

But "the milk and honey are beyond the wilderness." We live in hope. The joy of rare moments in the closet, where we look into the face of our Saviour; the singular peace that comes to us when

we "leave our burden at his feet and bear a song away"; the felicities of communion with him, are like grapes of Eshcol, which stimulate a deeper hunger for the vineyards further on.

We speak of heaven; but how little we know of it! The figures used in Scripture, such as golden streets and gates of pearl, are but vain efforts to make clear the glories of the infinite to finite minds; they are like the outlines on the smoked glasses through which we must needs look when gazing at the sun.

It is written in the Pilgrim's Progress that while Christian and his companions were journeying on toward the Celestial City they had glimpses now and then, in the distance, of shining domes and pinnacles; and lying down at night "they talked much in their sleep," just as we murmur brokenly of heaven. At length they saw those who had crossed the river drawing nigh to the city; the gates rolled back, the light came streaming forth, there were songs of welcome and the gates were closed. "Then did we wish ourselves among them."

All thanks for the joy of living and serving here and now; but there is something more and better coming. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

In the sacerdotal prayer of Jesus he offered one

petition in terms which could be used by no mortal man: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Observe the imperative wish: "Father, *I will!*" And mark the burden of his prayer. His disciples had seen him in his humiliation, had known him in his workshop and toiling wearily along the highways; they were about to see him in the judgment hall, scorned and derided, wearing his crown of thorns, dying on the accursed tree. But his will, the will of Jesus, as expressed in this great prayer, was that they should know him in different guise, exalted on his throne in glory!

Nor is this all. The glory of the Christian is not simply to behold the glory of his risen and glorified Lord. Oh, marvelous grace, he is to participate in it! For the same Christ who made that imperative prayer in the upper room gave this promise also, "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."

Think of that, follower of Christ! This is the fulness of the glory that awaits us. To sit with him in his throne! Give your imagination room to interpret it. The hope of glory can no further go.

To one who has no part nor lot in this matter it will doubtless appear, from the foregoing, that Christians have a great opinion of themselves.

Surely; and why not? The half has not been told. Is it not written, "All things are yours; whether . . . life or death or things present or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's"?

Great is the Inventory of Grace! Are others rich? We more. The Golconda of grace is ours. Are others honored? We more. Not only are we called "the children of God," but a crown of righteousness awaits us. Do others have pleasure? We more. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." "Vast is the inheritance; and vast is the earnest of the inheritance that comes to us in reversion, here and now.

Let it be remembered, however, that we make no claim of personal merit. Whatever we have or hope for, we deserve no whit of it. The very garments that we wear, "fine linen, clean and white," as we sit at the table of grace, are ours only by the imputation of Christ. Our righteousness is his. Our peace is his gift. Our boasting is in him.

O gift of gifts, O grace of faith,
My God, how can it be
That thou, who hast discerning love,
Shouldst give that gift to me?

How many hearts thou mightst have had
More innocent than mine!
How many souls more worthy far
Of that sweet touch of thine!

Ah, grace, into unlikeliest hearts
It is thy boast to come;
The glory of thy light to find
In darkest spots a home!

And let it be remembered furthermore that the possessions which are ours are offered freely to all. The door of the House of Grace is open, and whosoever will may enter. The sole condition is faith in Christ. What is mine may be yours. If you have no part in the inheritance of the saints, it is only because you will not have it.

8. *PRAYER*

O thou blessed God, who hast enriched me with grace, help me not only to rejoice in my spiritual wealth but to share it with others. Thou hast broken for me the living Bread; help me to give the hungry to eat. Enlarge my heart. Save me from selfishness. Use me to thy glory; and thy Name shall have the praise. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "O happy day that fixed my choice."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NINTH SERVICE

The Daughter of the Voice

1. *INVOCATION*

I COME to thee, O Father, for the benediction of thy grace. And thou art more willing to give than I to ask. Out of thine infinite riches bestow a blessing that shall sustain and strengthen me for the bearing of burdens and the discharge of duty in coming days I ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Proverbs 8:1-17.
John 14:1-31.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, I thank thee for thy Word. I thank thee that thou hast not left me like a shipwrecked mariner clinging to a spar, but hast given me a staunch craft with chart and compass to sail by. Help me to value the Scriptures aright and to follow them as a trustworthy rule of faith and practice. I thank thee that, in addition to thy written

Word, thou hast revealed thyself in thine Incarnate Word, the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. This is thy beloved Son; help me to hear him. Whatever he teaches, that would I believe; and whatever he requires, that would I do. Forgive my sins and shortcomings for his sake; and incline and enable me to walk more closely in his steps. Do thou, in like manner, for all thy people, O Lord; that thy church universal may be obedient to thy holy will. Bless all worshiping congregations this day. And bless those who have no Gospel or who, having, disregard it. Hasten the salvation of the world: for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "I was a wandering sheep."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Daughter of the Voice

"And I turned to see the Voice that spake with me." (Rev. 1 : 12.)

The Jews were accustomed to speak of two voices, given them for direction in the spiritual life.

One of these was the Voice of the Oracle. In the Holy of Holies, in a recess beside the Ark of the Covenant, beneath the mysterious cloud of the Presence, was deposited the official copy of the

sacred Scriptures. No question was raised as to the divine origin and trustworthiness of that document. It was regarded as the Court of Last Appeal for the determination of all questions of truth and ethics. It was revered as the veritable and authoritative Voice of God.

The other was called Bath-Kol, that is, "Daughter of the Voice." By this was meant any divine communication from without the Oracle. It included the voices of nature and providence, of the prophets and seers, of creeds and traditions, of dreams and visions of the night. All these, when duly verified by reference to the Oracle, were revered as authentic communications from God. The synonym for Bath-Kol is the Voice of the Spirit; and this is the theme of my discourse: *The Voice of the Spirit of God.*

Let it be understood, at the outset, that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is no new doctrine. It is as old as the history of man.

It is intimated of Adam that he heard this Voice in the garden of Eden. This was in the days of his innocency, when, as yet uncorrupted by sin, he was accustomed to walk with God in the cool of the day.

The Voice of the Spirit was addressed to primitive men in terms of earnest remonstrance when, "the wickedness of man being great in the earth," the clouds were gathering for the Flood. And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

The Voice was addressed to Abraham, calling him to go forth from his father's house to a country that he knew not. It spake to young Samuel in the Tabernacle at Shiloh. It was heard by all the seers of the olden time.

It was predicted, however, that in the fullness of time there would be a singular and mighty manifestation of the Spirit: "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. . . . And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." (Joel 2:28-32.)

On the Day of Pentecost that prediction was fulfilled. As the disciples were gathered with one accord in one place there came a "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

How are we to interpret that miracle? It does not mean that the Holy Spirit was any more really present than he had always been in the affairs of men; but this was a dynamic manifestation of the Spirit, in view of the campaign which was now to be inaugurated for the conquest of the world. Christ had laid the foundations of his Kingdom and cemented them with his blood. Then came this "baptism of power and of the Holy Ghost," that

the disciples, who were now commissioned as his witnesses, might go forth fully equipped to co-operate in the establishment of his Kingdom on earth. The administration of affairs had been turned over by Christ to the Holy Spirit as the Executive of the Kingdom. The work of the great propaganda was thenceforth to be under his control and supervision; and that work is now being carried forward through the instrumentality of the Church to its consummation in the Golden Age, when Christ shall return to reign from the river unto the ends of the earth.

In the meantime the Voice of the Spirit is, as ever, heard among the children of men.

And he is no respecter of persons. He speaks to all sorts and conditions of men. He spoke to Peter on the housetop at Joppa and, in the same hour, to the pagan centurion in his Cæsarean home. In fact, God does not leave himself without a witness in the case of any man. (Acts 14:17.) All high thoughts, noble ambitions, and holy aspirations come from him. He speaks with "so many voices, and none of them is without signification."

> Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind.

There are innumerable avenues through which the will of the Spirit is communicated to men. We cannot, indeed, avoid the "Daughter of the Voice." As it is written: "Whither shall I flee from thy Spirit?"

It is important, however, to observe that not all voices laying claim to divine authority are the true Voices of the Spirit. We are so compassed about by the sound of conflicting voices that it is quite possible to mistake the evil for the good.

The youth in the Book of Proverbs heard, on the one hand, the voice of Wisdom crying in the chief place of concourse, at the opening of the gates: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? Turn you at my reproof!" My ways are ways of pleasantness and all my paths are peace. But Folly, also, looking forth from the casement, called to him, "Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. I have spread my table, Come in unto me!"

We walk in like manner between the voices of Wisdom and Folly. Is there any way of determining between them, beyond all doubt and peradventure?

Can we depend on the trustworthiness of conscience, that inward monitor, which was originally intended to direct us in the paths of righteousness? Nay, conscience is oftentimes so perverted by habit, "seared as with a hot iron," that we cannot rely upon it. Paul in reviewing the evil of his former life, when he was breathing out slaughter against the followers of Christ, says that he did it "in all good conscience" and thinking, verily, that he was doing God's service!

Can we be certain that the preacher is always a safe guide in the way of truth and morality? Nay,

there were "lying prophets" in the olden time and "wizards that peeped and muttered"; and there are still anointed teachers who "steal the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in."

Can we rely upon the consensus of the Church? Let history answer. Listen to the bell of Saint Germain, tolling the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and hear above the sound of that bell the voice of the Defender of the Church, calling: "Kill! Kill!"

How then shall we discriminate? Is there any way of distinguishing the voices of Evil from the Voice of the Spirit of God?

The touchstone is Scripture. The voices from without the Oracle are always to be verified by the Voice of the Oracle. The final arbiter of truth is Scripture, which we receive as the indubitable Word of God. It is the one and only "infallible rule of faith and practice." At this Oracle all our perplexities are solved. The method is indicated by Isaiah, who, at a time when the children of Israel had forsaken the worship of Jehovah and turned to lying prophets and false voices, uttered this dictum: "To the Law and the Testimony! If they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God?"

In like manner Christ referred the perplexed people and their religious leaders alike to the final

and decisive authority of the Oracles, saying: "Search* the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

If we neglect our Bibles and go wrong, we have nobody to blame but ourselves; for the Voice and the Daughter of the Voice go hand in hand.

The Baal of our time is Anti-Bible. All heresies that are at odds with the gospel—and the air is vibrant with them—have their center in the renunciation of Holy Scripture as the decisive authority in questions of truth and practice.

But God be praised, there are myriads more than "seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal:" and these know where the truth is to be found! They are not left to the mercy of the spirits of the vasty deep and of the vasty air. They have faith to believe that God has not permitted his people to go through the wilderness without a pillar of cloud and fire to direct them.

The man who believes his Bible is safe, though he find himself in a very cyclone of conflicting voices. He lives, as mariners say, "in the eye of the storm." He can speak as John Knox did, who, on being admonished of the wrath of Bloody Mary, as he was walking to Holyrood with his blue Genevan cloak over his shoulders and a Bible under his left arm, replied: "All hell cannot harm the man who hath in his left hand a safeguard for his right."

*Or "Ye search" (R.V.). The indicative and imperative are the same.

But, being able thus to discern the Voice of the Spirit, what then? Our life depends upon our heeding it. Obey the voice; swerve not! There is danger in turning to the right hand or to the left. Having verified all voices by the Voice of the Oracle, then straight on thy way!

There are three specific dangers pointed out in Scriptural terms:

I. *"Resist not the Spirit."*

We resist the Spirit when, hearing the Voice, we insist on having our own way. Thus did the rulers of Israel, to whom Stephen, when on trial for his life in the Sanhedrin, said indignantly: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost! As your fathers did, so do ye; . . . who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it!"

II. *"Grieve not the Spirit."*

Here is a pathetic reference to the Spirit's love, as if a mother were being made heartsore by the ingratitude of a wayward son. We grieve the Spirit when we persist in known sin.

It is by this grieving of the Spirit that Christians lose their sense of assurance, and, to use a child's expression, "the happy goes out of their hearts." The hymn to sing under such circumstances is this:

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy Dove, return
Sweet Messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from Thy throne
And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

III. *"Quench not the Spirit."*

Here is a startling figure, the quenching of the last spark. A group of men in the Polar regions stand close together while one strikes a match. It is the last match. Come men, close ranks! Shield this feeble flame from the passing wind! Breathe softly lest you quench it!

If the Voice of the Spirit is finally hushed, there is no hope. It is said that thirty-two definitions have been given of the unpardonable sin. In fact, however, there can be no unpardonable sin but this: the quenching of the Spirit. This is the "sin against the Holy Ghost," who takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto us and wooes us to acceptance of him. To silence that Voice is, in the nature of the case, unpardonable; because it closes the only door of pardon that has ever been opened to a sinful man.

It is clear from the foregoing that here lies the secret of life; in hearing the Voice of the Spirit. The habit of adjusting all voices to the authority of the Oracle and then heeding them is life eternal.

The beginning of that higher life is when a man resolves, once for all, to be guided by the Voice. Regeneration occurs when a man is thus "born of the Spirit"; and, as Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

All the rest is sanctification, or "growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And this growth is under the influence of the Spirit.

He who hearkens to the Voice cannot go wrong in his creed: for Bath-Kol is the Spirit of truth.

He who heeds the Voice cannot go wrong in his conduct: for here is the promise to him who stands perplexed at the cross-roads, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it."

He who habitually hears and obeys the Voice cannot fail to grow in character: for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

The higher life of Abraham began when he heard the Voice in Ur of the Chaldees; and as he pursued his journey upward along the river Euphrates, pitching his tent at the command of the Voice, and moving on when the Voice bade him,

he, thus led by the Spirit, became the Father of the Faithful and the Friend of God.

The best definition of a Christian is that of Paul: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Wherefore hear the Voice of the Spirit and be willing to follow it. Bow low, as Elijah did at Horeb, with his head between his knees, and hear "the still small Voice." Then under its direction open your heart to truth and address your hands to duty, for as many as are thus led, obedient to the Voice of the Spirit, these are the sons of God.

8. *PRAYER*

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Open my ears to hear thy voice. And make me obedient, walking in the light thou givest until the day break and the shadows flee away; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Amen.

TENTH SERVICE

How Peter was Prayed Out of Prison

1. *INVOCATION*

BLESSED be thy Name, O God, for this holy day. May it be full of strength and comfort for all who assemble to worship thee, and for those also who cannot worship in thy courts. Incline the hearts of thy people everywhere to commune with thee in the beauty of holiness; and thy Name shall have the praise. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Awake, my soul, to joyful lays."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 92.
Acts 12:1-17.

4. *PRAYER*

Father in heaven, I thank thee for the privilege of making known my desires unto thee. Were it only to approach an earthly king one must needs clothe himself in fine apparel; put upon me now the garment of humility and array me in the imputed righteousness of Jesus which is as fine linen, clean and white. Blot out the sin which alienates from thee; for without holiness no man shall

see God. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Help me to covet earnestly the best things—the graces of character which made thy Son the ideal Man, his purity and zeal in service, his charity and passion for the good of all. Teach me how to think thy thoughts after thee, how to pray with a reverent but importunate faith, how to undertake great things for thee and expect great things from thee. And bless with me all thy people of whatever name. Fill their hearts with the sweet consciousness of thy presence and benediction. Be kind to those who suffer: comfort the bereaved; give new heart to the discouraged; endue with needed grace all who sit in high places of authority, and reclaim the wandering, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "In the Cross of Christ I glory."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

How Peter was Prayed Out of Prison

"Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12: 5.)

The time is A. D. 44.

The place is the upper room in Mary's house in Jerusalem. What memories gather about that up-

per room! It was here that Christ preached his last sermon, offered his last pastoral prayer and said his last farewell.

But that was fourteen years ago; and many things had happened in the interim. One of these was the muster at Olivet, where the Lord, having delivered his final commission to the disciples, lifted his hands in benediction and returned, through the triumphal arch of the opening heavens, to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." Another was the effusion of fire and power at Pentecost, where the disciples were equipped for a campaign of service which is destined to continue until the Tabernacle of God comes down among men. And the fires of persecution had been kindled; already three Emperors had hurled themselves vainly against the bosses of God's shield. Stephen had been stoned; James, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church, had been slain with a sword; and now Peter was cast into prison.

In the upper room the disciples were assembled for prayer. Their immediate purpose was to pray Peter out of prison. Could they do it? God was their helper, they knew that; but the question was, how to reach him; for he "sitteth upon a throne high and lifted up."

The thing works out like a geometrical problem.

Given: at the apex of a triangle, the throne of God; at one of the lower angles the upper room, where the disciples are engaged in prayer; and at

the other the prison where Peter lies in peril of death.

Required: to bring that upper room into such telegraphic communication with the throne that the throne may transmit a dynamic current to the prison and sever Peter's chains.

Solution, prayer: "And the disciples made instant prayer for him." (Margin, R. V.) This is the power that "moves the hand that moves the world to bring salvation down."

Let us get the picture before us.

In the Upper Room. The doors are locked for fear, and a handmaid is stationed at the outer wicket. The disciples are on their knees and John is leading them in prayer: "O Lord, leave not thy servant Peter in the power of the enemy! Thou art mighty to save. Deliver him, for thy great mercy's sake." That message traverses the heavenward wire with the speed of an electric flash, and God makes bare his arm.

In the Prison. Peter lies bound with a double chain and guarded by four quaternions of soldiers. He is as secure as imperial power can make him. But, as we shall see, no walls are thick enough, no chains are strong enough, no guards are watchful enough, to hold a man prisoner when God resolves to free him. The excitement of the day has wearied Peter and he sleeps. On a sudden a great light shines in the dungeon; an angel appears, lays his hand on Peter and says, "Arise up quickly!"

In the Upper Room. Andrew, the brother of

Peter, is praying: "O God, thy ways are not as our ways nor thy thoughts as our thoughts. We are at our wits' end; but our extremity is thine opportunity. We pray thee, deliver Peter! The thing which is impossible with men is possible with thee." And before he can say "Amen" his message has gone speeding along the electric wire, and God is proceeding to answer it.

In the Prison. Peter rubs his eyes; and as he struggles to his feet his chains fall off. The angel says, "Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee and follow me." He obeys as one dreaming. The great doors open before them noiselessly, as if their bolts were drawn by unseen hands. The last door opens and closes; and they are standing under the starlit sky.

In the Upper Room. Philip is praying: "O Lord, we put thee in remembrance of thy great promise, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name it shall be done unto you.' In thy name we make our request; save Peter from the peril of death!" And already his petition has reached its destination and deliverance is at hand.

In the Open Street. The angel has vanished and Peter is standing alone. "Now I know of a surety," he says, "that this is no dream. God has interposed to save me." But whither shall he go? There is but one place; the upper room, where he knows the disciples have been praying for him.

In the Upper Room. The praying still continues. Thomas is saying: "O Lord, if we have

ever doubted thy power to save, forgive us. We believe, help thou our unbelief! Thou hast promised to be a help to the poor and to the needy in his distress. Thine hour is come. Lord, hear and answer us!"

A knock at the door. How it startles them! Is it an officer come to summon another of their number to judgment and death? Who next? Their faces are blanched; all voices are hushed. Another knock, and a voice calling, "Open unto me!" It is Peter's voice. The answer to their prayer has come and is knocking at the gate. Why do they linger? O ye of little faith, unbolt and let your answer in!

The problem is solved. Wonderful telegraphy of prayer! One wire runs straight from the Mercy Seat to the Throne, and another, surcharged with power, runs direct from the Throne to the Prison. There is no interval of time or space.

"I will put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," says Puck in "Midsummer Night's Dream." But the intercourse of earth and heaven is by a swifter process of telegraphy; as it is written, "Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

In a consideration of the philosophy of prayer *the first thing* to be said is that *prayer would not be ineffective even if there were no God.*

There is many an unbeliever who says, "Prayer is a delusion but a wholesome one. While denying its objective value or efficacy, we are quite willing to admit that it has a reflex influence. It is like the

surplus steam escaping from an engine, which drives no wheels but relieves the pressure on the machine. In time of trouble it is well to have somebody to talk to; in default of a friend, better talk to yourself than brood inwardly." This reasoning, from the standpoint of an unbeliever, is good as far as it goes; but it goes only a very little way.

The group in the upper room are mutually strengthened by this fellowship of the knees. If their prayer went no higher than the ceiling, their hearts would nevertheless be the lighter for it.

But *the second thing* to be said as to prayer is that *there is a God who hears it.* And this fact carries us well on toward the solution of the problem.

It is recorded that the Emperor Diocletian had a system of concentric tubes so arranged that he could sit on his throne and hear the murmurings at every official point in the Imperial City. It is an impressive thought that God, from his high place, can and does hear the faintest prayer at the remotest corner of his universe. At this moment what a mighty volume of petition is ascending up! The child that lisps its "Now I lay me down to sleep," the prodigal in the far country who, weary of his shame and hunger, says, "I will arise and go," kings and beggars, parents and children—our Father hears them all!

But *our third proposition* carries us further still; to wit, *The God who hears prayer is moved by it.*

The objector says, "God's plans and purposes

are from all eternity. It is inconceivable that he should be turned aside by the breath of his creatures. The imprisonment of Peter is part of an eternal plan; it is therefore a vain impertinence to intercede for him." We reply, God is indeed immutable; but immutability is one thing and immobility is another. Our God is not like the Sphinx, carved out of stone and looking, in imperturbable serenity, through sightless eyes, upon the caravans of the centuries as they move by. He is our Father; and as a Father he pitieth his children.

But, interposes the objector, "How about the inviolability of nature's laws? There is a fixed order of the universe, and it cannot be supposed that the voice of a humble petitioner should interfere with it." We answer, The inviolability of any law must be understood with reference to higher laws. If I lift my hand I seem to violate the law of gravity; in point of fact I simply introduce the higher law of volition. And at the summit of all laws whatsoever is the sovereignty of God.

It is true that God is "yesterday, to-day and forever the same." And it is true, also, that he rules in accord with certain fixed and eternal laws. But this, so far from being an objection to prayer, is the fundamental sanction of it. The reason why men resort to our courts of justice for the vindication of their rights is because they believe that those courts are governed by fixed principles; and it is because we can depend upon the immutable

God to enforce the eternal laws of right and justice which center in him that we feel warranted in offering our prayers to him.

Our fourth affirmation is that *the God who hears our prayers and can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities answers when we call unto him.*

How do we know that? By the testimony of four witnesses, namely:

I. *Reason.*

If there is a God anywhere in the universe and we are his children, then surely he would not be indifferent to our welfare. And Jesus said, "When ye pray say, Our Father"; and again, If earthly parents know how to give good things to their children, "how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

President Lincoln had a favorite son who died in early life. He was familiarly known as "Little Tad." At school one day, smarting under some real or fancied wrong, he started for home. Running at a breathless pace through the streets, he came to the White House. Up the marble steps he sped, past the guards, until he reached the room where he knew the Cabinet was in session. There, heedless of everybody and everything, he threw himself into his father's arms and poured out his sorrows. The members of the Cabinet sat in silence and the affairs of Government stood still while the President listened to the complaint of little

Tad. Is God our Father? Are we his children? And shall he not hear and be moved and answer when we appeal to him?

II. *Revelation.*

The Bible, which we receive as the Word of God, is full of promises, such as "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." This is but one of hundreds; and you will look in vain for an "if" or a "perhaps" in any of them. "Shall" is the word. God leaves us in no doubt as to his willingness to hear and answer us.

"Yes, but how do we know that those promises are true? Give us facts." There is a sense, however, in which a promise, with due authority behind it, is more satisfactory than a visible and tangible fact. Here is a bar of yellow metal, said to be worth a thousand dollars; and here beside it is a Government bond for the same amount. Which will you have? Take heed how you trust your eyes; for many a countryman has been deceived by a "gold brick." You will, of a certainty, choose the bond, which is simply a "promise to pay." Why? Because there is no question as to the value of a promise with the red seal of the Nation upon it. Take this promise, then: "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." This is a draft, with the amount left blank to be filled out by the receiver, and endorsed by the King's Son—a *carte blanche* on the exchequer of God!

III. *Hearsay.*

Do you object to "hearsay evidence"? Substantially all that we know is acquired that way. Not long ago there was a shower of meteoric stars. You were probably asleep and did not observe it; but hundreds of astronomers say that they watched it from their observatories, and there are tens of thousands of people who sat up all night to see it. On the other hand there are many who, like yourself, are prepared to testify that they saw nothing of it. What then will you conclude? Shall the negative outweigh the positive testimony with you? Not if you are a grown man.

So there are millions of people in the world who certify that God has heard and answered their prayers again and again. It is respectfully submitted that the credulous man is not he who accepts this mass of positive evidence, but rather the one who prefers the negative testimony of those who were asleep and did not see the falling stars. It is incredible that men should not listen to the word of that great cloud of witnesses who with reference to prayer are prepared to say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life, . . . declare we unto you!"

IV. *Experience.*

I know. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles!" And the way for any other to know is to try it. But in making a test of prayer, remember this:

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

We have kept Peter waiting at the door. Rhoda, the portress, came running in, breathless with excitement, crying—but that is another story; and next Sabbath, God willing, we shall hear about it.

Meanwhile I can rest and rejoice in the assurance that I have a prayer hearing and answering God. I will pray on: because in due season I shall reap if I faint not.

There is an eye that never sleeps
  Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts,
  When sink the beams of light.

There is an arm that never tires,
  When human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails,
  When earthly loves decay.

That eye is fixed on seraph throngs;
  That arm upholds the sky;
That ear is filled with angel songs;
  That love is throned on high.

But there's a power which man can wield
  When mortal aid is vain,
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
  That listening ear to gain.

That power is prayer, which soars on high,
  Through Jesus, to the throne;
And moves the hand which moves the world,
  To bring salvation down!

8. *PRAYER*

Lord, teach me how to pray; how to present my strong arguments and make a prevailing plea. I know that if there is any failure of connection betwixt thee and me the fault is mine. Lay thy healing hand, O Lord, on the infirmity of my devotions and enable me to take hold upon thy strength. There are so many things that I need: help me to ask sō as to receive; in Jesus' name. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish."

10. *BENEDICTION*

God be with thee and bless thee and cause his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. Amen.

ELEVENTH SERVICE

A Simple Believer

1. *INVOCATION*

O God, who sittest upon thy throne high and lifted up, help me to worship thee aright. With confidence I now draw nigh and 'Father, Abba Father,' cry. Receive me into the secret place of thy pavilion and show me thy beauty in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Sweet hour of prayer."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Acts 12:1-16.
1 Cor. 1:20-30.

4. *PRAYER*

Who shall be accounted worthy, O Lord, to enter into thy presence? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. Alas, I have neither! But thou canst give me both. Begin at my heart, O searching God, and wring out of it the black drop of sin. Then purify my hands; for I have touched the unclean thing. Blessed be thy Name, thou hast opened a fountain for uncleanness in the atoning blood of thine only-begotten Son! It cleanseth from all sin. And thou art always ready

to draw near and answer the prayer for pardon. Yea, before we call thou hearest, and before we ask thou hast already answered. Wherefore I now rejoice in the assurance of thy grace and call upon my soul and all that is within me to bless and praise thy holy Name. Bestow on others, I pray thee, the gift which thou hast so graciously conferred on me. Let this Sabbath be one of thy days of power, when thou shalt make bare thine arm to deliver many from the shame and bondage of sin. Give efficacy to the preaching of thy word, that it may not return unto thee void. Save sinners and build up thy people in the most holy faith; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Jesus, lover of my soul."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

A Simple Believer

"And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so." (Acts 12: 13-15.)

At the close of the last sermon we left Peter standing at the door of Mary's house. He had been prayed out of jail. And the disciples were

too surprised to believe it. The answer to their prayers stood knocking at the door, and they were not ready to receive it.

At this point, enter Rhoda, the little maid who kept the outer wicket. She "ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate;" and when they doubted she "constantly affirmed that it was even so."

It seems to me that, as a believer, this little maid had the advantage of the disciples in the upper room in some ways.

I. *To begin with, she was a simple believer.*

There was not a man in the upper room who could not have argued her down. Some of them had taken a three years' theological course in the ministry of Jesus, besides having had fourteen years of active service. They were all cleverer than the little maid; and yet she put them out of countenance with her simple faith.

She could not have explained the philosophy of prayer; but she knew that the disciples had been praying for the deliverance of Peter, and that God had heard their prayers and that Peter was now knocking at the door.

Her faith was like that of Dr. Guthrie's little daughter, who set out for Church service in the evening with an umbrella in hand; and when her father said, "My dear, you will not need that; the stars are shining," she answered, "Yes, but you prayed for rain this morning, and the promise is, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, believing

that ye receive it, ye shall have it.' " It is such childlike faith as this that justifies the words of Jesus, "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

As we grow away from childhood there is always the danger of losing our hold on spiritual things.

One reason is because our natural tendency is to grow downward into the world. We are like the cedar that lifts its boughs toward heaven until it has attained a certain stature and stops there; while its roots are still thrust downward and outward in every direction. It requires a constant and most prayerful vigilance to keep ourselves from losing hold of the eternal verities, while we are in danger of fastening our grip on things that perish with the using and passing more and more under the dominion of the physical senses. The heaven that "lies about us in our infancy" is likely to grow fainter and fainter until it becomes "a happy land far, far away." We incline to put a higher value on bread than on the Living Bread, to care more for a livelihood than for life, and to seek more diligently after a fortune than for "treasure laid up in bags that wax not old, eternal in the heavens." Our senses are quickened, while our spiritual faculties are atrophied. This is a peril that constantly confronts us.

And another danger is, that as our years increase and our view widens, we are likely to grow wise in our own conceit. Children know little of science

and philosophy, but it is surprising how wise they are in the encyclopedia of faith.

They believe in God. And they have a singular confidence in human nature, too. They hold converse with the invisible. They dream dreams and see visions. But presently they learn the alphabet; then the multiplication table; Science taking them by one hand and Philosophy by the other lead them up to the Tree of Knowledge, and then the trouble begins. Their intuitive perceptions grow dull. They are initiated into the nebulous world of doubt, where they echo the tempter's word, "Yea, hath God said?" They learn a few things that are so and a great many things that are not so. Their visions cease. Faith in the unseen and eternal gives way to the Sciolism which says, "I will accept only that which I can touch with my finger tips." Faith says farewell! The lights go out.

> Great God, I'd rather be
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
> Catch sight of Proteus rising from the sea
> And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn!

As between knowing and believing, the latter is much more essential to the joy of living.

In fact, the things which we know by the evidence of the physical senses are comparatively few and relatively unimportant. I do not know that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, but I take great comfort in believing it. I do not know that

the bank where my funds are deposited is safe, but I should be unable to sleep if I did not believe it. We do not know that the beams which support the church roof are secure, but there would be a panic in the congregation if we did not believe it. We do not know that our President is an honest man, but the whole country would be up in arms if we did not believe it.

The great body of facts which we possess come to us, not by knowledge but by faith. And they are none the less substantial and trustworthy on that account. For faith is substance, and it is founded on evidence; only it is "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."

So as we increase in knowledge, let us take heed that we do not belittle the supreme importance of faith.

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," because of the danger of growing wise in our own conceit. But a little faith, though it be even as a grain of mustard seed, has in it the possibility of great things. So says Paul, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

II. *Let it be observed again that little Rhoda was a genuine believer.* There are a number of reasons for saying so.

First, "she ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate." We may imagine her clapping her hands as she told the good news. Enthusiasm is a primal test of earnestness, and particularly in religious things.

The word "enthusiasm" is from *en Theos,* meaning, "God in us." An enthusiast, then, is a God-filled man. The people who are thus divinely possessed do not loiter on their way. They run because they are in earnest. Elijah ran all the way from Carmel to Jezreel because, having seen a cloud in the heavens like a man's hand, he bore the tidings of approaching rain. The women who went early to the sepulcher in Joseph's garden and found it empty, ran to announce that life and immortality were brought to light. We dawdle when there is nothing doing; we run when we are on the King's business.

And second, we are given to understand that Rhoda's faith was genuine by the fact that *the disciples called her "mad."* They thought the dear child out of her senses.

Be careful, friends, how you indulge in religious enthusiasm! You may be in blood earnest about anything else, but if you quicken your step in the discharge of religious duty, somebody will be sure to say that you have lost your balance.

Not long ago a literary man went South, to write

up the customs of the colored people. He attended one of their barbecues, where they sang plantation melodies and danced and made merry all night; and he pronounced that a fine illustration of emotional æsthetics. Then he went to one of their camp meetings, where they spent the night in preaching, telling their religious experience, and singing "Swing low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home," and "Steal away to Jesus"; and that seemed to him a sort of phrenitis or hysteria, a remnant of their primitive Voodooism!

Is it not singular that a man can invest all his time and energy and earthly possessions in a business enterprise, such as the making of an aeroplane, adventuring his life in a vain effort to prove its success, and receive nothing but adulations for it; when a measure of such earnestness in the things of religion makes him a harebrained victim of religious fanaticism? No doubt Festus had heard approvingly many an orator discourse in glowing terms on Roman politics; but when, in the audience room at Cæsarea, one of the apostles lost himself in the earnest presentation of salvation through Christ, he cried with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself! Much learning doth make thee mad!"

The third reason for holding that Rhoda's faith was genuine, is the fact that *epithets could not rebuff her.* "She constantly affirmed that it was even so." She had the courage of her convictions and declined to be laughed out of court. So Peter

himself on one occasion, when forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19.)

Oh, for the enthusiasm that holds fast and speaks out! If the things which we as Christians profess to believe are true at all, they are awfully true. And if the work that we are trying to do is not a transparent fraud, it is the most important business that any man can engage in. We are called to the Life-saving Service; to pluck men from danger "as brands from the burning" and bring them to Christ, without whom there is no possibility of spiritual life. We are called to tear down the strongholds of iniquity and build up the kingdom of truth and righteousness and thus to hasten the coming of the Golden Age.

Men and women of Christ, let us arouse ourselves to some commensurate sense of the importance of our work! Let us run like Rhoda; let us refuse to be silenced by the adverse criticisms of the children in the market-place. Let us so believe the gospel that we shall be ready to "constantly affirm" that it is true. Oh, for the enthusiasm of God-filled men! For is it not time that we no longer live but Christ liveth in us? And this is the Christ who was said to be beside himself by reason of his earnestness, and who had said of himself prophetically, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up!"

III. *Further still, Rhoda was a happy believer.* It is written of her, "She opened not the gate for gladness." Dear absent-minded child, it made her so happy to think that their prayers were answered that she left Peter standing without, until recovering herself she returned and opened unto him.

It is a common mistake, and one that young people particularly are likely to make, to suppose that true religion deprives us of any of the real pleasures of life. No one is asked to give up anything for Christ's sake except what is tinctured with sin; and surely no right-thinking man or woman, whether a Christian or not, should care to continue in any sinful indulgence. All the joys that belong to a normal life are open to the followers of Christ; and, in addition to these, the unspeakable hope of heaven and eternal bliss.

I have heard of a young man who on making the purchase of his first silk hat, asked for a crêpe band. "How wide?" asked the merchant. "Is your mother dead, or who?" The youth answered, "Nobody is dead; but crêpe bands are in fashion; and I thought one would look well." A hundred years ago or more an unbelieving poet said of Christians,

> They wear long faces just as if their Maker,
> The Lord of Glory, were an undertaker.

To go into the Christian life with the impression that crêpe bands are in fashion is a great mistake. The command is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and

again I say, Rejoice." Why should not Christians live a happy life? Why should they go with their heads hanging down like a bulrush, when they profess to believe that their sins are forgiven and that they are going on to Heaven under a rainbow arch of promise? No, here is their song, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

It is not religion that makes men miserable but unbelief. Doubt clips our wings, so that, like crippled doves, we flutter near the earth. Doubt breaks the arrows of our prayers, so that they cannot cleave the skies. Doubt dulls our eyes to visions of heavenly things and deadens our hearts to deep impressions of the Father's love. Doubt rends our harp-strings and turns our Hallelujahs to *Misereres*. It is faith that enables us to sing and make melody in our hearts unto God.

The youth who, having squandered his substance in riotous living in the far country, started home but hesitated while yet afar off, saying within himself, "Yonder is my father's house; there is plenty and to spare, but alas, it's no place for a beggar like me. My patrimony is gone and the glory of my youth worn off! No, no, there is no welcome for me!" was plunged in the depths of despair by doubt of his father's love. But when he sat at the table in his father's house, wearing the best robe, with a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, life and laughter and merry-making all about him, at home, his heart was light because his doubt

was gone. Faith had taken the place of unbelief and joy the place of despair because he realized that his father loved him.

In a letter of Sydney Smith's, addressed to a lady who had asked him for a recipe for happiness, he wrote, "Let there be a fire on your open hearth, a kettle singing on your hob, a box of sweetmeats on the mantel, and then give yourself to pleasant thoughts." Wise counsel, indeed; and all these things are ours. The fire is kindled on our open hearth. The kettle sings on the hob, for all the simple things of life make music to those who are living a holy life. The box of sweetmeats is on our mantel; for what can be sweeter than the promises which our Lord has opened to us? And pleasant thoughts also are ours; sweet memories of the past, since all our sins are pardoned, and sweeter hopes for the future, because all God's angels beckon us to the eternal life. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him!"

Blessings on the little maid who has taught us such lessons as these! Her name, Rhoda, is our English "Rose." How does the rose fulfill the purpose of its life? It takes the gifts of God and asks no questions. It receives the air, the sunshine and the benignant factors of the soil, assimilates them and translates them into beauty of form and color; and then, opening itself heavenward, it exhales the fragrance of gratitude to God.

So may we be led in the pathway of a simple and happy faith, to the end that our lives may be "all sunshine in the sweetness of our Lord."

8. *PRAYER*

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Teach me to pray with faith, trusting implicitly in thee. Help me to receive thine exceeding great and precious promises with a confidence corresponding to the love that gave them, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace, mercy and peace be with thee. Amen.

TWELFTH SERVICE

The Hill Difficulty

1. *INVOCATION*

I THANK thee, O Lord, for the call to worship. Let this place be to me like the heights of Bethel, where thou so wondrously didst manifest thy presence and power to bless; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "God is the refuge of his saints."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Deut. 1:20-40.
Acts 9:1-22.

4. *PRAYER*

All praise to thee, God of light and power and grace, for thy tender mercies. Thou hast not dealt with me after my sins. Hadst thou laid to my life the plumb-line of thy justice I should not now be in the land of the living, much less at this altar of praise. But thy mercy endureth forever. Great are my sins and manifold my transgressions, but greater is thy loving kindness. As far as the East is from the West so far, for Jesus' sake, hast thou removed my transgressions from me. Help me to show my gratitude in thanks-

living as well as in thanksgiving. May none of my powers of body or mind, none of my possessions, none of my time be withheld from thee. Take me, Lord, take all that I am and have; use me to thy glory and wear me out for thee. Give me more and more the mind of consecration that was in Christ Jesus. Save me from myself; for my meaner self is indeed my worst enemy. Deliver me utterly from selfishness. Enlarge my heart. Keep me thinking of others and doing for others all the while. Comfort the sorrowing; strengthen the weak; give dying grace to those who are this day passing from time into eternity. Turn the minds of the thoughtless to serious things. Give power to thy word wherever it is preached to-day; power to save sinners and sanctify saints. Speed the gospel on its way to the uttermost parts of the earth; and hasten thy coming to reign on earth as now thou reignest in heaven; for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Come, thou Fount of every blessing."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Hill Difficulty

"Now, therefore, give me this mountain." (Josh. 14: 12.)

The year that followed the Exodus was a wonderful one for the Children of Israel. It was spent at the foot of Mount Sinai, where measures were taken to organize them into a Theocratic Commonwealth. It was here that they received the Decalogue and Levitical Code, which were in the nature of a Constitution and By-laws. It was here that Moses, as God's viceroy, gathered about him the Princes and the forty Elders, the former of whom constituted the Upper and the latter the Lower House of Parliament. And it was here that an army of probably not less than half a million able-bodied men was mustered and mobilized under Joshua as commander-in-chief. Thus in a twelvemonth, the people who had escaped from Egypt a mere rabble of slaves were transformed into a well-organized and formidable nation.

They were ready now for the business in hand. There was no occasion for tarrying. The Land of Promise was before them; and they were in a position to enter forthwith and take possession of it. The order to advance was given accordingly; but the people had misgivings. It was natural that they should wish to know something about the *terra incognita;* hence the appointment of twelve spies to go over and see how the land lay.

I. *At this point, enter Caleb.* His first appearance is as one of the twelve spies.

They received their commission in the following terms: "Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and

the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."

The men did their work thoroughly, traversing the valleys and climbing the hills, viewing the oliveyards and vineyards and skirting the slopes of Hebron where the Anakim dwelt.

On their return they found the people awaiting their report with anxious impatience. They entered the camp, bringing of the abundant fruit of the land; figs, pomegranates, a single cluster of grapes from Eshcol borne "on a staff between two." And this is what they had to say: "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless" (Ah, that "nevertheless" has kept many a timid soul out of the Land of Promise! It sounds the minor note of unbelief and cowardice) "the people be strong and they dwell in walled cities; and we saw the giants, the children of Anak, there!"

Whereupon there was weeping and wailing: "Would God we had died in Egypt! Better the toil in the brickyards with a scant meal of lentils and leeks than to fall into the hands of the Anakim!"

Then spoke Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess the land. Giants, forsooth! There are but a handful in Hebron; and behold our army of

valiant men. The Lord hath spoken; his promise is Yea and Amen. We be well able to possess the land; for the Lord is with us!"

But the heart had gone out of the people. They feared and trembled and refused to advance. Thus unbelief breeds weakness.

> Our fears are traitors,
> And make us lose the good we oft might win
> By fearing to attempt.

There were some who would have slain Caleb for his earnest exhortations. "Stone him! Stone him!" they cried; and there is no telling what would have happened, but for the fact that just then the Cloud appeared above the Tabernacle of the Congregation to signify that God would speak with the people. And through Moses he delivered this message: "How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be ere they believe me? Because they have seen my glory and have tempted me, surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, nor shall any of them enter into it but my servant Caleb who hath followed me wholly. Him will I bring into the land and his seed shall possess it."

Then followed a period of thirty-nine years in which the Children of Israel wandered to and fro, entangled in the wilderness. The life of Caleb, during those weary years, is recorded in the single sentence, "He followed the Lord wholly." In other words, he was doing his duty and biding his

time. Not for a moment did he lose his confidence in the promise of God. He knew that if the people had been willing to advance in pursuance of the divine command they could at once have entered in; but he was not the man to go up and down among his neighbors, saying, "I told you so." Nor was he discontented or over-eager for action. He who "follows the Lord wholly," knows how to labor and to wait. The promise is, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." No doubt Caleb would rather have run to Canaan; but if God required him to trudge wearily with the people, round and round in their entanglement, he would be content to serve that way.

It is related of Luther that, in the darkest period of the Reformation, when Melanchthon, a fellow prisoner with him in the Castle at Erfurt, complained that everything was going wrong, he replied, "Philip, there is a rare physical herb called *Patientia,* which sustains the spirit in darkness; and thou art in sore need of it."

It is comparatively easy, when drums are beating, to face death on the thin red line of battle; but to do sentry duty on the outskirts of the camp, alone and in silence, this tries the soul of a man. Yet he who "follows the Lord wholly" is ready thus to stand and wait. An important part of his code is, "Bide a wee, and dinna weary."

So Caleb kept his soul in patience; heeding the

ram's horn when it called to the daily service of the Tabernacle, and heeding it just as readily when it called to a defense against the desert tribes. The duty of each hour contented him.

He saw the people dropping out, one by one, until the entire generation that had come out of Egypt lay in graves along the way. He saw Moses climb to his lonely sepulchre, and heard his last farewell, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations; from everlasting to everlasting thou art God!" And still the faith of Caleb failed not; as it is written, "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Then came the crossing of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho, the driving out of the native tribes and the distribution of the land. And for Caleb this meant six years more of waiting before he could possess his inheritance.

It was no small matter to parcel and apportion the conquered territory. No doubt there was a clamorous competition for the choicest claims. The rich valley of the Jordan was soon chosen. The green pastures along the foot-hills were assigned. At length nothing was left but Mount Hebron, where the giants dwelt; and no one dared take it. Still not a word of Caleb. What was he doing? He was holding his peace; biding his time; containing his soul in patience.

Oh, for patience! Oh, for the patience of unrewarded toil, to wait and believe that "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,

shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Oh, for the patience of unanswered prayer; to wait and faint not, to keep on praying though the heavens are as brass, to believe in the mighty "shalls" of the promise: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you!"

Now Caleb appears for the last time. What is his request? A pension? His age entitles him to it. A position of honor in the public service? His character gives an assurance that he would efficiently fill it. He speaks: "I am this day fourscore and five years old; yet I am as strong as I was in the day that Moses sent me. As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day. The Anakim are there; but the Lord is with me and I shall be able to drive them out!"

It was a strange and startling request. And what a tribute to the patience of faith! His "therefore" covered the whole story of the wilderness. The fire had been smoldering in the heart of this man for forty-five years; and now in sight of the mountain it flamed up. All that time he had been waiting for an opportunity to have at the giants; and now that the hour had come, he proved himself no idle boaster; for the record is that he went up to Hebron with his men, drove out the giants and took possession of it. His faith won out; and long afterward we are informed that his

captured possession was still in the hands of the generations that succeeded him.

What is the lesson? The Secret of Success.

It is for us to say what our inheritance shall be. "A man is the architect of his own fortune." What shall we choose? An easy life? Shall we follow Lot down to the well-watered plains of the Jordan or climb the steep path into the hills?

In the common affairs of secular life it is those who choose the upward path that ultimately have the best of it. The get-rich-quick and get-rich-easy schemes of the market-place and in finance usually come to naught; this is the rule and the rare exceptions simply prove it. There is no "Northwest Passage" to earthly immortality; knowledge is for those who burn the midnight oil, and fame for such as keep their eyes aloft.

> The heights by great men won and kept
> Were not achieved by sudden flight;
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upward in the night.

And truer still is this in the province of spiritual things; as Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." And by this "kingdom of heaven" we are to understand not merely the Canaan which is afar off but the kingdom of character and usefulness which is here and now.

The word that came to Zerubbabel, as he stood

among the ruins of the temple which he was commissioned to rebuild, is for every earnest soul, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it!"

It is written in the Pilgrim's Progress that Christian, as he journeyed, came to a place where three roads met: one was called Danger, and it led into a great wood; another was called Destruction, leading into a wide field where travellers stumbled and fell and rose no more; the third was a narrow way called Difficulty, which "lay right up the hill." And Christian, after drinking from a hidden spring, chose the narrow way, clambering often on his hands and knees because of its steepness, but saying as he went,

> "This hill, though high, I covet to ascend.
> The difficulty will not me offend,
> For I perceive the way to life lies here.
> Come, pluck up heart! Let's neither faint nor fear!
> Better, though difficult, the right way to go,
> Than wrong, though easy, where the end is woe."

The high levels of spiritual attainment are for those who climb the upward path, fearless of lions and Anakim along the way. Difficulty is a challenge to manhood. "He who battles," says Carlyle, "will be found stronger and more expert than he who stays at home from battle, concealed among the provision-wagons or abiding by the stuff." The

rougher the path, the stronger the appeal to faith; since every spell of fainting stimulates our sense of dependence on God.

Once on a time there lived two men, as far apart in character as the two poles. One of them was Saul of Tarsus. His home was, as they say, on "Easy Street." All the advantages of noble birth, Roman citizenship and a liberal education were his; and under a rainbow arch of promise he faced a future such as probably no other youth of his time could boast of. Everything came his way. Then a thing happened, on the highway to Damascus, which changed the tenor of his life and transformed Saul of Tarsus into the other man. He forthwith moved out of "Easy Street" and was found in the street called "Straight," wearing a new name, "Paul the Apostle." The story of his after life is that of an upward climb. He was compassed about by danger and difficulty, troubled on every side yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed; still bravely trudging on. Was it worth while? Hear his last word, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day!"

Oh, yes, it pays to choose the road to Hebron. It means all that makes life worth living here, and in the time to come life everlasting. The end crowns

the work. "The North Wind makes Vikings." Blessed is the man who takes heaven with the wind in his face.

The Gospel of Christ is not for weaklings, but for such as aspire to the measure of the fulness of the stature of a man.

The two ways of living are clearly indicated by Christ himself; one is the broad way that leads to the extinction of all high purposes and noble aspirations; the other is "the narrow way that leadeth unto life." And every man must choose for himself. "If any man will come after me," he said, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." To represent the Christian life as a flowery path of ease and indolence is to take issue with Christ himself. He, pointing to an unfinished tower, bade men count the cost before they begin to build. He frankly likened his service to a yoke and a burden; but added, in view of its compensations in time and eternity, "My yoke is easy and my burden light."

And when he bade his people choose the mountain path, he led the way. "He points us through no darker rooms than he went through before." His journey was over the Via Dolorosa; as it is written, he "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Our watchword is "Follow!" He who treads in the footsteps of his Lord, bearing his cross up the steep Hills of Difficulty, stimulated by that word

"Follow! Follow!" ends his journey at heaven's gate and enters into eternal life with Christ.

8. *PRAYER*

Give me, O Lord, a strong, brave heart for service and for suffering. Stay by me, and I can do anything; leaning on thee, I can climb the steepest Hill of Difficulty; but if thou leave me alone, I can do nothing. Abide with me, therefore; show me thy face; speak to me! And keep me ever obedient to thy holy will: for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

THIRTEENTH SERVICE

The Three Mighties

1. *INVOCATION*

GRANT me, O Lord, a season of communion with thee. Help me to keep this Sabbath as a day apart—set apart and hallowed for the uses of the immortal soul. Let its sunset find me a Sabbath day's journey nearer the perfection of life and character. Come near now, I beseech thee, and speak comfortably to me, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "The morning light is breaking."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

1 Chronicles 2.
Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28. 3:5, 12, 21.

4. *PRAYER*

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies; for I acknowledge my sins and my transgressions are ever before me. Blessed be thy name for the abundant pardon which thou hast provided in the fountain filled with blood. I believe in Jesus Christ; I believe in his atoning death; and I freely and fully accept forgiveness in his name. Let me now rejoice in thee. Teach me the song of thanksgiving

that rises above the confused noises of doubt and worldliness to thee upon thy heavenly throne. Glory and honor and power and dominion be unto thee, O God of my salvation, forever and ever! I praise thee and magnify thy name and give thanks to thee for thy great goodness! Yea, Lord, even in my sorrows and disappointments I am sensible of thy love. Thou hast never withheld thy comforts when out of the depths I have called unto thee. Once and again thou hast made bare thine arm to help me. Oh, that all men would praise thee for thy goodness! Make thyself known to-day in thy sanctuaries to such as have borne their sorrows and carried their burdens in lonely pride. Unveil the glories of the Cross to multitudes of sinners; and draw thy people into closer communion with thee, for the sake of thy dear Son who sits "expecting" until the whole world shall return to him. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Love divine, all love excelling."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Three Mighties

"These things did these Three Mightiest." (1 Chron. 11:19.)

Of the conspicuous figures in the Old Testa-

ment, none is more popularly beloved than David. This is due in part to his courage. The shouting in the valley of Elah as the ruddy stripling went out to meet the champion of Philistia has sounded his fame through the ages.

Then, too, David was an amiable man. An old proverb runs, "He that would have friends must show himself friendly." This man had a way of attaching others to him. In his exile among the mountains, though "hunted like a partridge," he did not lack adherents. One and another came with vows of loyalty until he had a body-guard of not less than six hundred, who were called Gibborim or "Mighties." These were divided into bands of thirty, each commanded by a captain of distinguished valor. The thirty companies, in turn, were organized into three regiments, which were officered by "the Three Mightiest."

The first of these, Jashobeam, had won his honors like a savage chief who carves three hundred notches on the handle of his spear.

The second, Eleazar, had stood by David's side in opposing an attack of the Philistines until "his hand clave unto the hilt of his sword," stiffened there by the fervor of his zeal.

The third had defended himself in a field of lentiles, solitary and alone, until the ground was covered with his foes. Brave men all! And braver than all was David himself.

He was, moreover, a tender-hearted man. It

is usually the case that "the bravest are the tenderest, the loving are the daring."

In his life amid the luxuries of the palace he had not forgotten his old home at Bethlehem. He could see it now, twenty-five miles away from his camp among the hills—the old home and the fields where he had watched his flock.

David was homesick! He longed for a drink of water from the well beside the gate. Have you never felt that way? Has your pulse never throbbed to this tune?

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew;
The wide-spreading pond and the mill which stood by it;
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket which hung in the well;
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

Then the memorable exploit. One of the Three Mighties overheard his captain's wish and straightway called his comrades. They were devoted to their captain, "swift to the thought or wish divined, swift to the sigh o'erheard." That night they "brake through the host of Philistines," reached the well beside the gate and were back again before the morning, out of breath, dusty, with red-stained swords, but with the water-skin full. A drink for their captain! Well done!

Here was a golden deed to tell beside the camp fires: and here is a lesson for us.

I enter a plea for Heroism in the Christian life.

We are followers of great David's greater Son. Did the Three Mightiest love their captain? Much more shall we who follow the Hero of all heroes, the Captain of our salvation. We are his militant host; we are his "Mighties." And heroism is born of love. "Ye that are men now serve him!" Blessed are all who stand in the ranks of the Six Hundred; more blessed they who attain to the ranks of the Thirty; but what shall be said of those who attain to a place among the Three?

But is heroism possible in the Christian life in these days? Not the heroism of martial deeds. That, let us be thankful, is made next to impossible by the apparently near approach of the truce of God. Our Captain, Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, wants no wars. His word is, "Put up thy sword into the sheath."

Nor are we likely to perform such golden deeds as were wrought by the martyrs of long ago. Blessed be the memory of the Vaudois, the Huguenots, the Puritans, the "Beggars of Holland." Blessed be the memory of Stephen, who shrank not when "glory smote him in the face"; of Polycarp, who "played the man in the flames"; of John Huss, who went smiling to the stake, "crowned with a yellow cap covered with black devils," and of all that noble army of whom we sing,

They faced the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane;
They bowed their necks the death to feel;
Who follows in their train?

But can we "follow in their train"? Can one be heroic in these piping times of peace? Yes, more than ever, though in different ways. The *service chevron* may still be ours if we care to win it.

I. *One may be Heroic in Devotion to Truth.* There is such a thing as truth. Do you believe that? The tendency of our time is to reduce truth to what Ritschl calls a "value judgment." This destroys its objective reality *in toto;* and, if followed to its logical conclusion, lines us up with Pilate who, with a lifting of his eyebrows, asked sarcastically, "What is truth?"

But there are some things which are essentially true without reference to personal opinion or to their specific value to us. There are some things which are unchangeably and eternally true. If Jesus Christ rose from the dead, his resurrection is an outstanding historical fact, without regard to what your "value judgment" of his resurrection may be. We are informed by scientists that the discovery of radium has played havoc with their theory of matter. So be it. All their theories may go, but matter remains. Facts are immortal. Our views of truth may change, but truth itself abides more impregnable than the foundations of the everlasting hills.

But where shall we find it? "The depth saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. Whence then cometh truth and where is the place of it?"

Those who call themselves Christians cannot be perplexed on this wise; because, as "disciples" of Christ, they inquire of him; and his word is an end of controversy. Truth has its center in God; its emanations are from Christ who "dwelleth in the bosom of the Father" and, according to his counsel, from the Scriptures as the Word of God.

What then? Here is our opportunity for heroism. Once having learned the truth from the lips of our Teacher, it behooves us to stand for it. *Sto pro veritate!*

We are bound to keep ourselves open to conviction, ever ready to "ring out the old, ring in the new," providing that in ringing out the old we ring in the true. And for us the truth is always and ultimately what Christ says. We have no alternative but to contend for this. We cannot compromise, we cannot hesitate, we cannot swerve an hair's breadth. The word for every sincere Christian is that of Luther, "Here I stand; I cannot otherwise. God help me!"

II. *There is room for Heroism also in Devotion to Principle.*

And moral principle is a fact. The difference between right and wrong is grounded in human nature by virtue of our having been created in the likeness of God.

We are hearing, just now, a good deal about Pragmatism. The word is from *pragma,* meaning "business." The temptation of our time is to turn aside from a deep-grounded regard for the things which are fundamentally right to those which make for personal advantage. But moral principle goes deeper: it is grounded in eternal laws.

The things which are essentially right or wrong can, therefore, never change. Murder is as wrong to-day as it was when Cain killed Abel. If it was wrong for Jacob to steal the birthright of his brother Esau, then dishonesty is wrong now and everlastingly. If it was wrong for David to covet Uriah's wife and to appropriate her, then no change in social theories can ever make it right to intrude upon the pure sanctities of domestic life.

But where shall we find the ultimate source and standard of these convictions? It is vain to look within, since reason and conscience fluctuate and speak a various tongue. It is vain to look without, since custom and conventionalism cannot lead us beyond "doing as others do." It remains only to look up. And this is precisely what we are bound to do, as disciples of Christ. We look up into the face of our Teacher, who lays down general principles and directs us, for further information, to search the Word of God. Here, in the teaching of Christ, is our standard and touchstone of rightness or "righteousness." The final question at all the crossroads of right and wrong, for those who follow Christ, is, "What will please Him?"

And having found that out, we are under bonds to stand for it. The moral precepts of Christ are worth living and dying for. Do right, O Christian, at any cost! Do right though the heavens fall! Do right under all circumstances, as God has given you to see the right! Custom and fashion go for naught. It matters not what others think or what others do; the Christian must brace himself against his convictions and let the crowd sweep by.

In the records of the early Church there is mention of a young girl who was condemned to death for her devotion to Christ. On the way to the Colosseum, as the procession passed the temple of Cybele, a flower was placed in the maiden's hand and she was told that, if she would cast that into the lap of the goddess, she should live. What would you have done? She lifted her eyes in prayer, received the strength she needed and went on to die. Such heroism is as possible to-day as ever. Are you, as a Christian, equal to it?

III. *And Heroism is possible also in Devotion to Duty.*

There is such a thing as duty. It is a rudimental, unchangeable, eternal fact. Duty is that which is "due" to God and to our fellow-men.

The utilitarianism which is so prevalent in our time leaves God practically out of the reckoning. It defines duty to be that which is of use in accomplishing "the greatest good of the greatest number." It recognizes our obligation to those about

us, but fails to recognize its ultimate source in obligation to God. But, inasmuch as we are debtors to him for the very breath in our nostrils, how shall any honest man or woman ignore it?

This sense of final obligation to the Father of being and Author of grace lies back of all those specific duties which constitute a useful life. These cannot be affected by the vicissitudes of time. Does not progress change them? Only as it enlarges the sphere of usefulness. Our duties are the same; but privileges are multiplied and opportunities enlarged, and thus, all the while, a deeper emphasis is being placed on personal responsibility.

And as Christians we are clearly advised respecting these duties and obligations. Christ is our Teacher and Lord. In our communion with him and in our study of the Scriptures we have a plain answer to the question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The First Commandment, as laid down in our instructions, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; and the Second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; and in these two Commandments center all the details and particulars of duty as we understand it.

And here, again, is the opportunity for golden deeds. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it!" Get busy for Christ! "Work, for the night is coming!" There is no room for idling or dawdling in a Christian's life; room only for zeal and enthusiasm. The tempter says, "Take thine ease"; Christ says, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap."

Heed the ethical imperative. There is only one greater word than "Ought" in this world and that is "God." Joseph Cook says, "Sum up the globes as so much silver, and the suns as so much gold; and cast the host of heaven as diamonds on a necklace into one scale; and if there is not in it one part of the word Ought—if Ought is absent from the one scale and present in the other—up will go your scale laden with the universe as a crackling paper scroll is carried aloft in a conflagration ascending toward the stars."

The story of the heroism of "the Three Mightiest" has this singular end: David would not drink of the water which they brought from the well of Bethlehem, "but poured it out to the Lord." The bravery of these men was too fine for personal appropriation; it was fine enough to be offered as a libation to God!

There are many Mighties in our time, who are doing equally well, in standing for truth, for principle, for duty: and however they may live unpraised and die unwept, unhonored and unsung, they are seen and remembered of God.

> One dared to die, in a swift moment's space;
> Fell in the front of battle, laughter on his face.
> Bronze tells his fame in every market-place.
>
> Another dared to live the long years through,
> Felt his warm life-blood ooze, like crimson dew,
> For duty's sake; and smiled, and no one knew.

The deed of the Three Mightiest was wrought in response to the longing of David for a drink of

water from the old well. In the passion of Christ there was a singular parallel to that desire. In the climax of his anguish he cried, "I thirst." What an appeal to the followers of Jesus is in that cry! He thirsts to see a deeper and more earnest life in us. He thirsts for the salvation of the children of men. He thirsts for the deliverance of the world from sin. Where now are the Mighties, who will break through and bring a drink of water to those thirsty lips? The appeal is to all that is noblest in us. And the heroism which answers that appeal is the best that is possible for man and worthiest to be poured out as a libation before God.

8. *PRAYER*

Make me loyal to my convictions, O Lord. Impress me with the fact that truth and righteousness and deeds nobly done for Jesus' sake are the eternally enduring things. Make me rich in these, however I may lack the things that perish with the using. Give me somewhat of the clear vision and moral courage of Christ, for his name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Stand up, stand up for Jesus."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you. Amen.

FOURTEENTH SERVICE

More Than Conquerors

1. *INVOCATION*

OUT of the world's noise and confusion, O Lord, and out of my own cares and worries I come to commune with thee. Make thy presence, I pray thee, very near and manifest unto me. Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Behold a Stranger at the door."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 46.
Romans 8:16-39.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, thou art my strength and my Redeemer. Thou hast delivered mine eyes from tears, my feet from falling and my soul from death. Wherefore I call upon my soul and all that is within to bless thy holy name. For all past mercies I thank thee; but let me plead for greater mercies still. There is a peace in

believing which I have not yet reached; there is a secret place of thy tabernacle into which I have not yet entered; there is a joy in service which I have not yet experienced; there are graces of character which I have not yet acquired; there are visions of heaven which I have not yet seen. Lead me on, O Lord, into the unexplored regions of the higher and better life. Help me to realize the possibilities before me. Give me, in this hour, a new impulse to make the most of myself and to render a more faithful service unto thee. Give me a larger charity, a more consuming passion for souls, a deeper interest in the welfare of thy Kingdom. Bless thy Church, O Lord, thy world-wide Church, and all true Christians everywhere. Bless those who are still in the regions of darkness and the shadow of death. Gospelize the world, O Lord; and to this end make thy people willing to be laborers together with thee. Make me myself willing in the day of thy power; willing to be saved, willing to be sanctified, willing to serve, willing to spend and be spent to the glory of thy Name; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Lord, I hear of showers of blessing."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

More Than Conquerors

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8: 37.)

The Epistle to the Romans was written in the Spring of A. D. 58, while Paul was at Corinth. This was about twenty years after his conversion. In the meantime he had suffered the loss of all things for the truth's sake. He was now an old man and so reduced in circumstances that he supported himself by tent-making while preaching the Gospel. But the heart of youth was in him. Bearing the scars of frequent persecution and worn with many journeys across seas and mountains, he was still brave and buoyant as ever and as full of enthusiasm in the service of Christ.

At Rome, meanwhile, Nero "the Lion" was carrying things with a high hand. He lived in his Golden House on the Palatine, before which stood a colossal statue of himself, one hundred and ten feet high, bearing the inscription "Conqueror of the World." His captains returned from afar, laden with the spoils of conquest and dragging subjugated kings at their chariot wheels. The golden eagle was everywhere triumphant. Nero, Conqueror! The world was at his feet.

The old man in the tent-makers' shop at Corinth was writing to the Christians at Rome. They were but a feeble folk like the conies; and they were

"accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "The Christians to the lions!" was the cry that ushered in the Roman holidays. Yet here is what the tent-maker writes to the martyrs: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us!"

We are at a disadvantage in trying to translate this expression. It requires five English words to interpret one in the original Greek, and then they fall immeasurably short of it—the word *hupernikomen,* which is rendered "We are more than conquerors." In that word there are whole campaigns of service. It rings with the rattle of drums and the blare of trumpets and the shouting of multitudes. The rivalry of a penniless old tent-maker and a laurel-crowned Emperor is in it. The deathless, exultant hope of the Gospel is in it.

But how can that be? Can a man who speaks of himself as "killed all the day long" be greater than Cæsar with the world passing under his yoke? Here is no hyperbole; it is plain matter of fact. To be a conqueror is the climax of human ambition; but to be "more than a conqueror" is possible to the humblest of the faithful followers of Christ.

I. *The most formidable of our enemies by common consent is Death.*

Behold "the King of Terrors"! Sooner or later we must all come face to face with him. There are two ways of doing this.

There is Zeno's way. He was the father of the

Stoics, who believed that whatever is to be, will be, and there is no use of resisting it. "The black camel kneels at the doorway of every tent; let us make the best of it." The most consistent Stoics of our time are the followers of Islam, who are also the reckless soldiers of the world. Each of them carries his shroud in his knapsack. They face death stolidly because, as they say, the fated hour is written on their foreheads, and nothing they can do can possibly avert or postpone it.

But the way of the Christian is better. He does not conquer death by submitting to it, but becomes a super-conqueror by placating it. To him death is not a messenger of doom but the fairest of God's angels, calling him to a higher and better life. There is no more convincing evidence of the power of the Gospel than the dying words of those who have espoused it.

Richard Baxter: "I have pain but I have peace."

Edward Payson: "The battle is fought, the victory won."

John Wesley: "The best of all is Immanuel, God with us."

Charles Wesley: "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness."

The mother of the Wesleys: "Children, I am going; sing a song of praise."

Rutherford: "Oh, for a well tuned harp!"

John Fletcher: "I am like a bird escaping from its cage."

Prince Albert: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

Dr. Cookman: "Hallelujah, I am sweeping through the gates!"

Mrs. Hemans: "I hear the music of His voice."

Lady Huntingdon: "I go to my Father to-night."

Philip Melanchthon: "Nothing now but heaven."

John Bradford, the martyr: "Be of good comfort, we shall sup with Christ to-night."

Edward Perronet, author of All hail the power of Jesus' name: "Glory to God in the height of his Divinity! Glory to God in the depth of his humanity! Glory to God in all his sufficiency! Into his hands I commend my spirit."

Robert Newton: "Farewell, sin and pain and sorrow! Welcome, joy and heaven and Christ forevermore!"

Is not this better than a mere servile acquiescence in the inevitable decree? Is it not better so to placate "the King of Terrors" that he shall wear a smiling face and lead us on to heaven and life eternal? Is not this more than conquest? And this is possible "through Him that loved us." As it is written, "The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

II. *But there is an enemy more formidable than Death; namely, Life.*

Life's pains, its trials and temptations, its difficulties and obstacles, its "whips and scorns"—we are bound to meet them all. And "there is no discharge in this war."

How shall we get the better of our circumstances? That is the great question. Do it we must, if we would win success. For, as Macaulay says, "The mark of true greatness is to conquer one's environment and get the better of difficulties." And there are two ways of doing this.

One is the way of self-reliance; that is, to conquer by mere force of energy and resolution. Many a man without the aid of religion wins a measure of success that way. And it is, so far forth, a splendid thing to do.

> I like the man who faces what he must
> With step triumphant and a heart of cheer,
> Who fights the daily battle without fear,
> Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
> That God is God, that somehow, true and just,
> His plans work out for mortals; not a tear
> Is shed when fortune, which the world holds dear,
> Falls from his grasp; better, with love, a crust
> Than living in dishonor; envies not,
> Nor loses faith in man; but does his best,
> Nor even murmurs at his humble lot;
> But, with a smile and words of hope, gives zest
> To every toiler; he alone is great
> Who by a life heroic conquers fate.

The world pays tribute to one who, like Palissy the Potter, keeps a single purpose in view and makes all the forces of his being contribute toward it. This man set out to make white porcelain and reduced himself to poverty in the vain effort to accomplish it. He was beset by obstacles on every hand. At length his last farthing was gone for pots

and chemicals. Having no fuel for his furnace, he used the palings of his garden fence, tore down his pantry shelves and burnt up his furniture, while his wife stood weeping by and neighbors looked in at the windows deriding him. Then the crucible was emptied; and, lo, there was the white flux! Palissy the Potter had won out! All difficulties yield to the concentrated energy of such men.

But the way of the Christian is better. He does not merely conquer difficulties; he subsidizes them. He imitates the clever policy of the Roman Emperors as seen in their treatment of the more influential nations which they overcame in war. They were put under honorable tribute. Their kings and courtiers were not dragged in chains behind the conqueror's chariot but harnessed before it, as if to lend a friendly contribution to his glory.

So Paul subjugates the adverse forces of life: tribulation, distress, persecution, nakedness, famine, peril and sword. They draw his chariot while he cries, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." He is not satisfied with mere acquiescence in misfortune; "I glory in tribulation!" he says; and again, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The man of the world takes things philosophically when he says, "All things are against me, but I will get the better of them." This, however, is not enough for the Christian; his philosophy goes

further and says, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

III. *But the greatest of the hostile Triumvirate is Self.*

Death is referred to as a formidable foe; Life is more formidable still; but the last and most persistent of a man's enemies is his own meaner Self. We say sometimes of a confirmed victim of habit, "He is his own worst enemy"; but that saying is true of every one.

Self is a complex thing. Every man is really two men. There is his meaner self, made up of sins, bad habits, sensual passions and appetites; and his better self that dreams dreams of truth and righteousness and entertains high hopes and noble purposes and splendid aspirations; and these two are always in a close grapple. This is the Battle of Life; and it is "hard pounding, gentlemen," as Wellington said at Waterloo. And what is braver or more glorious than to win out in this conflict with one's meaner self?

In a country churchyard in England is a gravestone with this inscription:

> Here lies a soldier whom all men applaud,
> Who won many battles at home and abroad;
> But the hottest engagement he ever was in
> Was the conquest of self in the battle with sin.

But, behold, I show unto you a better way. The Christian becomes "more than a conqueror" by turning his old nature over to Christ, that he may

convert it. Paul the Apostle thus got the upper hand of Saul of Tarsus by surrendering all to Christ; his Jewish birthright, his University diploma, his Roman Citizenship, his hopes and purposes and ambitions, all were consecrated to the new Master whom he met on the Damascus highway, when he said, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The "old man of sin" became by regeneration a "new man in Christ Jesus." And in the light of that experience he was moved to say, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away: behold all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A surrender like this is better, I say, than to spend one's life in a lone battle against one's evil passions and appetites. It makes us "more than conquerors" because, by bringing us into a co-operative alliance with the Infinite, it enables us to triumph not merely over our adversities but in them. We thus make merry in prison, like Paul and Silas at Philippi, and sing this song:

Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be his sweet will.
I have no cares, O blessed Will,
For all my cares are thine;
I live in triumph, Lord, for thou
Hast made thy triumphs mine!

The man who wrestled all night with the Angel by the brook Jabbok was unsuccessful until he was

thrown. And when the Angel saw that he prevailed not, he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and it shrank; and the man thus divinely crippled received this blessing, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob" (i.e., "the Supplanter"), "but Israel; for as a prince hast thou prevailed and hast power with God" (Genesis 32:24-30).

Paul was fifty-one years old when he wrote this Epistle to the Romans. At about the same time he wrote another letter full of like courage and good cheer in which he said, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong." "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10).

Nine years later he was in Rome, a prisoner in the Mamertine jail; and there he dictated a letter to Timothy, his spiritual son. Had he changed his mind in those nine years? Had increasing age, suffering and persecution diminished his fervor and hopefulness? Let him speak for himself: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind. . . . I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

From this dungeon he can hear the shouts of the populace as they greet the returning captains of the Empire; and he writes on, "Be strong, my son, in

the grace that is in Christ Jesus. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him!" He hears a footfall in the corridor of the jail; it is the executioner; still he writes on, "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. . . . The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen!"

Out beyond the gate there is the flash of an axe, and the heroic spirit of Paul goes up to join the multitude who surround the throne, clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands, palms for having quit themselves as good soldiers of Christ and come off "more than conquerors" through him that loved us.

May I be worthy of a place among them, and may my voice be attuned to their song, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

8. *PRAYER*

O Lord, give me a place among the overcomers; the great multitude who stand before thy throne with palms in their hands. Help me to overcome sin; clothe me in the righteousness of saints. I can do nothing alone; I can do all things if thou strengthenest me. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord.

I need thee at the breaking of the day, when called to go forth into an unknown country of tasks and trials where no mortal man has ever been. I need thee as the day wears on, that I may meet each obligation with courage and good cheer. I need thee at nightfall, in the defenseless land of darkness, where the pestilence walks and unseen dangers surround me, I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord; no tender voice like thine can peace afford. Stay by me in the vicissitudes of life, unto the end and beyond. And the glory shall be thine forever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with thee. Amen.

FIFTEENTH SERVICE

How Piso Built

1. *INVOCATION*

HAST thou a word for me, O my Father? Open my ears to hear it. Speak now the word of counsel, of strength, of comfort, of warning or of promise, that shall make my life more profitable for myself, for others and for thee. And thou shalt have all the praise in Christ. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "My faith looks up to thee."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Eccles. 2:1-11.
1 Cor. 3:9-23.

4. *PRAYER*

As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. The world is a weary world without thee. Its toil is like making bricks without straw, its pleasure is ashes on the lips and its strongest hope is as a spider's web. But thou, Lord, makest toil a pleasure and crownest sorrow with the hope of eternal glory. Come into my life, therefore, and fill it with thyself. Crowd out sin and all selfish desire. Make my life like the great Life that told its story

in beneficence and passed into the heavens by the way of the Cross. The world is full of sinful and suffering people who need thee, O Lord; and because they need thee, they need me. Use me therefore in their behalf. Make me quick to hear their cry for help and swift to answer it. Bless all those who have gone forth in thy name on errands of mercy. Speed them on their way so that they may come back at this eventide, saying, "Master, even the devils are subject unto us." Bless those who by reason of pain, sorrow, temptations or heavy burdens of responsibility have special need of thee. Give to rulers and magistrates a heart of wisdom that they may discharge their duties as in the great Taskmaster's eye. Have thy way among the nations of the earth and among all the children of men. Turn and overturn until the world shall be ready to receive thee. Then come and reign, King over all and blessed forever, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

How Piso Built

"I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God." (1 Kings 5:5.)

In the time of Cæsar Augustus, the Golden Age

of the Empire, a wealthy Roman, named Piso, resolved to build for himself a house that should withstand all the vicissitudes of time. He knew there would be natural convulsions and political turnings and overturnings; therefore he laid the foundation deep and made the superstructure of stone from the Alban Hills. And when all was completed he paid tribute to his own far-sightedness by inscribing over the doorway:

"PISO BUILDS FOR EVER"

The man meant well, but he reckoned without his host. Time that laughs at the permanence of the everlasting hills is not likely to respect the ambitious dreams of a builder whose breath is in his nostrils. To-day there is not one stone left upon another of the walls and buttresses of Piso's house. Only its arched doorway remains; and on its lintel Time scoffs at the boastful architect in the crumbling but still decipherable words,

"PISO BUILDS FOR EVER"

Twenty-seven hundred years ago on the coast of Sicily a priest of Neptune conceived the thought of building a temple that should stand forever. On the slope of a hill overlooking the Straits of Messina, where the world's commerce passed between the rock Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, it stood for centuries in honor of the pagan god of calms and tempests. But at length, in the passing of the years, the religion which it represented went out of fashion and Neptune himself passed into the

limbo of forgotten gods. A crucifix supplanted the graven image in the ancient shrine. That was nearly a thousand years ago; and still the fabric stood, with its giant columns and Norman portals, as if defying "the tooth of time and rasure of oblivion." But recently when all Sicily shook and trembled, that temple crumbled to its base, and a tidal wave, sweeping in from between the rocks and the whirlpool, completely overwhelmed it.

Is there any such thing, then, as building forever? Do all the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples thus dissolve and leave not a rack behind? Do all earth's dreams of immortality "melt into thin air"?

He who would build forever must not build of stones and mortar. Yet every one is bound to build: for life is structural. And destiny is involved in the quality of our architecture. Wherefore, as Paul says, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth;" for his work shall be made manifest of what sort it is; the day shall declare it and the fire shall try it.

The one product of human power that lasts forever is Character. Earthquakes cannot shake that; fires cannot burn it. He who builds Character builds forever. This, then, should be the ambition of every earnest soul.

But what of our plans and specifications? How do we "purpose to build"?

I. *At the outset there must be a Clearing Away of Debris.*

It is vain to undertake the building of character so long as there remains an old record of unforgiven sin. The mislived past must be disposed of.

But how? I know of only one possible way, namely: the Way of the Cross. In all the false religions and philosophies of the world, so far as I am aware, there is no rational suggestion as to the pardon of sin. There are many fine guesses at truth and splendid rules for right living; but no plan for the wiping out of old scores. In this the Gospel stands solitary and alone. Here a voice is heard calling, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!"

Not long ago a man entered a Bowery lodging-house in a spirit of desperation. He had been living at the pace that kills and had now reached the end of his tether. His sunken cheeks and watery eyes told the story of a hopelessly wasted life. The clerk behind the counter handed him a letter, which he received with shaking hands. The handwriting was that of his father, whom he had not seen for many years; not since the hand that wrote that superscription had driven him from home and closed the door behind him. Across the envelope was written the word "Immediate." He opened and read, "My son, come back! Let us bury the past; the door is open for you."

It is such a message as this that comes to every one who has wasted the opportunities of life. A

Voice from the Cross calls, "Come back, and the past shall be buried! As for your sins, I will remember them no more against you." This done, there is hope for betterment. But otherwise there is no more prospect of building an upright character than there is of an athlete winning an Olympic race with a ball-and-chain on his foot.

II. *The next thing in order is to Lay the Foundation.*

And in doing this we must find bed rock. The importance of this is set forth by Christ, where he says, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

The bed rock is indicated in the phrase, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine." In other words, he who would build character and build it well must ground it in the teachings of Christ. If we examine "these sayings" of his, we shall find that they contain the two particular things which are essential to the matter in hand.

First, *a System of Truth.*

In the sayings of Jesus we shall find no stress put upon the jot and tittle of small and non-essential things, but a great emphasis on such truths as God and Immortality, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, and others having to do with our spiritual life.

And, second, *a Moral Code.*

Here again it is the great salient points of morality that are emphasized. The Ten Commandments are thrown into bold relief. If you want to see a searchlight turned on the meaning of the Ten Commandments, turn to the Sermon on the Mount and you shall have it.

In this System of Truth and this Moral Code, you have the enduring foundation of character. No man who adjusts his mind and conscience to these will ever have to lament the failure of his life.

III. *Then comes the Superstructure.* Having cleared away the debris and laid our foundations on bed rock, we are ready to build. And what we propose to build now is Character. Let us have a clear understanding at this point. What do we mean by Character? What does it consist of? Can we analyze it?

The First constituent of Character is Self-culture; that is, making the most of oneself.

Tennyson wrote:

> Howe'er it be, it seems to me
> 'Tis only noble to be good.

And Sir Walter Scott said, "The best of all is

to be a good man." But is that enough? I think not. One should aspire not only to be good but to be the best possible. The ultimate is perfection; and the ideal is Christ, the Perfect Man. This was in the mind of Peter when he said, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is, in the experimental knowledge of Christ which makes us like him.

But Self-culture is not all. It is a serious mistake to address oneself exclusively to any sort of mere cultivation of self. In the philosophy of Christ the very beginning of Character is getting out of self; as he said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Wherefore the Second element in Character is Beneficence.

It is a good thing to be somebody, but a vastly better thing to do something for somebody.

In one of our daily papers there is a department called "The Art of Beauty," in which women are advised how to improve themselves with face-paints, cosmetics and the like. That stands for one sort of self-culture, but not for the best. One of the most beautiful women I know lives in a

cramped apartment up in Harlem, where she cares for an invalid husband and three children. Time was when she shone in social life. One of her former friends said to me recently, "She has quite lost her looks." She has indeed. The manicure and the milliner are nothing to her nowadays. But the time is coming when her children will rise up and call her blessed, and when the crowsfeet and wrinkles and other marks of mother-love that have spoiled her "looks" will be lines of perfect beauty in their eyes. This is that favor which is not deceitful, and this is that beauty which is not vain. "Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates!"

A few years ago I was in Rome when the King and Queen of Italy were there. It was a time of royal functions and celebrations marking the loyal regard of the people. Not long after the King and Queen were going about among the ruined towns of Sicily ministering to the poor and bereaved; and when they returned to Rome there was a new and deeper tone of affection in the *Vivas* with which the people greeted them. For there is no grace so royal as the grace of doing good.

The name of the King of Italy, "Emmanuel," is borrowed from One whose whole life was spent that way. He forgot himself. He remembered all the poor and suffering and forgot only Jesus. He was himself a homeless man. He had no bed which he could call his own, "no place to lay his

head." He had no larder of his own; but said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He lived for others, died for others, and was buried in a borrowed grave. But he left, as his bequest to the world, a Gospel of kindness which finds its best expression in that apostolic injunction, "To do good and to communicate, forget not."

The Third factor in Character is Piety.

To leave God out of the reckoning is fatal to the highest ambition. "I purpose," said Solomon, "to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God."

The man who reads his Bible in serious mood will find two things there which are prerequisite to success. One of them is a *Commission.*

The old-time worthies were all under commission. God said to Abraham, "Arise and go to a country that I will show thee." He said to Moses, "Go to the palace of the Pharaohs and say, 'Thus saith Jehovah, release my people.'" He said to Joshua, "Arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I have promised them." He said to Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and cry through its streets, 'Yet forty days and this city shall be destroyed.'" He said to Ruth, "Go to Bethlehem and glean in the fields." He said to Esther, "Go in unto the King and make supplication for thy people." He said to John the Baptist, "Go to Jordan and preach, 'Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand.'" He said to Philip the

Evangelist, "Go down to the desert and deliver to a man riding in a chariot a message which I shall give thee." He said to Paul, "Go over the seas and across the plains and up into the mountains and preach the Gospel of salvation from sin." Thus to everyone comes his commission. Read on, my friend, and you will find yours. For somewhere, in the plan of the Kingdom, there is a place for you.

And the other thing which every earnest seeker is sure to find in the Scriptures *is a full equipment for his work.*

"Ye shall receive power," said Jesus, "when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." No man was ever yet put into commission without receiving the promise of a sufficiency of wisdom and power to enable him to perform it. "Be strong!" is the word of command. But no man can be strong who is not willing to be strong. Let us be willing, then, to be filled of the Spirit. Let us be willing to be as influential as God would have us. Let us be willing not merely to be Christians, not merely to be good Christians, but to be the best possible Christians, in line with God's purpose concerning us.

To your work, O architects of destiny! Waste no time, no privilege, no opportunity of usefulness; for we are all going away presently and we shall never pass this way again. The graveyards are full of people who, if they could return, would look with immeasurable contempt upon the frivoli-

ties of this life. The jewels, the treasure-houses, the dancing and the triumphs, how little they would seem! "O fools that we were!"

One day we also shall be looking back. Let us be building so that there shall be no vain regrets. Let us be building so that there shall be no shattered ruins to lament over. To that end, let us build Character. Let us build not for ourselves but for others and the glory of God. So shall we build for ever.

8. *PRAYER*

I am resolved, O Lord, to live a better and more useful life. Be pleased to help me. I want to be more like Christ, more thoughtful and prayerful and zealous for thee. Help me and I shall succeed; and thou shalt have all the praise, in Jesus' name. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "How firm a foundation."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SERVICE

The Triumphs of a Disappointed Man

1. *INVOCATION*

MY Father, let the light of thy countenance now rest upon me, that I may now rejoice in thee. Whatever the troubles of the week have been, banish them, O Lord, as dark clouds are driven from before the sun. Let there be nothing between thee and me in this hour, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Hark! ten thousand harps and voices."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Exodus 14:8-31.
Hebrews 11.
Deut. 32:48-52.

4. *PRAYER*

I thank thee, Father, for the bright pictures of heaven in thy Word; for the vision of a better country where "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood stand dressed in living green"; and of a city with golden streets and gates of pearl, "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I thank thee for Christ's home-picture, "In my Father's house

are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you." O blessed day when I shall see him with these eyes; and when I shall meet the dear ones who have passed on! But suffer me not, O Lord, to dream dreams and look heavenward with folded hands while common tasks are neglected here and now. Help me to do my very best to make a heaven on earth for myself and those about me. Let me hear thy commendation, "Well done, good servant," not only at heaven's gate, but at nightfall this day. And, with me, bless all thy people; all the sick and bereaved; all kings and rulers; all bewildered souls who have no Saviour; all the aged people and little people. Holy Father, minister to the needs of thy children everywhere, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "In the cross of Christ I glory."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Triumphs of a Disappointed Man

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the

> land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." (Deut. 34: 1-4.)

A few years ago the most notorious of modern infidels was going about the country discoursing on "The Mistakes of Moses." His theme was well taken, inasmuch as that great leader, when not under the control of divine inspiration, was liable to mistakes like other men. But there was one point at which Moses made no mistake; and that was when he started out to live a godly life.

For this his name is recorded in the roll-call of the Heroes of Faith in the eleventh of Hebrews, where it is written: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" that is, he gave up the honors and emoluments of princely life with a bright outlook toward the throne—for what? By faith he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" that is, he calmly resolved to turn his back on the luxurious enjoyments of court life in order to champion the cause of his oppressed countrymen. For how could he endure the thought of personal ease and comfort while they were groaning under a whip of scorpions? And further still: by faith he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;" in other words, he was a Christian fifteen hundred years before the be-

ginning of the Christian era. To his mind the royal exchequer was not to be compared with the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ as he saw them afar off! And in all this, we are informed, he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." He perceived that it is a wise thing to forego, if need be, everything that the world can give during a handbreadth of time in order that one may be forever rich toward God.

So he began right; and it is a true saying, "Well begun is half done." In choosing "the reproach of Christ" he made it definitely sure that his life would be a success; but herein there was no guaranty against pain and sorrow and the thousand ills that human flesh is heir to. His career was destined to be full of bitter rebuffs and disappointments. It furnishes a shining illustration of *the ultimate and glorious triumph of a disappointed man.*

It is a trite saying that disappointment is our common lot. We dream dreams and see visions only to awake and find them melting into thin air. Our castles in Spain come rattling down about our ears. We are ever, as Cowper says, "dropping buckets into empty wells and drawing nothing out." The business man enters on well-considered schemes of personal gain only to learn the truth of the proverb, "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley." The young Christian who sets out with a firm resolve to "run up the heavenly way" is presently heard singing, "Dear Lord, and shall we ever live at this poor dying

rate?" The lament of Thomas Moore finds a response in every heart:

> Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour
> I've seen my fondest hopes decay.
> I never loved a tree or flower
> But 'twas the first to fade away.
> I never nursed a dear gazelle
> To glad me with its soft black eye,
> But, when it came to know me well
> And love me, it was sure to die.

It matters not, however, what happens to us along the way if only our journey brings us to heaven's gate. All's well that ends well. The man who by faith esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt has a definite assurance that "all things work together for good;" that is, for his final deliverance from sin and triumphant entrance into the kingdom of God. "The end crowns the work."

Let us turn our attention now to the disappointments of Moses that we may perceive, for our encouragement, how they wrought for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

His first disappointment was *when he started out to be a Reformer.*

He had seen the oppressions of his people and was resolved to avenge them. The story is told in graphic terms: "It came to pass that he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that

way, and, when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together; and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared and said, Surely this thing is known! Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses; but Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well."

The disappointment of Moses on this occasion is set forth in the defense of Stephen before the Sanhedrin fifteen hundred years later where he says, "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not." (Acts 7:25.) In other words, he looked for a general uprising, and no man followed him. This is the common fate of amateur reformers who take matters into their own hands. The wrongs of the people are not to be righted off-hand. In vain does Peter, own brother to Moses in the habit of magnanimous impulse, draw his sword to arrest the deep-laid conspiracy against Christ. In vain do the students of Moscow and St. Petersburg fall in with the ranks of anarchy to avenge the tyranny of the Grand Dukes. The oppressed people of Paris, writing "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" on the dead walls

and dragging princes and aristocrats in tumbrels to the guillotine, do but stay the wheels of progress. Let such earnest spirits know that "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." Dramshops and brothels cannot all be closed in a day. Wars and strikes are human expedients; and "they that take the sword shall perish" by it. Patience, brave souls! Be not discouraged. Hold on, hold fast, hold out. "Learn to labor and to wait." God waited four thousand years for the fulness of the time of redemption; and he has waited nineteen centuries more for the stiff-necked world to accept it. "He that believeth shall not make haste." This was the lesson that Moses had to learn; and he learned it.

The second of his great disappointments came to him *after he had lived in the desert of Midian for a period of forty years.*

He had fallen into the habits of a pastoral life, keeping the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law. And he had come to love the simplicity of it. The communion of nature was dear to him. The quiet days and starlit nights, silence and solitude, the calm beauty of the plains and mountains, the routine of his daily tasks—how much better these than the uproar of the palace and the boisterous cares of State!

But all this must now be given up. Observe again the unadorned beauty of the narrative: "As he was leading his flock to the back of the desert he came unto the mountain of God; and an angel

appeared unto him there, in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He said, I will turn aside and see why the bush is not burned. And God called to him out of the midst of the bush, saying, Moses, Moses! He answered, Here am I. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt; I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people."

Was it strange that Moses should be reluctant to go? "Who am I," he said, "that I should go to Pharaoh and bring forth the children of Israel?" And God said, "Certainly I will be with thee." Moses answered and said, "Behold, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice. O my Lord, I am not eloquent, but slow of speech and of a slow tongue." And God said, "Who hath made man's mouth? Now, therefore, go, and I will teach thee what thou shalt say." No more quiet days in the wilderness. No more caring for the sheep. The simple life is to be put off, and the strenuous life is to be put on.

Many a man has been constrained in like manner to leave his comfortable field and fireside at the behest of duty. Joan of Arc was called from the farm to the battlefield. Luther was called from the cloister at Erfurt to nail the Pope's

Theses to the chapel doors and send the thunders of the Reformation around the world. Evan Roberts was called from his theological studies to preach among the glens and mountains of Wales, and arouse the dormant energies of the universal Church of God.

The lesson is obedience. Christ "laid his glories by" to answer the cries of the sin-stricken race, saying, "Here am I; send me!" Obedience! Obedience without demur or hesitation. It is enough, friend, that God hath need of thee. The very thing which Moses had vainly attempted in his own way was now to be accomplished by him along the lines which God marked out. The people went forth out of the house of their bondage, and Moses led the way.

The third great disappointment now awaited him, a disappointment which was destined to continue *through the long journey of the Wilderness.* And by it he would learn the necessity of entire and absolute dependence upon God.

He had reason to suppose, from the readiness with which the people responded to the signal for departure, that they would stand by him until the journey's end. He had yet to discover the fallacy of the proverb, "You can always trust the people." For scarcely were these manumitted slaves out of sight of the brickyards ere they began to murmur: "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us?" And

from that day forward they kept on murmuring, murmuring not only against Moses but against God.

But surely he could depend on Aaron and his other official helpers? Had not they promised him their support? Had not the Lord said, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? . . . And, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee"? Yet when Moses came down from Sinai, where he had been communing with God, and found the people dancing about the golden calf, lo, it was Aaron himself who had erected the idol and "made the people naked unto their shame!"

So, being cut off from all confidence in the people and his counselors, he must needs lean on himself alone. Yet this dependence was also to be proven a broken reed; for when the people thirsted at Rephidim and God commanded him to smite the rock for their relief, so easily did his hot temper get the better of him that he cried, "Hear now, ye rebels! Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And the Lord reproved him, saying, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

And thus he learned his great lesson, dependence on God. There is no other to lean on. Vain is the help of man. Blessed is he who has learned it.

The last of his great disappointments came to Moses *at the border of the Promised Land.*

The forty years of journeying being over, the people were encamped in the shadow of Nebo. And the Lord said, "Get thee up into this mountain, and behold the land which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession. . . . Thou shalt see the land, but thou shalt not go thither."

How strange the providence that seemed thus to deny "the recompense of reward."

The man who climbed the mountain path that day was an hundred and twenty years old, "and his eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated." On reaching the heights he surveyed the country. Observe again the simple pathos of the narrative: "And God showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan; and all Naphtali; and Ephraim and Manasseh, and the land of Judah unto the utmost sea; and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And God said, This is the land which I sware unto thy fathers, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes; but thou shalt not go over thither." Was ever disappointment greater than this?

But was this disappointment, after all? The end had come. Moses had learned his lessons, all briefly comprehended in faith. He closed his eyes one moment and opened them the next, and, behold, the heavenly Canaan was before him! He stood beyond all life's vicissitudes in the General Assembly of the First-born, and looked on the

King in his beauty. The "recompense of reward" was his at last. And it was clear that the eventful life, so full of mistakes and disappointments, was crowned with ultimate and eternal success.

The great lawgiver rests in:

"a grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again—most wondrous thought—
Before the judgment day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
On the hills he never trod,
And speak of the strife that won our life
Through Christ the incarnate God.

"O lonely tomb in Moab's land
On dark Beth-peor's hill,
Speak to these anxious hearts of ours
And teach them to be still!
God hath his mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
Of him He loved so well."

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "All things work together for good to them that love God." No life can be a failure that is adjusted to the divine purpose. God makes no mistakes. His care for us is so constant and comprehensive that all things, even our mistakes and disappointments and failures, are made to work together for our good, if only we love him. The outcome is determined by the setting out. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even

your faith." It was by his choice of the reproach of Christ that Moses made sure the final recompense of his reward. Wherefore, let us put our hand in God's and walk evermore with him.

8. *PRAYER*

Blessed be thy name, O God, for the possibility of triumphing over the adverse conditions of life. Let thy strength so rest upon me that, however I may be buffeted, I shall never be cast down; for I know that all things work together for good to them that love thee. Let this be my strength and consolation in every dark hour, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss thy sovereign will denies."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SERVICE

An Interrupted Meeting

1. *INVOCATION*

O LORD, sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, thou hast promised to commune with those who are of a humble and contrite spirit. I would bring to thine altar the firstfruits of my life and the fatlings of my lips; for nothing is too good for thee. I am a great sinner; but thou art a great Saviour. Behold my penitence and hear my prayer; and, when thou hearest, forgive, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "From every stormy wind that blows."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 90.
John 14:15-24.

4. *PRAYER*

I thank thee, blessed Lord and Saviour, that I am permitted to call myself a Christian. I thank thee for my spiritual kinship with the innumerable host who worship thee in heaven, saying, Worthy art thou to receive glory and honor and power and dominion

forever and ever, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood! And I thank thee for my place in the great family of believers who in many lands and languages on earth are worshipping thee as King over all and blessed forever. One family we dwell in thee. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Bless them now and make them true to their Lord, to the faith which thou didst deliver to them once for all, to the baptism of thy Spirit which makes them forever consecrate to thy service, and to thy sweet revelation of the Fatherhood of God. Give me the mind of brotherly love, the helping hand, and a great passion for souls to keep me from idling in the market-place while thy fields are white unto the harvest. In every relation of life, whether at home, in business or in social fellowship, keep me true to my Christian name. In my trials help me to find strength in thee. Give me a deep sympathy for all sufferers. Comfort them, O Lord; and, according to my ability, incline me also to minister to their needs. Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion, prosper every good cause and magnify thy name throughout the earth, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Am I a soldier of the Cross?"

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

An Interrupted Meeting

"Arise, let us go hence." (John 14:31.)

So ended the last interview of Christ with his disciples. The three years of fellowship were over, and they were met in an upper room in Jerusalem to say farewell. Christ had thus informed them and they so understood it. Here was the last sermon, the last prayer, the last supper, the last bequest, "Peace I leave with you," the last handclasp, the last word: Farewell! "Arise, let us go hence."

I. *So end all life's brightest chapters.*

"We need no reed," says Matthew Henry, "no pole or measuring-line wherewith to take the dimensions of our days, nor any skill in arithmetic wherewith to compute their number. Nay, we have the standard of them at our fingers' ends; it is but an handbreadth for one and all."

Our life is likened to a dream, an eagle hastening to its prey, a swift ship, a cloud, a shadow, a tale that is told.

"A tale that is told"? But is there no sequel? Does death end all? If so, life is scarcely worth the living. Why should a man endure the ills that human flesh is heir to when, as Shakespeare says, he may so easily "his quietus make with a bare bodkin"?

But perhaps life is longer than we think. The

two most unnatural of falsehoods are these: "There is no God," and "Death ends all." The first is unnatural because it intimates an abnormal twist in one's mental machinery: as it is written, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." And the second is equally so because it does violence to a universal intuition. The question is, If a man die, will he live again? And the conclusive answer comes not from books or laboratories but from within: "I shall live and not die!" I live forever because the breath in my nostrils is the breath of God.

The brief period of time that we call life is but the beginning of it. The voice that says Goodnight shall "in some brighter clime give me Goodmorning." The word above the archway of God's acre is not *"Finis,"* but *"Emigravit,"* that is, He hath passed on. To say, "Let us go hence," is to suggest going some whither; and there's the main question, Whither shall it be?

II. *So end all life's associations: "Arise, let us go hence."*

> There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there:
> There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair.

All earthly homes are sooner or later broken up. All dearest friendships and fellowships are interrupted. There is crape on the door. What has happened? Farewell! Is it indeed Farewell?

or is it *Auf wiedersehen,* "Until we meet again"?

A class of young girls was graduated from high-school in a village among the Alleghenies above fifty years ago. I see them now as they sat upon the platform arrayed in white. I hear again their graduation song:

> When shall we meet again, meet ne'er to sever?
> When shall love wreathe her chain round us forever?
> Never, oh, never?

Is this the end of friendship? If so, let there be weeping as in Egypt on the Passover night. But there is to be a "time of knitting severed friendships up." We part to meet again. O blessed Gospel of the Reunion! What else could the Master mean when he said, "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"? Home, sweet home!

What makes a home? Walls and doors, pictures and furnishings? No; faces! The faces of the beloved, of wife and mother and children. Heaven is home. We shall know each other there. "Arise, let us go hence;" let us go hence to the Father's house.

III. *So ends the quest of knowledge.*

At school we master our A B C's, push on through successive grades until we reach the University, and then go forth into the world with our diploma and the title of Bachelor of Science.

Science is from *scire,* meaning to know. But how little the "Bachelor of Science" knows!

Is he a Geologist? What does that mean? He has analyzed a grain of sand, discovering its component parts and government by certain forces acting according to fixed laws. What more? He calls his fellow scientists together, and on comparing notes, they find they have reached the same meager result. Thus far and no further. This is the Science of Geology! And the curtain falls.

Or perhaps he is a Biologist. This means that he has dissected a blade of grass, found out its color scheme and the pattern of its fabric; and that he has been vainly chasing an elusive mystery which he calls "life." But what is life? Let him call a convention of Biologists and ask them. There is no voice nor answer nor any that regardeth. At this point one rises to say, "I move that we adjourn." And the Biologists pass out.

Or he is an Astronomer; that is, he has been watching the stars. "Look how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold!" Here are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; and as he gazes, more come wheeling into space, like ships to join an infinite armada. He enlarges the object glass of his telescope; and still they come! He makes a spectral analysis; he consults his table of logarithms and measures their relative distances. Then his gaze wanders to the interstellar spaces; and he asks, What lies beyond? There is no answer.

He assembles his confreres and propounds the question. Silence! Then again the motion to adjourn. And this is the Science of the Stars!

Or he is a Theologian. He has stood at the burning bush and heard the Voice saying, "Draw not nigh hither: I AM THAT I AM!" He cries, "Show me thy glory!" The Voice answers, "Hide in the cleft of the rock and I will pass by"; and lo, he hears the rustle of a garment and a whisper, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" He cries again, "O God, reveal thyself!" The answer is: "Go thou to Bethlehem." He stands there at the manger and looks into the face of the Christ-child. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." Angels desire to look into it. Can the Science of Theology go no further? Thus far and no further! In vain do Councils assemble; in vain do Theologians confer; in vain do they formulate creeds. Science is baffled. Faith alone can lift her eyes. "Where is the wisdom of this world?" Arise, let us go hence. The curtain falls.

But hear the word of the Master: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you." And again, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." There is then to be a Post-Graduate Course. Oh, the vistas that open up before us! Here we know in part, we see as in a glass darkly; but there we shall see face to face and know even as we are known. The adjournment is not *sine die;* but to

meet for further conference at the call of Him who said, "I am the Truth."

IV. *So end our most earnest attempts at character building: Arise, let us go hence!*

Where will you find Plato's "Dikaios," the four-square man? The most discouraging thing in the world is to try to be somebody; not a somebody wearing a crown or a laurel wreath; not a somebody with his name in the newspapers; but a self-respecting Somebody who can look in the glass and say, "I am not ashamed." The requirement is, "Be ye perfect"; and our best answer is, "I count not myself to have apprehended, as though I had already attained either were already perfect."

We have rules of conduct, noble aspirations and a splendid Ideal. The elements of worth and true greatness are in every one. We have a conscience wherewith to determine betwixt the worse and better reason. We look on our Ideal and resolve to be like him, to come up to the measure of the stature of his fulness, and we constantly fail. Sin, strengthened by habit, has an almost irresistible grip upon us. Heredity is against us; our forebears drag us down. Environment also is against us. So "there is no difference; we all come short," not only of the glory of God but of the possible glory of manhood as God has revealed it.

I once officiated at the funeral of a man who for fifty years had lived the reckless life of a sybarite. Then he saw the light that Saul of Tarsus saw on

his way to Damascus and heard the Voice saying, "I am Jesus"; and the grapple began. For the next ten years he lived on the thin red line, fighting a good fight, wounded sore, staggering and going down, struggling to his feet again, facing the world, the flesh and the devil with a resolute purpose to be a Christ-like man. And thus, at length, he died fighting. Is that the end of the story? In the plan of Infinite Love is there nothing beyond for that man? For such comes the message: "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The eternal æons are before them to finish the task of character building, as it is written, "Now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

V. *Our life-work ends in the same way: Arise, let us go hence!*

We set out to accomplish great things for God. We dream dreams and see visions and they dissolve about us like castles in the air. We are cut off in the midst of our days. We hoped for success. There is no such thing as success in this world. One Man only has ever been able to say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!"

A man sits down to write a story. He calls it "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." As he approaches the dénouement he hears a voice saying:

"Arise, let us go hence!" and in the middle of a sentence the pen drops from his hand.

In our Museum of Natural History there is the mummy of a Peruvian woman, with a work-basket by her side, which was buried with her. It would appear that she was knitting a lace-pattern when the summons came. Here is the pillow; and here are the spools and the needles—the very needle with which she hoped to finish her work, when the voice said, "Arise, let us go hence!" And there she left it.

Once upon a time there lived a man whose years were nine hundred and sixty and nine, "and he died." He lived long enough, surely, to warrant the hope of success. It is safe to say, however, that in his last sickness he called his sons and his sons' sons about him and said: "I have undertaken to do this or that and have not completed it. I pray you take up the plan and carry it out."

The two most indispensable men of the Old Economy, as it would appear, were Moses and Elias. The former led the children of Israel out of their bondage and through the wilderness to the very border of the Promised Land; and just there, when it seemed as if himself alone could finish the work, he was called up into the mountain where he sang his death song: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away. So teach us to number our days

that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it!"

And the other, Elias, wrought for the deliverance of Israel in a time of great spiritual need. As a reformer he tore down the high places and destroyed the images of Baal. He brought the nation to the very verge of pure religion, and then God sent the chariot of fire. As he went upward, a voice of lamentation was heard from the valley below: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

Thus the work of the two mighties was apparently broken in the midst and reached a futile end.

But when a thousand years had passed, lo, here are Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, speaking with Jesus concerning the decease which he is presently to accomplish at Jerusalem. This means that the continuity of their lives was not broken at all. In the interim they had kept abreast of human events and they were in full sympathy with their glorious consummation at Calvary. Thus was the work of their hands established upon them.

No; life is not a fragment. The letter which we write is brief, but its postscript is eternal. He is a foolish man, therefore, who leaves eternity out of the reckoning. It is this that makes life worth

living. The fabric is otherwise a thing of mere threads and thrums. It needs the infinite outlook to complete it.

The world has known no greater artist than Raphael. What faces of Christ he painted! What angels and Madonnas! And he died at thirty-seven. Has he ceased to paint, think you?

When earth's last picture is painted,
And the tubes are twisted and dried;
When the oldest colors are faded,
And the youngest critics have died;
We shall rest—and oh, we shall need it—
Lie down for a moment or two,*
Till the Master of all good workmen
Shall set us to work anew.

And those that were good shall be happy;
They shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas
With brushes of comet's hair.
They shall have real saints to draw from,
Magdalene, Peter, and Paul,
They shall work for an age at a sitting,
And never be tired at all.

And only the Master shall praise us,
And only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money,
And no one shall work for fame;
But each for the joy of working,
And each in his separate star,
Shall draw the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are.

*A liberty is here taken with Mr. Kipling's theology. He writes "for an æon or two"; but we shall not lie down for an æon or anything like it. The question of soul-sleeping was settled definitely and finally when Jesus said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The meeting in the upper room was broken up. At the Master's word, "Arise, let us go hence," one opened the door and they passed down the outer stairway. Whither? To Gethsemane, to the Judgment Hall, to Calvary, to Olivet, where he lifted his hands in benediction and the heavens opened to receive him. And still whither? The Master went to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Presently one of those disciples passed on by the red path of martyrdom to rejoin him; then another and another until at last the aged John, sole survivor of that apostolic company, climbed the steep ascent to heaven. Then the circle was complete. What a reunion! Not in Mary's house in Jerusalem, but in the Father's house of many mansions. And there what joyous memories, what planning of campaigns! The mists that hung about their earthly life have long since cleared away. They see the just proportion of things. It is apparent to them now that their earthly life was but the preface of an endless serial; time but the threshold of eternity, and service here an apprenticeship for unending usefulness in the Kingdom of God.

8. *PRAYER*

O God, as I have no abiding city on earth keep me moving on toward the City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Loosen my grip on things temporal and give me an ever deepening interest in the things

which endure forever. I know that I, being risen with Christ into the immortal life, should seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Help me to realize the high calling wherewith I have been called. My citizenship is in heaven. Let me live, therefore, as a pilgrim and a stranger, looking forward to a better country, even an heavenly, and setting my affection on things unseen and eternal. Help me to live for eternity; and to that end help me to live to-day, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "I would not live alway."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH SERVICE

The Ministry of Angels

1. *INVOCATION*

GIVE ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation and hearken unto my cry. Let the worship of this hour be acceptable unto thee as the morning sacrifice. Teach me to pray and praise in the beauty of holiness, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Come, thou Almighty King."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Genesis 28:10-22.
Luke 9:18-36.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, I thank thee for thy nearness. My prayer is not to one that standeth afar off or sitteth on a throne enveloped in forbidding splendors; for thou hast said, "Lo, I am with you alway." Thine eyes behold my down-sitting and mine uprising; and I am not afraid, because thou hast taught me to say "Abba, Father." For thy great love made manifest in providence and grace I thank thee. I have heard the story of the Cross. O

wondrous love! Make me, in some measure worthy of it. And help me to realize my commission as a servant of Christ. Send me forth with the Evangel and make me willing to go. Help me to tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour I have found. Let my walk and conversation proclaim the sincerity of my faith. Make all thy people evangelists, each preaching the gospel in his own way, but every one preaching it. As they profess to have risen with Christ in newness of life, so incline them to seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Bless all preachers, whether humanly ordained or not—myself among them—and enable us to follow in the steps of Jesus, proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Let this Sabbath be a day of thy right hand, O Lord; build up thy people in the most holy faith and let sinners come flocking to thee for salvation as doves to their windows. Strengthen the weak; reclaim the wandering; give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And all to the glory of thy great Name, for Christ's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Just as I am, without one plea."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Ministry of Angels

> "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.)

"I cannot help feeling that my dear husband knows all about my circumstances and is near to me. We lived together forty years and our happiness was ideal. Do you suppose that he can be alive anywhere in the universe and not want to come to me? Is it right to believe that way?" So writes a bereaved wife. There are multitudes of people who are questioning in like manner. If an affirmative answer could be given, what consolation it would give to those who are passing through the Valley of Tears!

I. *Let us hear, at the outset, the Testimony of the Heart.*

It cries aloud and will not be silent, "Come back, O loved and lost, come back and comfort me!"

But this is not proof. We want something more positive than the lonely cry and the outstretching of empty arms. One of our poets has expressed it in this wise:

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

"Lord, thou hast conquered death, we know:
Restore again to life," I said,
"This one who died an hour ago."
He smiled: "She is not dead."

"Asleep, then, as thyself didst say;
Yet thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away."
He smiled: "She doth not sleep."

"Nay, then, tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,
Restore her to our hearts that ache."
He smiled: "She is not gone."

"Alas! too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again our joy to touch
Until the stream of death we cross."
He smiled: "There is no such."

"Yet our beloved seem so far,
The while we yearn to feel them near,
Albeit with thee we trust they are."
He smiled: "And I am here."

"Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?"
He smiled: "Abide in me."

II. *Let us turn now to the Testimony of Reason.*

And here we are on dangerous ground; since reason, of itself alone, is ever an untrustworthy guide in spiritual things. So long as it pursues a straightforward argument from data furnished by the five physical senses it can be

trusted; but when it crosses the borders into the province of faith it becomes a blind leader of the blind. This will account for the many lamentable and often grotesque errors of irreligious men in dealing with the question before us.

There is the error of the Sadducees, those rationalists of the olden time, who, recognizing no authority beyond that of reason, argued themselves into a practical rejection of the supernatural. They held that life beyond the grave is an empty dream. Death ends all.

And there is the error of the Pagan mythologists, who peopled the earth with supernatural beings. Nymphs, Naiads, Oreads and Oceanides, Dryads and Hamadryads, they swarmed through the fields and forests, flitted along the shores of every stream, rode in chariots of cloud and whispered in the winds. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of a sublime and helpful truth.

The Romanists, also, by exceeding the bounds of Scripture and following their own imagination, have fallen into the lamentable mistake of paying divine honors to angels and spirits of just men made perfect. This would never have happened had they hearkened to the voice of the Angel of the Apocalypse, who, when John fell down to worship before his feet, recoiled in horror, saying, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. 22:9.)

And scarcely less deplorable is the error into which the Puritans fell when, in their repugnance to Mariolatry and saint-worship, they swung to the other extreme and wholly ignored, if not denied, the ministry of saints and angels. They put the spiritual world afar off, making it a cold and dreary place; like that of the poet's dream:

> Somewhere in desolate, wind-swept space,
> In Twilight Land, in No-man's Land,
> Two hurrying shapes met face to face
> And bade each other "Stand!"
>
> "And who are you?" cried one, agape,
> Shuddering in the gloaming light.
> "I do not know," cried the other shape;
> "I only died last night!"

But the worst error of all is that of the so-called Spiritualists, who profess to call back the spirits of the departed and converse with them at will; engaging them in foolish and frivolous tricks, with the lights turned down, such as ringing bells in closed cabinets and tipping tables and knocking on hollow walls; inducing them to peep and mutter nonsense beneath the level of dull scholars in our grammar schools. This is not only grotesque; it is hideous and abhorrent to common sense; since, whatever change may have been wrought in our beloved by their transition to the spiritual world, they are certainly not greater fools than when they dwelt among us. And whatever may be their ministries on earth, we have no reason to believe that

they can be summoned at pleasure or conversed with at will. The purpose of their earthly visitation, if there be such, is not to gratify curiosity or contribute to our entertainment, but to serve our best interests with reference to the future life.

III. *We shall avoid these and similar errors by keeping close to Scripture.* To the Law and the Testimony, therefore; what saith the Lord?

At the outset attention is called to the frequent reference made in the Scriptures to angels.

Who are these "angels"? It is often taught and generally supposed that they are a distinct order of beings, wholly apart from the human race. I do not believe that; nor do I believe there is any Scriptural ground for it. Objection has been made to the Sunday School hymn, "I want to be an angel," as expressing a desire after the unattainable: which would be a valid criticism if angels and saints triumphant were different *genera.* In fact, however, the term "angels" is used to characterize all the inhabitants of the spiritual world. So far as we are informed there is only one race of spiritual beings in the universe, and it embraces all who have ever been created in the likeness of God.

True, it is written of man, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:5); but in this instance the word is *Elohim,* and the passage is rendered in the Revised Version, "Thou hast made him a little lower than God," the reference being to his participation in the divine char-

acteristics. It is true, also, that man in his earthly life is lower than the inhabitants of the celestial world; but Christ himself affirms that this inferiority is removed by death where he says, "They are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).

The host of heaven may consist, for aught we know, of multitudes from other worlds as well as from our own. Among them there are different orders, indicated by such titles as angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, authorities, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers and saints triumphant; but this fact does not prove any racial distinction any more than the existence of ranks and titled orders among men. All are alike in having been created as rational beings after the divine image. Some have never been defiled with sin, having "kept their first estate;" others are sinners saved by grace. "One family they dwell in him."

Turn now to a consideration of the employment of these heavenly beings. This is twofold. They are represented as "before the throne of God, praising him in his temple." This is their *leitourgia,* or devotional service; and the Scriptures abound with references to it. But their other form of employment is the *diakonia,* or ministry. This brings us immediately to the matter in hand.

The name "angel" is significant of ministry. It means literally a messenger or one sent forth.

It was the belief of Cardinal Newman that our world is everywhere pervaded by spirits, who are sent hither as divine agents, not only in spiritual matters; not only in the directing of social and political affairs; but even in the control of the elements; as it is written, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Without going so far, we are bound to affirm, as the consistent teaching of Scripture, that they are sent out everywhere as willing servants to do the divine will (Acts 5:19; 12:7, etc.).

One of their special functions is to exercise a personal care for those who are living on earth.

This is the doctrine of "guardian angels." The fact that it is so frequently carried to a grotesque extreme must not frighten us away from the wonderful and blessed truth. Jesus, holding a child upon his knee, said: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father:" on which Doctor Schaff, agreeing with most commentators, remarks, "It would seem the proper inference that every believer has his guardian angel." But even this interpretation is too narrow. Why confine it to "every believer"? If it suggests the doctrine of guardian angels at all, it teaches that they watch over the interests of all the "little ones." (See also Psalm 91:11, 12; Luke 15:10.)

But a still more particular care is exercised by these angelic ministrants over those who have al-

lied themselves with the service of Christ. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says they are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And David says more specifically, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

It is our purpose to avoid all speculation at this point and to confine ourselves absolutely to the teaching of the Scriptures. The Old Testament abounds in references to the ministry of angels. Angels appeared to Abraham (Genesis 22:11, etc.); to Jacob (Genesis 28:12); to Hagar (Genesis 16:7, etc.); to Balaam (Num. 22:23-35); to Gideon (Judges 6:11); to Manoah's wife (Judges 13:3-20); to Elijah (1 Kings 19:5, etc.); to Zechariah (Zech. 1:9, etc.); and to many more. An angel led the Children of Israel out of Egypt "by the right way." An angel "shut up the mouths of the lions" and delivered Daniel from his trouble. Once and again angels interposed to save Israel in battle against overwhelming odds.

The New Testament is no less explicit. Angels foretold the incarnation, heralded the wonderful event, attended on the ministry of Jesus, succored him after his temptation and in the Garden of Gethsemane, hovered over his cross in legions, rolled away the stone from his sepulcher and announced his resurrection. Angels appeared to Peter (Acts 12:8); to Paul (Acts 27:23); to

Philip (Acts 8:26); to Cornelius (Acts 10:7); to John (Rev. 1).

And the direct teaching of Jesus in this matter is conclusive. He not only affirmed the guardianship of angels in the passage already referred to (Matt. 18:10), but repeatedly made mention of their ministry among men.

In the Parable of Dives and Lazarus he expressly says that the soul of the devout beggar was carried by angels to the blessed land (Luke 16: 22).

In his thrilling portrayal of the Judgment he says, "The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39), and, still more explicitly, "So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just" (Matt. 13:49).

He assigns to these spiritual beings a special place in his ultimate triumph and universal reign on earth, announcing that when he comes it will be "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

In his conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration he gives us to understand that the spirits of just men made perfect bear a closer relation to mundane affairs than is generally supposed. Here were two men who had lived five hundred years apart and had been dead more than a thousand years; yet they knew each other and felt a mutual interest in the earthly work of Jesus. They came from heaven to minister to him when

the shadow of the cross fell over him as dark and cold as a winter's night; and they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). The inference is inevitable that they, while in heaven, knew what was occurring and about to occur on earth, and, more, that they were under commission to assist in some of its important events. One such visit is enough to demonstrate the fact that the saints triumphantly share in the blessed ministry.

Our own loved ones in heaven are among those who are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." They are "sent": and, unlike Christians on earth, when they are sent they always go. And what could be more natural than that they should be sent to those whom they know and love and for whose welfare they are most profoundly concerned? "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Which of the petty kings of earth
  Can boast a guard like ours,
Encircled from our second birth
  By all the heavenly powers?
With them we march securely on
  Throughout Immanuel's ground;
And not an uncommissioned stone
  Our sacred feet shall wound.
Ten thousand offices unseen
  For us they gladly do,
Deliver in the lions' den
  And safe escort us through.

And when our spirits we resign,
On outstretched wings they bear,
And lodge us in the arms divine
And leave us ever there.

To the testimony of Jesus might be added that of his apostles, who in all their writings recognize the ministry of angels.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is quite clear: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And, later on—after an illustrious roll-call of heroes, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens—he utters this exhortation, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1, 2). The Christian is standing as an athlete in the lists, waiting for the signal to speed toward the golden milestone for the Olympian wreath; and the galleries are filled with spectators—angels, saints triumphant, martyrs gone to glory—cheering him on.

Oh, we are living in a larger world than we

think! We are objects of heavenly solicitude in all our earnest efforts to quit ourselves as the children of God.

If these things are so, it follows that heaven is not "far, far away." It is nearer than we think. A veil of gossamer is all that separates us from the invisible. Death is but "a covered bridge, leading from light to light through a brief darkness." There is no interruption of the continuity of life. A line of shadow falls across our path; we step across and go living right on. The life beyond is merely the sequel of the life we are living now.

It follows, also, that everything depends on the way we spend these probationary years. This is merely an apprenticeship for eternal service. Whoever honors his commission, discharging every duty as it comes and rejoicing to minister to others, will receive the service-chevron. He that is faithful in a few things shall be made ruler over ten cities. If we would find a congenial place in that world of which it is written, "And his servants shall serve him," we must be faithful in this world. Ministry is our business, as followers of Christ; to "do good as we have opportunity unto all men." Our promotion to the ministry of angels depends on our fidelity here and now.

And it follows, finally, that if our friends in heaven are so deeply concerned in our spiritual welfare we ourselves should be concerned no less. One passage, and perhaps the most important, in

the teaching of Jesus touching the matter in hand, has been purposely deferred until this point: it is his reference to the concern felt by the inhabitants of heaven for the conversion of their friends on earth. "There is joy," he said, "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). Are there mothers there, watching and waiting, like Monica on the shores of Africa, to hail the home-coming of their wayward sons? Do ministering spirits come to guide the feet of the prodigal out of dangerous paths? Is there a multitude of expectant ones in glory, eager to raise the song of thanksgiving when a sinner returns from the error of his ways? Then surely it behooves the recipients of all this care to shake off indifference and turn to Christ!

But the supreme lesson, after all, is not the interest felt by the angels in our behalf, but that of God himself, by whom they are sent to minister to us. This was the thought which most deeply impressed Jacob after his vision of angels at Bethel: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!" He was a lone wanderer, a fugitive from justice, a sinner oppressed with a sense of retribution; and, lo! God loved him, nevertheless, and sent his angels to comfort and encourage him.

Gracious God, we wander not beyond the tether of thy love! Awake us from indifference, break our stubborn hearts with the conviction of thy loving care!

Blessed Son of God, who not only sendest thine

angels to allure us from sin to salvation, but thyself standest at the closed door of our hearts, knocking and waiting until thy locks are wet with the drops of night, we surrender to thy love! We unbolt the door! Come in and sup with us.

8. *PRAYER*

Lord, help me to realize that I belong to two worlds, and that they are not far apart. Let my conversation be in heaven. Keep my heart open to the approach of all goodness and closed to the allurements of sin. May I be prepared for whatever thou hast prepared for me. Enable me to live so that death shall summon me to life eternal; and the praise of my salvation shall be thine forever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "My days are gliding swiftly by."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Peace be unto you, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

NINETEENTH SERVICE

The Happy End of God's Correction

1. *INVOCATION*

I WILL praise thee, O God, with my whole heart; I will be glad and rejoice in thee. For thou art good and thy mercies are from everlasting. Grant me a spirit of true devotion; that my service of prayer and thanksgiving may be acceptable in thy sight; for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "I am thine, O Lord; I have heard thy voice."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Genesis 28:1-18.
James 1.

4. *PRAYER*

In thee, O God, do I put my trust. My sins are ever before me; bow down thine ear and deliver me speedily. Be thou for an house of defense to save me. I make my plea under the cross of Christ who died for me. The chastisement of my peace was upon him and with his stripes I am healed. Wherefore I call upon my soul to bless thy holy name. Give me, in full measure, the joy of salva-

tion; the joy that expresses itself not only in praise but in right living and faithful service. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Direct me to the place where thou wouldst have me spend and be spent for thee. Equip me for service and make me willing to do thy holy will. If I am to suffer, help me to suffer as for thee. Give me the patience of faith. Help me to live not for myself alone but for all about me. Let my light so shine that others, seeing my good works, may glorify thee. Bless thy Church to-day. Give to all preachers the baptism of the Spirit, and to all hearers the hearing ear and the understanding heart. Go out thyself to-day, O conquering Lord, and bring in many prisoners of hope. And to Father, Son and Holy Ghost shall be everlasting praise. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Depth of mercy, can there be."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *SERMON*

The Happy End of God's Correction

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said—." (Job 38: 1.)

A special interest attaches to the Book of Job because it is, in all probability, the oldest literary work in the world. It is a dramatic poem, its object being indicated in its ancient title, "The

Happy End of God's Correction." The Dramatis Personæ are as follows:

I. *Job, the central figure of the poem:* an Arab sheikh, dwelling in the land of Uz.

In his happy home are a loving wife and ten children. The inventory of his wealth is given thus: Seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and "a very great household" of servants and retainers. This was an extraordinary fortune, in the Orient, even for those days. He was in possession also of perfect physical health; a blessing which no man appreciates until he has lost it. And, better than all else, Job was an upright man; as it is written: "He feared God and eschewed evil."

II. *Satan, the accuser:* a shadowy figure, but none the less real.

He is represented as appearing in the divine presence to offer a railing accusation against Job. "Doth he fear God for naught?" he insinuatingly asks. "Is his piety disinterested? By no means! Thou hast put a hedge about him, so that he cannot be tried. Let me but go within that hedge and lay my hand upon him and his possessions; and, behold, he will curse thee!" He is permitted, accordingly, to tempt Job.

A light is here thrown on the rationale of trial. No attainment of character is possible without trial; but no trial is possible except as God permits it. Our Lord himself was "driven forth by the

Spirit" into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil; and the servant is not greater than his Lord. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life!"

The first of Job's trials was poverty. In a hostile foray all his property was lost. But he was not "ruined." He sat amid the ashes of his prosperity, saying: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Then came bereavement. A messenger announced that his children had been swept away by a sudden calamity. In the morning he had parted with them at the door, wishing them God-speed; at the evening he lamented their taking-off. And still, in a calm spirit of resignation, he said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

His health was next assailed. A painful and loathsome form of leprosy was laid upon him; so that, "taking a potsherd to scrape himself withal," he sat apart as an unclean man. His wife, heart-broken by his repeated troubles, bade him, "Curse God and die," to whom he patiently replied, "What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

And then the worst of misfortunes befell him in the loss of his good name. It began to be whispered about among his friends and neighbors that Job was no better than he ought to be. "He must indeed be a great sinner, else how

could so many and grave adversities come upon him?"

III. *A group of Comforters:* namely, Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar.

As old friends, they came to pay him a visit of condolence. Lifting up their eyes afar off, they knew him not, so greatly was he changed. They rent their mantles and sprinkled dust upon their heads. For awhile they sat with him in silence; and when at length they broke the silence, it was to accuse him of the sins which were so clearly avenging themselves upon him. Miserable comforters were they all!

The view they advanced is not an uncommon one; namely, that suffering is in the nature of strict requital; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and burning for burning; all sin receiving its own punishment here and now.

IV. *Elihu: a young man,* who modestly waits while his elders, at great length, air their false philosophy.

"I am young," he begins, "and ye are very old, wherefore I was afraid and durst not show you mine opinion."

He reproves the three comforters for the severity of their judgment and insists that much of human suffering is not penal or retributive, but disciplinary.

His view is practically that which was later advanced by Augustine on this wise: "If no sin were punished in this present time, men would not be-

lieve in Providence; while if every sin were punished here and now, they would not believe in a Judgment Day." In fact, no view of sin and suffering can be correct which does not take eternity into the reckoning. Our life here is but a small arc of the great circle. The balance cannot be struck in this present time; eternity is before us.

V. *God appears;* the last of the Dramatis Personæ.

He speaks from a cloud sweeping through the heavens and proclaims his majesty: "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me!"

The key of the interpretation of the book is in the words of God. He must be permitted to be the interpreter of his own dealings with men. Let us, therefore, in framing our philosophy of Providence, observe the following facts which are here brought out.

First: God sits upon a throne, high and lifted up.

He affirms his supremacy over all and insists that we keep silence before him. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it."

It is much to be feared that some of us take great liberties with God. We are prone to forget the immeasurable gulf that separates the finite from the Infinite. "Do you think," said one clergyman to another, as they came from a theological conference in which there had been great

freedom of debate, "that anybody fears God in these days?"

It behooves us to remember, when the last word has been spoken about the dignity of man, that he is nevertheless, in comparison with God, as a mote flying in a sunbeam is to the sun itself. Is not his breath in his nostrils? He is as the clay upon the potter's wheel. May not God do what he will with his own? And who are we that we should reply against God?

The right attitude of thoughtful men is set forth in the approach of Moses to the burning bush. He said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, he said unto him, "Draw not nigh hither! Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And out of the bush came a Voice, saying "I AM THAT I AM!"

Second: God reveals himself in a cloud: as it is written: "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

Here is a suggestion of impenetrable mystery. It is greatly to be doubted, indeed, whether there can be any revelation of the Infinite without a corresponding adumbration.

We dwell in the midst of mysteries. The righteous are cast down oftentimes, while the wicked "flourish as a green bay-tree." Why is

this so? We bandy our whys and wherefores to and fro; and there is no voice, nor answer, nor any that regardeth. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." The King must be permitted to hold state-secrets. As Christ said to his disciples: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." *"Procul, procul abeste, profani!"* was the cry of the pagan priests in the olden times: "Draw not too near, O sinful ones!"

If God be God, there are some things which, in the necessity of the case, cannot be found out concerning him. Here we know in part and prophesy in part; here we see as in a glass darkly; but there we shall see face to face and know even as we are known. In the meantime we can afford to await the rending of the veil, keeping silence before him; as he said: "Be still and know that I am God!"

Third: There is a bright light in the cloud.

So Elihu said: "Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them." The bright light is love. "God is Love," and the supreme token of his love is the Cross. Its luminous shadow is over all the sufferings of the children of men. A strange cry was that which issued from the lips of Job, while he sat among the ruins of his prosperity: "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" It was the cry of faith, piercing the darkness with eyes that rested on the Father's love. It was a formulation, albeit in faint outline, of the mighty truth which was destined

to be more clearly formulated in the fulness of time: "God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He shows his love toward the impenitent in correcting them for their good. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." It is true that men inevitably suffer, in this present life, for their violations of divine law; but it is also true that many of the afflictions of the wicked are for the purpose of turning them from their evil ways. The prodigal in the far country was permitted to go down into the very depths of poverty and shame, until his substance was all wasted and he sat in rags and tatters in the swine-field, because only so could he be moved to cry: "I will arise and go unto my father!" It is thus that God draws the wicked with the "cords of a man."

And he shows his love toward his children also, in a similar manner, by correcting them. "Does God send trouble?" Aye, on occasion, because he is our Father; and he loves us too well not to send trouble or anything else that may be needed for our good. In fact, affliction is one of the richest items of our inheritance as heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Was not Christ himself "made perfect by suffering"? and again, shall the servant be greater than his Lord? If I must needs glory, therefore, I will glory in tribulation; for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed;

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

This is the teaching of Christ: "I am the true Vine and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." Fruit, much fruit, and ever more fruit! This is what God wants of us. And here, in brief, is the philosophy of affliction: it is divinely intended to transform a bad man into a good one, and a good man into a better one.

Fourth: The bright light in the cloud is discerned only by faith. God's love meets a response in the love of his children, when they are content, if need be, to trust him with a blindfold over their eyes.

Pain's furnace heat within me quivers;
  God's breath upon the fire doth blow;
And all the heart within me shivers
  And trembles in the fiery glow:
And yet I whisper, As God will!
And in his fiercest fires hold still.

Why not? Must a child know all that is in his father's heart or else decline to trust him? Two lads were looking at a picture of Elijah going up to heaven in a chariot of fire. One of them said, "I'd be afraid to ride that way; wouldn't you?" The other one replied: "No, not if God drove." Our strength is in our confidence that the reins are

in trustworthy hands. In so far as there are mysteries in the divine providence we may rest calmly in the assurance that the Lord of all the earth doeth right. We are his children; and his name is Love. He does not explain everything; but he makes this perfectly clear, that he loves us.

And this is "the Happy End of God's Correction." It is recorded that the Lord turned again the captivity of Job; so that he was greatly blessed in his latter end. At the close of the book we see him sitting in a happy home with wife and children about him, prosperous and content. All's well that ends well.

But the conclusion of the story is not always written in this present life. The sequel is beyond. It matters little what befalls us here, so long as interminable æons of felicity are before us. One day we shall look backward and see clearly that the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory which is revealed in us.

Oh, for clearer eyes and a larger faith; a faith to see through "the bright light in the cloud" to that eternal future where clouds and darkness are dissipated and all is light! a faith that can believe without seeing, and rest in God!

I think it was Henry Martyn, who, cut off in the midst of his work and dying in pain, said calmly: "God makes no mistakes." Blessed assurance! Let us take him at his word: "All things work together for good to them that love God."

8. *PRAYER*

O Lord, give me a heart to glorify thee in adversity as well as in my brighter days. Let my pains and sorrows, by patient endurance, become a part of my willing service. Be pleased to cast out of thy remembrance all my past offenses and shortcomings, forgiving them in thy boundless mercy and purifying my heart that I may lead a better life. In my chastening forbid that I should faint; in my prosperity save me from pride; under all circumstances keep me mindful of thy Fatherly love. Let all my doings, being ordered by thy governance, be righteous in thy sight. Use me as thou wilt, O Lord, but ever use me to thy glory, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "How firm a foundation."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen.

TWENTIETH SERVICE

The Christian and His Bible

1. *INVOCATION*

I LIFT up mine eyes unto thee, O Lord that dwellest in the heavens. Be pleased to bow the heavens and come down, according to thy promise, to commune with me. Make me to know by the warmth of my heart and the quickening of my zeal that thou art here with a blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "All hail the power of Jesus' Name."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

2 Kings 22.
2 Timothy 3.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, my heart is fixed. I will praise thee; for thy mercy is great above the heavens and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. The heavens declare thy glory and the firmament showeth thy handiwork; but in thy Word thou hast revealed thyself more gloriously as the God of love. The entrance of thy Word giveth light. Put to shame the purposes of

all who would destroy the foundations of faith. Forasmuch as I have professed to receive the Scriptures as my infallible rule of faith and practice, help me to show forth my sincerity by defending their truths and exemplifying their precepts in my walk and conversation. Keep me as loyal to the Scriptures as Christ was, who believed, loved, preached and practiced them, and never uttered a word against their entire truth and trustworthiness. Exalt thy Word in the Church and in the pulpit to-day. Bring to the remembrance of thy people everywhere what thou didst say, "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Let them honor thy commandments, heed thine admonitions and love thine exceeding great and precious promises. Give power to thy Word as it is preached to-day; that it may be sharper than any two-edged sword for conviction and as healing as balm of Gilead to such as penitently turn unto thee. Let the luminous shadow of the Cross fall over the world to-day. Show thyself the God of salvation, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Blow ye the trumpet, blow, the gladly solemn sound."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Christian and his Bible

> "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3: 14-17.)

There was trouble in Ephesus. The Church there had fallen on "perilous times." False teachers had crept in and were leading away all such of the people as had "itching ears."

Paul, the founder and former pastor of the Church in that city, writes to Timothy, his successor, exhorting him to continue in the truth; and he suggests as a sure safeguard, for himself and his people, a profound loyalty to the Scriptures as the word of God.

He reminds the young pastor that he had learned the Scriptures in his childhood. In his old home at Derbe his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois had instructed him. Blessed is the man or woman who can look back to such training as this! The father of John Stuart Mill declined to teach religion to his son; the father of David Livingstone required his son to commit the One

Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm to memory and take the Scriptures to be "a lamp unto his feet;" and the difference was manifest in the life and character of these men.

Paul reminds Timothy also that the Scriptures were able to make him "wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ." No man can search the Scriptures without finding two things, namely, Christ and Life; as our Lord said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." This youth had found Christ in the pages of the Book and, accepting Christ, had been saved by faith in him.

Paul assumes, furthermore, that Timothy, as a "man of God," must be true to the Bible. This ought to go without saying, since men of God, in or out of the ministry, are in covenant bonds to be loyal to it.

The question now arises, "What shall a Christian do with his Bible?" Shall he be satisfied with merely reading it? Is it enough for him to talk about it? Shall he approach it in a critical spirit, with the purpose of finding fault with it? If so, he must not expect to find much that is "profitable" in it.

In one of Krummacher's fables he tells of a society of learned men who resolved to make a voyage to investigate the properties of the magnetic needle. The ship being ready to sail, they went aboard and, placing a mariner's compass in their

midst, sat down to observe and scrutinize it. Thus they sailed to and fro, watching the needle, while each advanced and defended his own theory as to the secret power which moved it. At length there was a violent crash; the ship had struck upon a rock and the waves rushed in! Then these learned men, all seized with terror, leaped overboard and swam ashore. And sitting there on the barren rocks, they lamented one to another that there was no dependence to be placed on the magnetic needle!

For a like reason there are so-called "Biblical experts" who can see no profitableness in Scripture; but there are others equally if not more "expert" who search as for hid treasure, and find in these pages the unspeakable gift of eternal life.

The man who reads, ponders and inwardly digests will find that the Word is profitable particularly in four ways:

I. *"For Doctrine."*

As a rule of faith it serves, like the mariner's chart, to sail by. It tells us what we are to believe as to spiritual things; and truth is the basis of life and character. For "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

One of the singular characteristics of the Bible is this: of all the world's "Sacred Books" it alone presents a multiplicity of truths which can be arranged into a harmonious system. Who ever heard of the Moslem system of Theology or of the Buddhist system of Doctrine? The other

religions make no pretense of presenting a consistent creed; but the truths of the Scriptures are like pearls, which can be strung upon a necklace having for its central gem this saying: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Another singular characteristic of the Bible is that all its truths are announced under a seal of divine authority. All are not equally "profitable," since it is not so important, for example, that we should know about the birth of John the Baptist as it is that we should know that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God; but all its truths are equally authoritative, since all alike were written by holy men "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The entire book is signed and sealed with a "Thus saith the Lord."

The quest of truth was set forth by the ancient Greeks in the story of Jason and the Argonauts, who set forth in the good ship "Argo" to find the golden fleece. It would have been a vain quest, despite the fact that Hercules and Orpheus with his lyre and the twins Castor and Pollux were in that famous crew, had they not known with some degree of certainty where the golden fleece was to be found. Somewhere among the islands of the Hesperides? That was all too vague. But Colchis, just there and nowhere else, was their destination. Thither they sailed, found the fleece and brought it home.

Truth is the principal thing; but where shall we search for it? There must be some place of authority whither we can go with an assurance of finding it. To wander about among the islands of the Hesperides, guided by nothing more trustworthy than opinion and guess-work, doubting and wondering, with the rocks and forests as our farthest horizons, this is to pursue a vain and hopeless quest. And little wonder if we are lost in doubt and perplexity. To our cry, Where is truth?" the echoes answer mockingly, "What is truth?" But the Christian takes up his Bible, opens it, and lo, from every page there comes a voice, "I am the Truth."

If, then, a man would be a believer and not a perpetual doubter, if he would rest on authority and not on mere opinion, let him search the Scriptures; for

> This is the judge that ends the strife
> When wit and wisdom fail,
> Our guide to everlasting life
> Through all the gloomy vale.

II. *The Scriptures are profitable "for Reproof."*

We need to be reproved, because we are sinners. "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

It is said by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews that "the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit

and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

So it was with Hilkiah, the high-priest, when he found the official copy of the Law, dust-covered and forgotten, in a lumber-room of the Temple. So it was with Shaphan the scribe, to whom Hilkiah delivered the Book, when he had examined it. And so it was with Josiah the King before whom Shaphan read it. "And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the Law, that he rent his clothes, . . . saying Go, inquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord to do after all that is written in this book."

Sin is writ large in the Bible; so that an evil-doer who reads frankly is "like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass." Not that he finds there any learned disquisitions about sin; for such entertainment he must go to our modern philosophers and psychologists; but he does find a personal indictment that pierces to the quick, and a pointed finger like that of Nathan, followed by a voice, "Thou art the man!" which sends him as it sent David staggering to his closet with the cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions! Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me

from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

No other book has such searching power. It was with this singular characteristic in mind that Coleridge said, "The Bible finds me." And he might have added, "Having found, it convicts me."

III. *The Scriptures are profitable "for Correction."*

If they are like "a sharp, two-edged sword" to pierce asunder, they are also like ointment to mollify the wound. They not only expose a man's crookedness but straighten him out.

And this they do by the proffer of salvation in Christ, saying to the patient, "Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee."

This also is singular. No other of the so-called "Sacred Books" suggest a means of deliverance from the penalty of sin. Pardon is a Gospel word and the Bible has a monopoly of it. It bids us "Get right with God" and tells us how to do it.

An old man and his wife who had long neglected their souls happened into a church, where they heard a sermon which moved them to get a copy of the Bible and examine it. As they read they were so overwhelmed with conviction that the old man said, "Wife, if these things are true, we're lost!" But as they continued to read, the invitations and promises grew so convincing that he added joyously, "Wife, if these things are true, we're saved!"

In like manner there are multitudes who can point to the Scriptures and say, "Behold, I was born there." For as a rule the Holy Spirit works through the Word in bringing men to God.

IV. *The Scriptures are profitable "for Instruction in Righteousness."*

As a "Rule of Practice" they form the basis of Character.

One of the great words of the Bible is Righteousness. It is set forth in two perfect symbols, namely, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; and in one perfect Exemplar. The critic has yet to be found who can pick a flaw in the Decalogue; and by common consent Christ is the one immaculate Man who has lived among us.

But if we as Christians believe in the Bible, which presents such an admirable code of morals, how is it that there are so many inconsistent professors among us? The point is well taken; we freely acknowledge the justice of it. But in that criticism what a tribute is paid to the morality of the Bible, and to the Christ who perfectly exemplifies it! Behold the Book, how faultless its standards of righteousness! And behold the Man! The world finds "no fault in him at all."

But there is this to be said: the best people are Bible Christians. There is not one among them who claims perfection; but taking them by and large, good, bad and indifferent, we do not shrink from a comparison. Let a thousand of them stand up in line, and a thousand others who reject

or ignore the Scriptures in an opposing line; and we are ready to have the exhibit stand upon its merits.

But suppose all Christians did live up to the standard of the Bible, what people would they be! One man did so, once. He "brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his light." The Bible was his rule of faith and practice; and in his walk and conversation he was true to it. And when he hung upon the cross, the soldier in charge of his execution was moved to cry, "Certainly this was a righteous man!"

It remains to state the summary and application of Paul's message, which is indeed its most important point, namely, that the Scriptures are profitable "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

It is in the Scriptures that the Christian gets his commission for service. "As my Father hath sent me," said Jesus, "even so send I you." As Christians we are to serve not ourselves but others, and to do everything to the glory of God.

It is in the Scriptures that the Christian gets also his equipment for service. He is furnished with all the necessary pieces of defensive armor and with one weapon, namely, "the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." This is enough for every need. As preacher or layman, scholar or teacher, merchant or clerk, he is equipped. At home, in society, in politics, everywhere he is equipped. For life and death he is thoroughly furnished.

By the Scriptures thus the Christian wins his crown. In the strength of their promises he remains true to truth and duty, true to himself, to his country and to all the children of men.

Wherefore it behooves us as Christians to continue steadfast in the things of Scripture. Alas for one who has lost or neglected his Bible!

It is related in Pilgrim's Progress that Christian was met at the foot of the Cross by three Angels who presented him with a Name, a white garment and a Roll with a seal upon it. He found much comfort in reading from this Roll until, coming to a pleasant arbor, he fell into a slumber and lost it. As he continued his journey, meeting with many dangers, he felt in his bosom for his Roll "that he might read therein and be comforted; and he found it not. Then was he in great distress; for he wanted that which used to relieve him and which should have been his pass into the Celestial City. At last he bethought himself of the arbor wherein he had slept; and asking God's forgiveness for that foolish act, he went back to look for his Roll, all along the way crying, 'O that I had not slept!' But coming to the arbor he espied his Roll, the which with trembling he catched up and put into his bosom. And who can tell how joyful this man was when he had gotten his Roll again? For this was the assurance of his life!"

Get back your Bible, O Christian. Take it from the shelf where, perhaps, it lies covered with

dust. If while sleeping you have neglected it, seek until you find it.

For this is not only "the assurance of our life;" it is our joy along the way. A legend of St. Dunstan says that, on a certain day as he sat reading from the Scriptures in his cell, the harp which hung against his wall sounded without hands; "for an angel played the *Gaudeate Animi* upon it to the great delight and solace of that holy man." And many another in the reading of the Scripture has dreamed dreams, seen visions and heard music fairer than ever mortals make in this world.

8. *PRAYER*

O Lord, thou art so wise that thy foolishness is wiser than the wisdom of men. If I ever put my opinions before thy precepts, forgive me. Help me to bow reverently at thine Oracles and make thy Word the pathway of my life. Make me true to Christ, thine incarnate Word, and to the Bible, thy written Word; and when all the doubts and misgivings of this world have passed away, like shadows fleeing at the break of day, thy name shall have the praise forever and ever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "He leadeth me."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SERVICE

A Field of Five Battles

1. *INVOCATION*

I APPROACH thee, Father in heaven, with reverence, and pray that I may be graciously received and blessed in this hour of communion with thee. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "I love to steal awhile away."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 98.
Romans 8:1-18, 28-39.

4. *PRAYER*

I look unto the hills, O Lord, from whence cometh my help. I pray thee, make bare thine arm in my behalf. For I am very needy. I need, above all things, thy pardoning grace; and, blessed be thy name, thou hast promised it. I need the sanctifying influence of thy Spirit that I may grow in spiritual stature; and thou hast said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your Heavenly

Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." I need strength for the hour of temptation; and thou hast promised to be a strength to the poor and needy in his distress. I need patience in suffering and comfort in the time of sorrow; and thou hast said, "I will not leave you comfortless." I need a better equipment and a more willing spirit for service; I need more love, more faith, more of everything, Lord, to make me more like thee; and I put thee in remembrance of thy great, all-embracing promise, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." I want to take thee at thy word; wherefore, having asked, help me to expect the things I have asked for. And all that I desire for myself, I desire also for those who are nearest and dearest to me. Bless my kinspeople, my intimate friends and neighbors, my fellow church members. Bless the people of this community. Bless our Country; and enable its rulers to rule in the righteousness and the fear of God. Bless all the nations of the earth. Let thy Gospel have free course and be glorified, until wars shall cease, thy Kingdom be established among all nations and thy love prevail everywhere among the children of men. And to thy name, blessed Saviour, shall be glory forever and ever. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Jesus, I my cross have taken."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

A Field of Five Battles

> "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose; for whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8: 28-31.)

This text is fighting ground. The swords of parties and partisans have here been crossed in the controversies of the ages. But the man who wrote this passage did not so intend it. His hope was to encourage the Christians of his time, struggling against a sea of troubles, by the assurance that God could not be thwarted in his great purpose of saving them and ultimately delivering the world from its bondage of sin.

It is clear that when God created Adam he designed him to be the progenitor of a race of saints; but Adam betrayed his trust and, falling, became the progenitor of a race of sinners. Thus the beneficent plan apparently came to naught; but sooner or later God always has his way.

In the fulness of time there came Another to carry out the plan. "The first man is of the earth, earthy, but the second man is the Lord from heaven." He lived, suffered, died and triumphed over death; and thus became the firstborn among many brethren. In him the prophecy was fulfilled, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." So the eternal plan and purpose of God was not a failure after all. Sinners are being converted, the world is being saved. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

As I said, this passage, so irenic in its intent, has been an Esdraelon of conflict. Here are five words—Foreknowledge, Predestination, Vocation, Justification and Glorification—every one of which contains a bugle-call.

I. *"Whom he did foreknow."*

The word Foreknowledge is the keynote of the controversy between Deism and Theism which has reference to the personality of God.

The question is, Does God know? If he knows, then he must be a self-conscious Person. Law does not know. Energy does not know. Is God like an image of Buddh with a heart of stone, eyes that see not and arms that help not?

But assuming the omniscience of God, the question arises, How does he know? By the processes

of thought, as we do? We jot down an idea, another follows it, then comes an *ergo;* and thus we arrive at a conclusion. But God does not reason that way. He never thinks. He always knows, and he knows all. And knowing thus, he must foreknow as well. The past and future are alike to him, since with him there is no succession of thought. We know as one turning the pages of an almanac in which day follows day; but God knows as one who faces a calendar where all the days are at once before him.

Eternity with all its years
Stands present to thy view;
To thee there's nothing old appears,
Great God, there's nothing new!

II. *"He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."*

The word Predestination suggests the long-continued controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism.

The question is, Did God predestinate because he foreknew, or vice versa? The hyper-Calvinists have been accustomed to say that God predestinated before he foreknew, thus apparently making our destiny dependent solely on the divine decree; while the hyper-Arminians, by affirming that God foreknew before he predestinated, have sought to relieve God of responsibility as to the destinies of men.

. But neither of these positions can be defended,

since there is no "before" or "after" with God. It is vain to qualify him by the terminologies of time and space. We cannot measure his stature with a yardstick nor bind our chronology like a tape-measure about his loins. With him there is neither yesterday nor to-morrow. His foreknowledge and foreordination are therefore contemporaneous. No hands sweep around his dial. No pendulum swings before him. We look back over our shoulders and speak of "the past," but before us falls a curtain and of the future we have naught to say. Not so with God; the future is as clearly known as the past to him. He has been there; he has traversed it. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God!"

III. *"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called."*

The controversy is now resolved into the respective terms of Election and Free Will.

The question is, If the calling of God is an "effectual calling," and if his grace is "irresistible" grace, how can man be a free agent? Is he not absolved from responsibility, since his welfare is predetermined for him?

The difficulty is one of reconciliation. The two facts in issue are clear. On the one hand I know that, if there is a God anywhere in the universe, he must have foreknown all that comes to pass; and his foreknowledge makes the event as certain as his decree could make it. On the other hand I know that I am a free agent. All the logic in the

world cannot persuade me that I have not the power to lift my hand at will. But how to reconcile these facts, there's the rub.

The important thing is that we should understand that a failure to reconcile these facts does not disprove either of them; for we are constantly, and without demur, accepting truths which seem to be mutually incompatible. Two straight lines are said to be parallel because they never meet; yet according to the theory of the higher mathematics, the lines will meet in infinity. It is sufficient to know that there is no conflict between the doctrine of The Decrees and the doctrine of Free Will, both being inevitable and irrefutable conclusions from the nature and relations of God and man.

It is said that Ludovicus, a learned man of Italy, had many arguments with his physician about these matters. He was fond of saying, "Si salvabor, salvabor;" that is, "If it is decreed that I shall be saved, I am bound to be saved and there is no need of my doing anything about it." On falling sick, however, he sent for his physician, who, leaving a prescription, said, "Why shouldst thou take it? Apply thy dictum, Si salvabor, salvabor." But Ludovicus took the medicine and got well. So much more sensibly do men reason in common affairs than they are accustomed to do in the province of spiritual things.

It should be obvious to any one who stumbles here that means as well as ends are included in the

divine decree and calling. No man can live unless he eats, yet no man need eat unless he wants to. The pangs of hunger are universal; the decree is plain; and living and eating are both included in it.

God knows whether or no a farmer will reap a harvest. The fulness or emptiness of the garners is foreknown and predetermined in the mind of God. But the farmer who would infer therefrom the futility of effort would be a foolish man. The plowing and sowing, the reaping and garnering, are all a part of the divine plan, and the farmer attends to his business as a free moral agent because he so understands it.

In that voyage in the Ægean, where "the ship was exceedingly tossed with the tempest so that all hope was taken away," Paul said to the frightened crew, "Sirs, be of good cheer, for I have had a vision, and there shall be no loss of any man's life among you." But when the vessel was swamped and broken by the violence of the waves, all betook themselves to boards and broken pieces of the ship despite the vision, and Paul, like the others, swam for his life. The fact that their deliverance had been foreordained, and so announced, did not prevent their acting like reasonable men. In like manner it behooves us to "make our calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

IV. *"And whom he called, them he also justified."*

The word Justification sounds the bugle-call to the controversy of Faith *versus* Works.

The question is, "How should man be just with God?" He cannot be just so long as he is defiled with sin; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Can he be justified by works? No; it is written, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." There is no expiatory value in morality, in penance or in ceremonial observance. Fire cannot burn out sin; nor can the fat of rams and fed beasts atone for it. The debts of yesterday cannot be canceled by paying cash to-day. If I were never henceforth to be guilty of another sin, the record of the mislived past would still remain against me. And if God, in consideration of my better way of living, were to overlook the past, I should still go to heaven only as a ticket-of-leave man.

Can Faith justify, then? This is the doctrine which sent the thunders of the Reformation around the world, the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Faith is the sole condition affixed to the promise of life. If we are ever justified it will be not on account of personal merit, but because the righteousness of Christ is by faith imputed unto us.

> Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress;
> 'Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
> With joy shall I lift up my head.

For him who thus believes in the atoning work of Jesus, the past, being expiated, is "blotted out."

There is therefore now no more condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. Their sins, which were as scarlet, are as white as snow. All who thus accept Christ as their Saviour are "justified" before God, since he has cast their sins behind his back and promised to remember them no more against them.

Is a man then justified by faith without works? There is no such thing as faith without works. "Faith without works is dead;" and a dead faith is no faith at all. Works are the touchstone of faith. Works are the evidence of faith. The man who has really believed in Jesus can assure himself of the genuineness of his faith only by the fidelity with which he does his Master's will.

The real question, therefore, is not one of Works *versus* Faith, but of Works *versus* Faith *plus* Works. The logic of James is clear: "A man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

V. *"And whom he justified, them he also glorified."*

In the word Glorification, which brings us across the threshold of heaven, we note the controversy between "the perseverance of the saints" and "falling from grace."

And here again there is no real ground of dispute. The difference of opinion arises from a misunderstanding and misuse of terms. There can be, indeed, no such thing as "falling from grace."

One may fall from his good resolutions, from his profession, from his reputation as a Christian, but surely he cannot fall from the grace of God. The real question is, Whose grip is it that saves us? Are we saved by our clinging to God or by his holding to us? If my salvation depends on my grip alone, then alas for me! But if it depends on the power of a divine hand, then the gates of hell cannot prevail against me.

A life-saver plunges in to rescue a strangling swimmer. "Hold on!" he cries, and the man's hands fasten upon him. But as they swim shoreward, the rescuer feels the man's grasp loosening, and his own tightens accordingly. Thus the life-saver brings him safe to shore. I am that strangling swimmer. Once assured that God has laid hold upon me, I know I can safely trust in him. For

> The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
> He will not, he will not desert to his foes;
> That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
> He'll never, no, never, no, never forsake.

It is thus that Paul pursues his great argument as to the success of the divine plan for the salvation of souls and the deliverance of the world. Be of good cheer! Nothing can thwart the Father's will.

As Napoleon was setting out on his Russian campaign, a lady of the French Court said to him, "You know that, though man proposes, God disposes." He replied, "Yes; but watch the issue and

you will see that I propose and dispose too." A few weeks later he was fleeing from Moscow with his half-frozen and starving army straggling after him.

It is God who both proposes and disposes in human affairs. The events of history are lines converging toward his throne. The fact that he has intended, from the beginning, to reward the passion of his beloved Son with a multitude of souls "conformed to his image," as "the fruit of the travail of his soul," is clearly revealed. That purpose cannot be defeated. In vain do kings of the earth set themselves and rulers take counsel together, saying, "Let us break his bands asunder and cast away his cords from us!" He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. The decree has gone forth: "Thou art my Son! Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The marriage-supper is coming; and "the supper shall be furnished with guests." The question of personal moment is, Shall I be there? which is another way of asking, Am I among those who are being conformed to the image of Christ?

8. *PRAYER*

O God, I rejoice in the thought that thou hast eternally planned for me. Help me to fall in with thy plan so that my will shall not cross thy will. Have thy perfect way with

me. In mercy grant that the mind that was in Christ Jesus may be also in me, that I may be made wholly comformable to thy holy will. Let me have no purpose in life except to fulfil thy gracious purpose concerning me. Make plain before my feet the path ordained for me; let my chiefest joy be to run in the way of thy commandments. And when my salvation is fully accomplished I will praise thy name forever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "God is love, his mercy brightens."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SERVICE

Living as Christ Would

1. *INVOCATION*

   AT the dawn of the Sabbath, Lord, my soul would return unto its rest. Put the world far from me and receive me into the secret place of thy pavilion, where thou hast promised to commune with those who seek thee. I wait upon thee, Lord, and invoke thy benediction; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "I heard the voice of Jesus say."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

   Isaiah 6:1-8.
   Luke 10:1-37.

4. *PRAYER*

   I thank thee, blessed Lord and Saviour, for the story of thy wonderful birth, wherein thou didst empty thyself of thy transcendent glory and assume our nature, in order to become an High-Priest able to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. I thank thee for the record of thy wonderful life, in which thou didst exemplify all the graces of human character, showing us in perfect pattern how we ought to live void of offense toward men

and God. "Oh who so calm, so pure, so bright, so fair, so made to live in light!" I thank thee for the record of thy wonderful death, in which thou didst bear our sins in thine own body, being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by thy stripes we might be healed. And I thank thee for thy supreme miracle, wonder of all wonders, in which thou didst triumph over death in our behalf, taking captivity captive and ascending up on high to give gifts unto men. So hast thou brought life and immortality to light, and delivered thy people from the bondage of the King of Terrors. So hast thou opened the gate of heaven to all believers and prepared the way for the great reunion, when those who have parted sadly in the wilderness shall meet again in sweet Jerusalem. I thank thee also for thy wonderful intercession at the throne of the heavenly grace; for thou ever livest to make intercession in our behalf. Plead for me, O strong Son of God, that my prayers for pardon, sanctification and entrance into heavenly glory may be heard. Plead for all thy people to-day, and for the universal Church, that truth and righteousness may prevail and the coming of thy kingdom be hastened among the children of men; for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "When I survey the wondrous cross."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

Living as Christ Would

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2:5.)

It was one of the wise observations of Solomon that there is nothing new under the sun. "The sun ariseth and goeth down, hastening to the place whence he arose. The wind whirleth about continually and returneth again according to its circuits. The thing that hath been shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

The discoveries which are heralded so frequently in the scientific world are merely discoveries of new applications of old forces. The last book in philosophy is an echo of discussions that were heard in the Athenian schools some thousands of years ago. And the same holds true in the province of religious things.

In the fifteenth century a book was published, called "The Imitation of Christ," which has had a wider circulation ever since than any other book except the Bible. Its author was Thomas à Kempis, an Augustinian monk and mystic. At the time there were two Popes, one having his seat in Rome and the other in Avignon; and the Chris-

tian thought of the world was divided accordingly. Those who stood with Rome held that the primal rule of the Christian life was action, to the end that the Kingdom might be established on earth, by force of arms if necessary; while those who stood with Avignon affirmed that contemplation was the fundamental rule, this being necessary to bring the soul into union with God. Thomas à Kempis held with the school of Avignon as against the Latin Christianity of his time. In the midst of a busy world, when Huss of Bohemia was going bravely to the stake and Savonarola was hurling thunderbolts in the Duomo at Florence, this placid monk in the shadow of the Convent of St. Agnes was writing on the Imitation of Christ.

Ten years ago a book was published, called "In His Steps," which followed out the philosophy of Thomas à Kempis from the practical standpoint of daily life; and this book, like the *Imitatio Christi,* has had an unparalleled circulation throughout the Christian world. Its story runs on this wise: A pastor named Henry Maxwell created a sensation in his parish by pledging certain of his congregation to determine their conduct by the rule, "What would Jesus do?" One of the parties to this covenant was a merchant who proceeded to place himself in right relation with his employes and patrons. Another was a choir singer, who declined an engagement with an operatic troupe in pursuance of what she deemed would be "the probable action of Jesus." An-

other was the editor of a daily newspaper, who forthwith stopped his Sunday issue, cut out objectionable advertising and renounced partisan politics. Still another was a young heiress, who gave up luxuries and devoted her fortune to benevolence. The pastor himself, abandoning his usual method of pulpit ministration, confined his preaching to the solution of sociological problems and ended by resigning his pastorate and going down into the slums to live and labor in behalf of the poor. Of course this created a sensation, and ultimately turned the city upside down, and incidentally right side up.

We are having, just now, a revival of this rule of living, particularly in certain of our Western cities, where groups of professing Christians have entered into a temporary covenant to "live as Christ would." At last reports most of them were satisfied with a fortnight of experimentation, many being discouraged and ready to affirm that the plan could not be carried out.

The movements referred to, though so far apart in time, are practically identical. The watchword of the mystics was, "Let us imitate Christ!" The watchword of the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon and his adherents was, "In His Steps!" The watchword of the most recent movement is, "Let us live as Jesus would!" But the question back of all is one respecting the ultimate rule of the Christian life.

It is my purpose to show that in each of these

cases there is but a partial and inadequate statement of duty.

I. *The Rule of Christian living here given seems to be Superfluous.*

One supreme and ultimate rule is enough. The world has had such a rule from the beginning, and universally recognizes its rightness; to wit, obedience to the Moral Law.

II. *The Rule proposed is Unscriptural.*

Do not the Scriptures say, then, that we are to imitate Christ? Yes! "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"; and again, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

But the question is one of emphasis, or the relative importance of things. What we want is not a rule but the rule—the ultimate and complete rule of the Christian life. And there is not a word in the Scriptures or in the teachings of Jesus to contravene the proposition that the standard by which every Christian life is to be regulated, in general and particular, is obedience to the Moral Law.

The two great words of Scripture are "Believe" and "Obey." A man is saved by believing in Christ. Until he does that he is not a Christian at all. As soon as he has accepted Christ as his Saviour his whole obligation is represented in the word "obedience"; that is, obedience to law as set forth in the teachings of Christ.

Is not the Christian, then, delivered from the bondage of law? Yes, from the bondage of the Ceremonial Law; for the obvious reason that all its rites and symbols were fulfilled in Christ. At his coming these observances lost their binding force, as the scaffolding of a building becomes useless when the building has gone up. But as to the Moral Law, our Lord himself referred its fulfilment to the conscience of every man. In the Sermon on the Mount he reiterated its precepts, adding the emphasis of his personal authority in a most searching analysis, and made them binding forever on all who profess to honor and serve him. It is false and mischievous to say that he "abrogated" that Law, since it is interwoven with the nerve and sinew of the human constitution. Its obligations can never be annulled until there is a radical change in our physical and moral structure. The Ten Commandments were written on tables of stone for this reason, to indicate that they were of perpetual force.

III. *The proposed standard is too Vague and Indefinite to serve as a final and comprehensive Rule of the Christian life.*

It says the only criterion is "the probable action of Jesus." But this means that there is no rigid standard at all. It leaves everything to personal opinion; since each must determine his conduct by supposing what Jesus would do. Here surely is a broad margin for ethical latitudinarianism.

What would be the result if a like standard of

action were set up in our civil life? It would scarcely be possible to find a better exemplar of good citizenship than the Governor of this Commonwealth; but suppose that one, in the exercise of his imagination, were to violate the code, would it be a sufficient plea, think you, to say that he had been trying to follow in the Governor's steps? Would not the presiding Judge be likely to answer, in the words of Jesus, "What readest thou in the law?"

Or suppose that the rule referred to was set up in trade and commerce? Let one of our merchants assume that it is sufficient for him to measure off silks and calicoes as he supposes A. T. Stewart, that most honorable of merchants, would have done in like circumstances; would not his patron be likely to say, "What we want is thirty-six inches to the yard. Hew to the line! Give us not your hypothetical imitation of Mr. Stewart but Mr. Stewart's yard-stick!"

So in the Christian life: it is not enough for a man to justify himself by saying, "I thought thus and so." There is a moral code; let him adjust his life to it. The Law leaves nothing to the imagination. It is positive and unvarying. There may be a difference of interpretation in details and particulars, but never as to the fundamental principles which underlie it.

IV. *The Rule proposed is Impracticable.*

It overlooks one tremendous fact, namely, the Deity of Christ. If he were merely a man, the

rule of *mutatis mutandis* might apply; but being the only begotten Son of God, it is not possible in all cases for him to change places with us.

We are urged to follow him everywhere, and above all in his sufferings. We have been seriously told that we must "go with him to Gethsemane and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood in our passion for souls." Do we forget what he himself said to his three companions when entering the Garden? "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here." And there they remained, while he went deeper into the shadow of the olive trees and drank, in solitude, the purple cup of his vicarious pain. Let no man go with him into the inner part of Gethsemane. Let none presume to intrude upon that awful anguish which was the divine expiation of the world's sin. For is it not written, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me"?

At the marriage supper in Cana was it possible for his disciples to follow in his steps? In this, the "beginning of miracles," he by the exercise of his omnipotence precipitated the processes of nature so that in a moment the water became wine. This was something that his companions could not do; but the thing which they could do was to obey him; as his mother said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

V. *The Rule suggested for the final regulation of the Christian life is an Unsafe one.*

It may easily become mischievous in its mistaken application. It gave rise to the order of barefoot friars, who said, "Christ was a poor man, who had not where to lay his head; therefore we take a vow of perpetual poverty." The advocates of an uneducated ministry reason in like manner: "Jesus had no diploma from a university or theological seminary. At thirty years of age he locked the door of his carpenter shop and went forth to preach. Why should not we abandon the saw and plane and follow him?" The Winebrennerians insist on washing each other's feet as a part of divine service, because, as they say, Christ did it. Christian Scientists, in their preposterous and grotesque claims of healing, affirm that they are "following in his steps." All over the world there are fanatical "communities" whose only rule is "the probable action of Jesus." What does this mean? It means that the letter may be pressed to the killing of the spirit. It means that the imitation of Christ, when interpreted solely by personal opinion and imagination, may easily pass the boundaries of common sense. It means that in the last reduction duty is not a matter of mere opinion but of obedience to law.

VI. *In the Rule suggested there is No Saving Power.*

It has to do with Christ, not as a divine Saviour, but as an exemplary man. Among those who deny the Divinity of Jesus there are probably few, if any, who would be unwilling to accept the

proposed rule of action, since they are all ready to admit that Jesus was a most righteous man.

And it is greatly to be feared that the erection of this rule in the place of the rule of obedience may work great mischief by minifying or wholly obliterating the claims of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. If this standard were to be accepted as comprehensive and final, then what room would be left for the Deity of Christ, for the authority of the Scriptures, for the saving power of the Atonement, or for the doctrine of Justification by Faith?

VII. *The Rule proposed is Unchristian, since it goes beyond the teaching of Christ, and supplants that teaching by a rule of action which was never so intended or prescribed by him.*

His rule is plain and unequivocal: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you"; and, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." The loyal Christian seeks no further, has no desire to go beyond the prescript of his Lord.

The heart of our religion is the personal relation of the Christian with Christ. He is our Priest, making expiation for our sins. He is our Prophet, instructing us as to the verities of the spiritual life. He is our King, protecting and commanding us. What more can we want? The sum total of our duty is to follow him, step by step, obediently, in the path which he himself has marked out for us.

To say that the imitation of Christ must not

be allowed to supplant obedience as the supreme rule of the Christian life is not to let down the standard, but to exalt it. His word is law; what can be higher than that? To put the personal opinion of the individual Christian in the place of the imperative word of the Master is a dangerous and disastrous sort of business. Let the young people, particularly, who have been "trying the experiment for a fortnight," only to land in utter perplexity and discouragement, come back to their Master and to his rule with an assurance that he knew best when he prescribed it.

The beginning of the Christian life is to accept Christ as our Saviour and Sovereign; all the rest is obedience: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

8. *PRAYER*

O Lord, as I profess to follow thee, let thy word be unto me yea and amen. Thou hast said, "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am"; wherefore let me obey thee in all things, and adjust my life in its minutest details and particulars to thy holy law. And wherein I fall short or transgress, forgive me for thy Name's sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Grace be unto thee and mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SERVICE

The Church in the Catacombs

1. *INVOCATION*

GOD, be with me and bless me, and cause thy face to shine upon me and be gracious unto me. Give me now the spirit of true worship, that I may lift up my hands with my heart unto thee in the heavens; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Holy Spirit, faithful guide."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Isaiah 5:3-16.
John 16.

4. *PRAYER*

As thou, Lord, didst bless thy people of old when, at the call of the rams' horns, they assembled in thy courts, so be pleased to pronounce thy benediction upon all who worship in churches of the world to-day. Hear them as they make confession of their sins and, hearing, grant absolution for Jesus' sake. Give them a spirit of humble reverence and of profound faith in thee. Grant them a new vision of thy love as manifest in Christ; in his wonderful life, his vicarious death and his

triumphant progress through the ages. Draw them into a closer union with thee and sweeter fellowship with each other. Enlarge the hearts of all Christians, of whatever name, until they shall lovingly and zealously co-operate in the propagation of the Gospel and the advancement of thy Kingdom unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Help me to realize that I am myself a member of the world-wide Labor Guild of Christ, and that I have a place to fill in the Master's plan of universal conquest. Then give me, Lord, the will and power to fill it. I am thine; every atom of my energy, every moment of my time, every farthing of my possessions belongs to thee. For I am bought with a price, not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Lord, forbid that I should reserve or withhold aught in my consecration of myself to thee. Forgive my sins of apathy and shortcoming. Help me to feel more deeply the truths of the spiritual life and to seek more earnestly the things that make for righteousness. Make me more patient in adversity, more faithful in the discharge of duty and stronger to overcome my besetting sins. Save me from conformity to the world and transform me more and more by the renewing of my mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Alas, and did my Saviour bleed."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Church in the Catacombs

"Then the people did hide themselves in caves." (1 Sam. 13:6.)

It is our purpose to-day to emphasize the lesson of divine providence as manifest in a tragic episode of long continuance in the history of the early Church.

The story begins on the night of July 16, A.D. 64, when a great conflagration swept over the city of Rome, burning fiercely for six days and destroying ten of its fourteen wards. This was generally regarded as a manifestation of the anger of the gods. They must be appeased; a sacrifice must be found. How natural that the lot should fall upon the despised followers of Christ! The imperial edict went out against them. "They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword." Whither should they flee to escape the fury of the oppressor?

The place of refuge was at hand. In the soft volcanic rock which underlies the imperial city excavations had been made for building purposes from time immemorial. There is a labyrinth of galleries, winding in and out on different levels,

crossing and recrossing, for a distance of four hundred miles, more than the length of Italy from end to end. On either side are shelves of niches for the dead. There are more than three million graves. It is a vast subterranean city, dark, lonely, dismal beyond expression, with the silence of death over all. This was the refuge and rude cradle of the infant Church.

In these catacombs the Christians found a safe retreat, with brief seasons of respite, for a period of three centuries during the successive persecutions under Nero, Domitian, Trajan and that excellent moralist Marcus Aurelius, who divided his time betwixt a philosophy of sweetness and light and the slaughter of God's little ones.

We may imagine the life of these early Christians in this desolate retreat. They uttered their prayers in low voices, listening for the footfall of their pursuers. As they worshipped under the flickering gleam of lamps placed in burial niches, they could hear the low rumble of chariot wheels overhead, telling how the chivalry and beauty of Rome were hastening to the Coliseum, perhaps to witness the heroic death of some of their loved ones. At night the mangled bodies of the dead were brought and laid away in their narrow resting-places. But these were glorious days, the seed-time of heroism from which subsequent generations have gathered the harvests of peace. The hymns these Christians sang were in a spirit of

heroic resignation to God's sovereign will. Here is one:

> This which they labor to destroy
> With so much madness, so much rage,
> Is but a vessel formed of clay,
> Brittle, and hastening to decay.
> Let nobler foes their arms employ;
> Let them subdue the indomitable soul;
> Which, when fierce whirlwinds rend the sky,
> Looks on in calm security
> And bows to God's control!

But the life of the Christians in the catacombs was not all sorrow and loneliness. In one of the chapels may still be read this legend: "THERE IS LIGHT IN THIS DARKNESS; THERE IS MUSIC IN THESE TOMBS." An insight may be gained into the character of these persecuted people from the symbols which were carved on their sepulchers, by which we are advised that they not only enjoyed the delights of Christian fellowship, but were sensible of the presence and blessing of God.

(1) One of the most familiar of these symbols is *the fish.* It gets its significance from the fact that the letters of the Greek *ichthus,* meaning fish, are the initials of the Greek words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour." It was not safe to place the name of Jesus on the sepulchers of the beloved dead; but here was a cipher which could be used to mark their resting-places. How significant of heroic constancy! These people had left everything for Jesus; homes, possessions, sweet associa-

tions—all were gone. Christ only remained to them. He was their Alpha and Omega; first, last, midst and all in all!

It is a curious fact, in this connection, that among the inscriptions in the catacombs there is none to indicate that divine honors were paid to the mother of Christ. To-day the city of Rome is the center of Mariolatry; yet in these galleries beneath the Vatican, where three centuries of the earliest Christian life are outlined, there is no suggestion of an *Ave Maria.* Is it not strange that the Church should have lived so long and left on every side the story of her devotion to Jesus, yet no word or syllable to authenticate the Mariolatrous litany of the Papal Church? It was not until the believers had passed the heroic period of their history that the words began to be heard, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!"

(2) The *cross* is another of the symbols used in the catacombs. It is met with everywhere, in the little chapels where the living were wont to worship and on the narrow sepulchers.

To these refugees the cross was the eloquent token of their spiritual life. By it the Saviour had brought life and immortality to light. We, alas, have largely abandoned the use of this symbol; nor is the reason far to seek. As the church lapsed into the superstitious reverence of outward forms and ceremonies, the cross came to be a fetish venerated for itself rather than for the life-giving fact which it symbolized.

There is a parallel in the history of the brazen serpent, which was preserved in the Tabernacle as a memorial of God's interposition in behalf of the children of Israel; to which, as time passed, they became so sacrilegiously devoted that when Hezekiah the Reformer came to the throne, he reduced it to powder, crying, *Nehushtan!* that is, "It is a brazen thing!"

It was with a like feeling that Luther and the other Reformers looked on the veneration of the cross. I venture the opinion, however, that here the pendulum of the Reformation swung too far the other way. Why should not the cross adorn the walls of our churches and tower aloft from their spires? Is it not a suitable emblem of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith and of the great tragedy by which the world is delivered from sin?

I remember an ancient crucifix in the public square of a Brittany village which no one passed without bending the knee. In the morning the workmen on their way to the fields and the little children going to school bowed before that stone figure of the Christ, which the storms of many centuries had worn almost out of human semblance. The last night of my stay in the village, as I was being whirled through the little square on my way to the station, I saw in the gathering gloom an old woman bent almost prostrate before that figure. Her hands were clasped and her uplifted face seemed to speak of long-borne suffering. I could

not know the bitterness of that poor heart; but her eyes were turned toward the infinite source of help. O beloved, the hand of the crucified Christ lifts every burden, heals every wound and saves the sinner from the shame and penalty and bondage of sin!

(3) Another symbol which frequently occurs in the catacombs is *the anchor*. Its reference is to the Christian's hope, which

> Like the glimmering taper's light
> Adorns and cheers the way,
> And still as darker grows the night
> Emits a brighter ray.

It is spoken of in this wise: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." The life of those heroic believers of the early times was indeed like a stormy voyage; but they had with them a safe chart and steadfast anchor, and looked therefore toward a final and eternal haven of rest. The ground of their assurance was Christ risen and triumphant, who had gone on before to fasten the fluke of their anchor on the Rock of Ages.

We are informed that Lieutenant Peary has, after long endeavor, reached the North Pole. His hope was generally regarded as a forlorn one. But suppose that he had been definitely advised that his superior officer had gone on before him and

reached the extreme north; and suppose that, as the weary days of hardship followed one another, he could see through the clear Arctic atmosphere the waving of his captain's banner afar off; would he not, think you, have plucked up courage to press on?

This was precisely what those early Christians saw in their dreams, the hand of their Forerunner beckoning. The affliction of the present time was only for a hand-breadth at most, while the future was illuminated with "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" a moment here, eternity yonder; affliction now, glory for ever! Let weeping endure for a night, since joy was coming in the morning!

(4) And still another of the symbols of the catacombs was *the palm-branch*. Its significance is emphasized by the fact that beside it are frequent portrayals of hooks and forceps and iron combs for tearing the flesh. By this we are advised that the palm-branch was reserved for the martyr's grave.

Where are those martyrs now? John the evangelist saw them in one of his visions in Patmos: "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What

are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7:9-17.)

It is within our memory that Coleridge Patteson, an Eton boy, fired by the enthusiasm of Christ's Kingdom, went to the South Sea Islands in the hope of bringing the savages there to the knowledge of the Gospel. He labored for a time with unspeakable patience but no apparent result, and was finally beaten to death with clubs. Then his murderers, as if smitten with sudden compunction, laid his body in an open boat, crossed his hands, placed a palm branch on his breast, and watched while the winds bore him away upon the open sea. To-day there are multitudes of those people who revere his name. Was ever an imperial triumph like that? This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.

The end of the story of the catacombs came in

the year 404, on this wise. The feast of the Saturnalia was being celebrated in Rome. The Coliseum was filled with an expectant multitude. The games were under way. The foot-races and chariot-races were followed by the play of Orpheus, in which the hero was doomed to the beasts. The people had tasted blood and clamored for more. The gladiators came forth, saying, *Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutamus!* They crossed swords and went down one by one, the people gloating over their death. This was witnessed by brave knights and centurions, by vestal virgins, by mothers and little children. But the choicest of the sports was yet to come. A cry was heard, "The Christians to the lions!" While the arena was being strewn with fresh sand, an old man sprang over the barriers, bareheaded, barefooted, clad in a hermit's garb, and cried, "O ye people, cease from the shedding of blood! There is a God who will avenge his own!" A moment of silence, and then the fury of the populace broke forth. He folded his hands and lifting his face in prayer calmly awaited his doom. A moment later his mangled body lay upon the sand; but the face of that monk, whose name is unknown, was long seen in dreams and visions of the night. His life had not been squandered; for that was the last martyrdom of the Coliseum. Not long afterward a decree of toleration was issued, and the Christians came forth from their hiding-places and gave praises for freedom to worship God.

How long ago it seems! What wonders have been wrought since then! Let us come out of the mouldy passages of the catacombs, so eloquent of the past, and look around us. Here are the Seven Hills; the desolate Campagna stretches afar; the sluggish tide of the Tiber still rolls by. The Forum is here, but its columns are crumbling and the voices of its mighty ones are hushed. Yonder on the Palatine was Nero's Golden House; its site is marked by a Capuchin monastery. Listen, and you may hear the monks droning their vespers! Nero's gardens were just over there, once lit by living torches, the Christians being smeared with pitch and set on fire to illuminate the revels. In the midst of those gardens now rises the dome of St. Peter's, with its great golden cross shining red in the light of the setting sun. The walls of the Flavian amphitheatre which rang with the cry, *"Ad leones!"* are broken and gray, and solitude pervades it. On yonder arch of Titus, commemorating the pagan conquest of Jerusalem, is the figure of the golden candlestick; but He that standeth in the midst of the golden candlestick has triumphed over all. Above that arch rises another, spanning the heavens and the earth, a bow of promise painted with all the splendors of sunlight shining through the tempests of history; and there is a cry, "Hosanna! hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The skies are opened and One draws near whose right it is to reign, crowned with a diadem of stars and accom-

panied by a retinue of angels praising him and saying, "Thou art worthy to receive power and dominion and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing, for ever and ever!"

The days of persecution are past, but the holy war is still on. The possibilities of moral heroism are greater now than ever. It takes more courage to lie still and suffer for Jesus' sake than to climb the steep but short ascent of martyr's pain. It takes more courage to face derision than to stand bound at the stake in a circle of flame. Many a man decorated for heroism on the thin red line has gone down before a pointed finger. In these piping times of peace the great temptation is to yield unresistingly to the specious allurements of sin. By our blood-bought heritage in the memory of the noble army of martyrs, let us, in the face of duty and temptation, quit ourselves like men!

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

8. *PRAYER*

I thank thee, Lord, for the record of those who have bravely climbed to heaven by the steep path of martyrdom. Help me to follow

in their train. If I am shut up in a narrow and lonely place help me there to show forth thy praises, as Paul and Silas sang in prison at Philippi. Blessed be thy name, thou givest songs in the night! There is no loneliness when thou art near; there is no darkness when thou showest the light of thy countenance. If I am ever called to suffer for the truth's sake help me to suffer gladly. Stay by me in the hour of trial and temptation, that I may be loyal to truth, fearless in the discharge of duty and faithful unto the end, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH SERVICE

The Half-way Man

1. *INVOCATION*

MY SOUL waiteth for thee, O Lord; yea, more than they that watch for the morning. Be pleased to make thy presence known, else this will be a barren hour. I do believe thou art here, nearer than touching or seeing. May all blessings come with thee. Help me now to yield myself wholly unto thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Psalm 84.
Luke 18:9-30.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, my Father, in weakness and sinfulness I appeal unto thee, in the name of thy beloved Son, for pardon and sustaining grace. Amid the confusing voices of the world I am in constant danger of being led away from truth and righteousness; wherefore lead me, I pray thee, in the right way. Reveal unto me clearly the great verities of the spiritual life and the eternal principles of character;

and, in so far as I have already attained, help me to brace myself against my convictions and let the crowds sweep by. Make me more and more indifferent to the fashion of this world and more and more mindful of thy holy will. Save me from the thralldom of popular opinion; and lead me into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Let every Thus-saith-the-Lord be an end of controversy for me. For I know that my welfare runs in the pathway of thy law. Help me so to search the Scriptures as to find thee, O Christ; for thou hast said: "They are they which testify of me." Help me to read thy name between all its lines and to practice thy precepts in my daily life. Be thou my pattern and my guide. Make me a blessing to my friends and neighbors. May they love thee better and serve thee more faithfully by reason of my example of faithfulness. Let all thy people be true to the truth as thou givest them to see it. Lead thy Church out of the vale of shadows into the heights of clear vision and communion with thee. Hasten the time when all those who call themselves Christians shall believe that Christ was what he claimed to be and when all half-way believers shall prostrate themselves before thee, as doubting Thomas did, crying, "My Lord and my God!" So make thy Church a mightier agency for the evangelization of the

world and hasten the coming of thy kingdom, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Rock of Ages."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Half-way Man

"And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God." (Luke 18: 18, 19.)

If Christ were to appear on earth to-day, the people would generally, I think, be glad to receive him. But they would divide themselves into two classes: one of them addressing him, like this young ruler, as "Good Rabbi"; the other, in the words of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" And the form of salutation would make all the difference in the world. It would, moreover, be a matter of vital importance with which of these groups we should take our position; for the immeasurable gulf of destiny would roll between them.

A light is thrown, by this consideration, on the attitude of this ruler toward Christ. He was young, wealthy and influential, of irreproachable character, quite candid and so amiable that Christ, "beholding him, loved him." Yet Christ refused to receive his salutation, "Good Master," because

it betrayed the fact that he utterly failed to grasp his divine work and message. He loved him, yet parted company with him.

This man stands as a type of a numerous class of half-way people in our time, who are moral, respectable and truly amiable, but not to be called Christians because they refuse to admit that Christ was what he claimed to be.

Some of these people never go to church, but are scrupulous in paying deference to Christ in their way. Others are regular attendants at church, but have no organic connection with it. They are generous patrons of its missionary enterprises and frankly admit that the church is the controlling factor in the problem of universal progress; and they, too, render homage to Christ in their way.

Still others are Church members, but with a reservation. They repeat the Apostles' Creed and bow where it says: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His Son"; but they call themselves "broad-gauge Christians," because they hold to a form of Christianity broader than that which was preached by Christ himself, though they still insist that they believe in him. All such would address him as "Good Master," rather than as their Lord and their God.

But what difference does it make how we address him, or indeed how we regard him, so long as we live an upright life and follow in his steps? Much, every way. The form of address involves

a principle which lies at the very basis of the Christian life.

When Cromwell was Lord Protector he received a letter from Louis XIV. of France addressed "To his Most Serene Highness, Oliver, Lord Protector of England"; but he refused to receive it, because this was not the phrase used by monarchs in communicating with their equals. He was next addressed by Louis as "Our Dear Cousin"; and again he refused to receive it. Whereupon the king consulted his minister, the Cardinal Mazarin, who advised him to use the customary mode of address, namely, "Our dear Brother." "What?" cried Louis, "would you have me call this base fellow my brother?" To which his astute counselor replied, "Yes, your majesty; or you will presently have him beating at the gates of Paris!" For a like reason the address which a man uses in approaching Christ is important, since it determines the question whether or no he believes that Christ is the veritable Son of God.

The position assumed by this ruler and others like him is wholly untenable. It is that of a man pursued by his enemies, making a dash for the gateway of the castle and pausing in the open, under fire both ways. In fact, however, there is no middle ground to stand on. The alternative is this: Christ was either an impostor or he was what he claimed to be.

If we can determine precisely what the ruler

meant by this form of salutation, we shall discover why Christ rejected it.

(1) It may be that he used it in the conventional sense, as when one begins a letter "My dear Sir."

A man may thus introduce a challenge to a duel. Or he may write, "My dear Sir: I beg to inform you that I have just sworn out a warrant for your arrest." Christ had no patience with mere conventionalities or with meaningless and hollow phrases. He was a plain, honest man. He said: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the greetings in the markets, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi; be not ye called so."

What were such epithets to him? He had worn the crown of the universe, and was to wear it again. He had listened to the adorations of an innumerable host of angels. What were empty titles to him?

(2) Or perhaps the salutation was used in the scholastic sense.

"Rabbi" was indeed the usual title by which Jewish pupils were accustomed to address their teachers. But this ruler went further in his approach to Christ, calling him "Good Rabbi." It was as if he said, "Thou art the wisest of teachers." This, however, did not go far enough. Christ claims to be wiser than the wisest. First among equals will not do. He has no peers. He

cannot be mentioned in the same breath with Plato, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Sakyamuni and other philosophers. He stands solitary and alone; wiser than the wisest and better than the best of them all.

His teaching was characterized by some features which distinguish it from the teaching of all others. It was said of him, "Never man spake like this man." His treatment of the great problems of the spiritual life was so singular that the question was raised again and again, "Whence hath this man letters?"

For one thing, his knowledge was intuitive. He bore no diploma from any university. The truths which he declared were those of which he was cognizant while he dwelt "in the glory of the Father before the world was."

And another point in which he surpassed all others was that his knowledge was infinite. It is a singular fact that in his few brief discourses he covered all the great problems of truth and ethics. He knew all things. "He knew what was in man." He knew the factors that were to solve the problems of the coming ages. His mind was a cyclopedia of the universe. In other words, his knowledge was Omniscience. The whole infinite sweep of truth was before him.

And another of the differentiating factors in his teaching was its authority. Those who listened to him saw that "he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes"; that is, he used the *ipse dixit*.

You will search in vain through his teachings to find a "Thus saith the Lord." His word invariably is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

But the one pre-eminent fact by which his teaching was separated from and infinitely exalted above that of all other teachers whomsoever is that he claimed to be Truth personified. He said, "I am the Truth." This being so, it is obvious that on the one hand we cannot receive Christ without receiving his teaching as authoritative and ultimate every way; and, on the other, that we cannot receive the teaching of Christ without receiving Him.

It is logically impossible to pick and choose, as those do who laud the Golden Rule and reject the parable of the House Builded on the Sand; who praise the story of the Prodigal Son while declining to accept that of Dives and Lazarus; who eulogize the Beatitudes while ignoring the woes and warnings addressed to those who reject the King's Son.

(3) Or perhaps the young ruler used the title Good Master in the ethical sense, as if to say, "Thou art the best of men."

In this case his position was no less untenable, since Christ claimed to be better than the best. So far as I am aware there are only seven kinds of people in the world.

First: those who appear to be totally bad; of whom we know that there must be somewhere a modicum of goodness in them.

Second: those who appear to be thoroughly good; of whom we are sure that there must be a joint somewhere in their harness, since all mortal men are under the dominion of sin.

Third: those who wear their vices on their sleeves for daws to peck at; who reel through the streets and seem to glory in their shame.

Fourth: those who are clever enough to conceal their faults; whose vices, such as envy, avarice and sordid ambition, are so eminently respectable as to escape blame.

Fifth: those who frankly confess that they are no better than they ought to be; like the publican who beat upon his breast, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Sixth: those who parade their virtues like the Pharisee who prayed, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are!"

Seventh: the mask-wearers, who deceive others, at times deceive themselves, but never deceive the God who looketh on the hearts of men.

In these categories are included all the children of men.

All but One! There is One who stands without the circumference of the sinful race, claiming to be better than the best of them all. He is the only man who ever lived so as to merit the verdict, "I find no fault in him." He is the only man who ever lived under the Law and was as good as the Law. He is the only man who ever "brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his light."

He is the only man who ever claimed to be a perfectionist without being challenged as a pretender. He is the only man who ever uttered the challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" with none to dispute it.

Was he then a sinless man; and is that all? Plato says, "It is impossible that any man should be called a good man; because none can be perfectly good but God." So, then, one who is disposed to look on Christ, as Pilate did at Gabbatha, saying, *Ecce homo!* "Behold the man!" must, by the irresistible force of logic, go on to say, *Ecce Deus!* "Behold, the very God of very God!"

4. Or possibly the young ruler used the title Good Master in the altruistic sense, as meaning "Thou art the kindest of men."

This again was true as far as it went, but it did not go far enough. The life of Christ was one of constant love and charity. Not once did selfishness get the better of him. His biography is written in the words, "He went about doing good." Yet to say so much is to force ourselves to say more; to wit, he was better than the best of men.

If we follow the story of his gracious life, we shall see him healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing and ministering to all the needs of the children of men; but if we follow far enough we shall find ourselves at the foot of Calvary; and there comes the crucial test of our devotion to him. Shall we go back, having gone so far, or shall we follow him up the steep path to the Cross?

Are we prepared to pursue the logic of "Good Master" to its very end?

The Cross is the one great deed of benevolence shining in the world's history like a brilliant star in an otherwise unbroken night. Lift up your eyes and see! He is bearing the world's sin in his own body yonder. My friend, he is dying for you, that by faith in his atoning blood you may receive remission of your sins. Do you believe that? Can you stand under the dropping of the warm blood and say, "Good Rabbi"? Oh, no! There are multitudes who praise and applaud and compliment Christ for his goodness until they come to Golgotha; and there they halt, turning away their faces from him. This ground is untenable. The argument drives us back and away from the Cross to the position of Voltaire who rejected Christ as an impostor, or it leads us on, as it led Rousseau, to exclaim, "Verily, he died like a God!"

(5) In any case it would appear that the young ruler meant to use the term "Good Master" in no other than the Unitarian sense.

He would have been willing to call Christ almost anything except "Son of God." Arius, Spinoza, Rousseau, Goethe, Channing, David Strauss, Theodore Parker, Renan, all of them go thus far.

But how can they go thus far and no further? Do they forget the stupendous claims which Jesus made? How could he be an honest man without

being what he claimed to be? And wherein was he better than an impostor if he was not what he claimed to be? At his trial he was charged with many offences; such as disturbing the peace, deluding the people, denying the sovereignty of Cæsar and conniving at insurrection; but there was only one charge to which he entered the plea of guilty, only one that was proven against him, only one that was nominated in the death sentence; namely, the charge of blasphemy, in that "he made himself equal with God."

The record of the young ruler ends with what Dante calls his "Great Refusal," which is recorded in the words, "He went away sorrowful." It is hard to believe, however, that the story ended there. He was so much in earnest, so candid and apparently so open-minded in his desire to arrive at the truth, that he must have continued to ponder the question "Who is this Jesus which is called the Christ?"

He may have been in Jerusalem a few days later when Christ came down the road from Olivet while the people, going before and coming after, shouted, "Hosanna, Hosanna to the Son of David!"

He may have stood in the Porch of the Temple and heard the discourses of Christ on the great problems of the endless life. If so, the question "Who is he?" must have knocked, like an importunate stranger, at the gateway of his heart.

He may have been in the Hall Gazith when

Christ stood before the Sanhedrin for judgment, and when, in answer to the High Priest's demand, "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God!" he answered, "Thou hast said! Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven!"

Perhaps he was present in the court of Pilate when the prisoner was brought, clad in cast-off purple and wearing a crown of thorns, to answer for his life; when in reply to Pilate's question, "Art thou a king?" he said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth!"

Perhaps he followed the mob to Calvary and saw Christ, suspended between heaven and earth for three mortal hours, and heard his prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

It may be that he heard the rumor, three days after, that he had risen from the dead; nay, it is quite within the range of possibilities that he heard the story of the Magdalene, "As I wept at the open sepulcher, lo, he stood beside me! And I fell before his feet crying, 'Rabboni, my Master!'" If so, he surely thought within himself, "This is better than to say, 'Good Rabbi.'"

It may be that, later on, he stood with the company at Olivet, listening to the discourse of the risen Christ, heard him say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth! Go ye there-

fore, preach the evangel!" and then saw him rising out of the midst, with hands extended in benediction, as the open heavens received him.

Ah, then "Good Master" would surely serve no more to express his attitude toward Christ! In the company of those who stood gazing heavenward he must have felt the power of the truth surging through his soul and forcing a deep conviction, which is the logical end of all right thinking and can only express itself in the words, "My Lord and my God!"

8. *PRAYER*

Blessed Lord, I rejoice that every word of thine is pure. I have accepted thee as my Lord, my life, my sacrifice, my Saviour and my all. Stay by me and keep me faithful, thou strong Son of God, until I behold thee in thy majesty; and I will praise thee forever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Jesus, and shall it ever be!"

10. *BENEDICTION*

The blessing of God, the triune God, Father, Saviour and Comforter, be with you. Amen.

TWENTY-FIFTH SERVICE

Down by the Sheep-Market

1. *INVOCATION*

O God, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the sun and the moon which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou shouldst be mindful of him or the Son of Man that thou shouldst regard him? Yet thou callest me into thy presence to bless me! Help me to know my privilege; and grant thy benediction as I commune with thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Take my heart, O Father, take it."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Exodus 15:1-21.
John 5:1-18.

4. *PRAYER*

O Lord, thou art my shepherd; I shall not want. Thou makest me to lie down in green pastures; thou leadest me beside the still waters. Thou restorest my soul; thou leadest me in the paths of righteousness for thy Name's sake. Yea, though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. In view of thy many mercies, crowned by thy vicarious passion on the Cross, help me to hate sin as much as I love thee, for sin alone offends thee. Help me, therefore, to hate and abhor every shape and form of sin; not more the presumptuous sin that flaunts itself before the world than the secret sin which eats like a canker, unseen of men. And help me to love everything that makes for truth and righteousness, for self-respect and beneficence and thy glory. Make me a busy agent in the propagation of the Gospel; not only professing to be a Christian, but adorning that profession by right living and kindness toward all. Give me a constant desire to follow in thy steps, O gracious Son of God; that it may be written of me also, "He went about doing good." If thy footsteps lead to Bethesda, to the slums and abodes of sin and suffering, to attics and basements where the poor and friendless call for help, make me willing and eager to follow thee thither. And if I cannot go personally, show me how to reach the suffering by my sympathy and prayers and the contribution of my earthly substance. Let thy people everywhere serve thee, as ministers of mercy, by serving their fellow-men. Fill the world with kindly

deeds. Put down envy and hatred, wars and contentions of words, selfishness and meanness of every sort; and make everybody more charitable toward everybody else. Let the mind that was in thee be in every one who professes to love thee. So make thy Church, O blessed Saviour, an irresistible power of goodness in this sinful world of ours. Convict sinners of sin and bring them to salvation by thy grace. Make thy love known to the uttermost parts of the earth, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "Did Christ o'er sinners weep."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

Down by the Sheep-Market

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches." (John 5:2.)

We are hearing a great deal about Social Science in these days. For this let us be thankful, since all such terms as "society," "socialism" and "sociology" suggest a deeper study and clearer apprehension of the Brotherhood of Man.

I have just declined one of many similar invitations to a drawing-room meeting where a young expert was to hold forth on the Regeneration of

Society. I know this young man; his name is Legion. At college he imbibed the views of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer and other theorists who teach denatured altruism. After that he went to Germany for a post-graduate course and sat spell-bound under the instruction of those bespectacled dreamers who have done so much to make Germany the garden spot of Rationalism. Then he came back to America and spent a year in a University Settlement, preaching salvation without a Saviour and religion without a God. Thus splendidly equipped as a B.Sc. he magnanimously offers his services as Tutor to Parsons and other Ignorant Reformers and a Pursuivant of the Golden Age.

I propose to-day to attend with you a Sociological Conference of a different sort; not in a drawing-room nor in the parlors of a fashionable hotel, but down by the Sheep-Market in Jerusalem.

Here is an open booth with five porches, known as Bethesda, or "The House of Mercy." At its center is an intermittent spring. The porches are filled with impotent folk, "lame, halt and withered," waiting and watching for the moving of the water. The place is a veritable lazaretto, where incurables are left to their fate, unpitied and uncared for.

The Lecturer comes: a plain Man, clad in homespun. He is to hold a Clinic here to-day; and those who are interested in the Regeneration of Society, the relief of the suffering and the uplifting

of the masses, cannot do better than to observe his way of doing things.

For this is the great Sociologist; a divine compassion is in his heart, and in his fingers a superhuman skill. The patients in Bethesda do not know him. The professional Reformers of Jerusalem decline to recognize him, but his system of social therapeutics is destined to turn the world upside down and, incidentally, right side up.

He has been in the world now for a period of nineteen hundred years, going up and down among its lazarettos; and there are still many who do not know him. But those who profess to follow him, and all who are sincerely interested in practical philanthropy, will gladly learn of him; for their special business is to make the world happier as they pass on, and He, as their Master, is qualified to teach them how to do it.

First then, observe, *he went seeking the suffering.*

It was the time of the Purim Feast, which was the carnival of the Jews. The people were waving lulab branches, singing and making merry in the streets; but the heart of Jesus was heavy as he thought of the many lonely and friendless ones.

It is written of him that he came "to seek and to save the lost." The seeking comes before the saving. The beggars who meet us along the street, men lost to manhood, women with red faces seamed and scarred with vice and with thin shawls drawn about their shivering forms, tramps whin-

ing for "a penny for the love of heaven," all have their claim upon us. But these are not the people whom primarily we are bound to help. There is a whole world of shame and anguish that never comes into the open, but hides away, saying, "For God's sake, come and find me!"

These are known as "the submerged tenth." The phrase is eloquent of misery; for the waves and billows of adversity have gone over them. Here are men with proud spirits, dying for the want of a relief which they will never crave. Here are women working their fingers to the bone to keep soul and body together for themselves and their famishing children. Oh, if the roofs were lifted, if we could see into the attics, if we could look down into the basements, what dramas of misery we should see!

How many hours have you spent in the last twelvemonth, my friend, in going out along the highways and hedges after such as these? How closely have you been following in the steps of the great Philanthropist who turned his back on the merrymakers of Purim to seek the lonely sufferers?

Observe, second, *he found one.*

And here he parts company with much of the socialism of our time, which affirms that the individual is of importance only so far as he contributes to the preservation and improvement of the type. It has much to say of the regeneration of society and the betterment of the community. The idea is that if the environment is improved the

individual is bound to get the benefit of it. No doubt there is something in that; but the trouble is, it begins with the chimney in building its house.

The method of Christ is the very reverse. He begins with the betterment of one and makes that one a missionary for the betterment of others. This is the system of the endless chain; and the world would have been saved long ago, in pursuance of this divine plan, were it not that so many of the individual links have dropped out.

Observe, third, *he looked on this man.*

Let this be emphasized: for there are multitudes of good people who, while willing to relieve suffering, are most reluctant to contemplate it. "Oh, don't harrow my soul," they say. "Here is my purse; take what you want, but don't distress me." This is the merest quackery of benevolence. We are bound to contemplate the world's suffering. Go, look upon it! Witness for yourself the shame and hunger, the crime and anguish. See it with your own eyes, as Jesus saw it, if you would be able wisely to relieve it.

I believe in Associated Charities. It is quite right and proper that our plans of benevolence should be systematized and wisely administered. But there is always the danger that we shall shift the burden of personal responsibility in thus farming out our ministries of mercy.

Do we not oftentimes, in this manner, lose the advantage of personal contact, the generous pleasure of the kindly deed, the grateful "I thank you,"

and perhaps the final recognition, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"?

Observe, fourth, *he pitied him.*

And this was the more remarkable, since the man was suffering the just penalty of a vicious life. You and I might have said, "It serves him right! The inevitable Law of Consequences has laid its whip of scorpions upon him. He is reaping what he has sown. This is justice. Let him bear it!"

But do we not herein condemn ourselves? Are we not all suffering for sin? There are some, indeed, who wear their vices on their sleeves for daws to peck at; and when they are laid in the porches at Bethesda, all who see them bear witness to the tokens of their shame. But there are others whose sins are of a less conspicuous sort; and they are none the less abhorrent in the sight of God. By reason of the fact that "we have all sinned and there is no difference," we are none of us in a position to pass hasty judgment on others.

"There is so much that is good in the worst of us and so much that is bad in the best of us, that it ill behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us."

Not long ago I saw a singular sight in one of the surface cars. A young man was holding by a strap; and just behind him a young woman, whose face I could not see, clung to him with one arm about his waist, while with her other hand she patted him affectionately on the shoulder. "A

most unbecoming thing," said I to myself. Then she turned and I saw that she was blind. It was her sense of dependence that made her cling that way. So thoughtlessly do we pass judgment behind the backs of people.

> Who knows the heart, 'tis he alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord, its various tone,
> Each spring, its various bias.
> Then at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.

Observe, fifth, *he helped this man.*

Benevolence is not a sentiment; it is a principle. True philanthropy does not express itself in idle tears and empty words, but in the ministry of the helping hand.

A traveler in Egypt relates that he saw multitudes of sore-eyed, half-clad beggars running along the banks of the Nile, calling for "Help in the name of God;" while the captain of the boat, who was a Moslem, scarcely taking pains to turn his eyes toward them, kept repeating over and over, "Allah pity thee! Allah behold thee! Allah help thee!" An open hand with a penny in it is worth a lifetime of such futile pity.

Our Lord proved his compassion by helping the ill-deserving. Not only "God's poor" but "the Devil's poor" were the beneficiaries of his grace. As he passed through the villages all sorts of suf-

ferers were brought out and laid on couches along the way, and it is written of him that "he healed them all."

Observe, sixth, *he preached to this man.*

His sermon was a brief but effective one. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Here again he parts company with much of the philanthropy current in these days.

We are sagely advised that religion must be carefully excluded from all efforts to uplift the lapsed masses. In our "Social Settlements" there must be no mention of Christ or of the Gospel of his grace; no reference to the Cross or to salvation from sin.

Not so have we learned the philanthropy of Jesus. He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth"—that is, the sweetening and preserving power among men—"but if the salt have lost its savor"—in other words, if the power of your religion has gone out of you—"wherewith shall the earth be salted?"—that is, what real and lasting advantage will men get from your ministry?—"It is thenceforth good for nothing"—that is, your profession of religion is good for nothing—"but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."

As Jesus looked on this sufferer at Bethesda, he saw something deeper than his palsy, to wit, the disease of sin; and to this he addressed his healing grace. It would, indeed, have been a matter of small moment for the only begotten Son of God

to come all the way from heaven to heal a few blind, halt and withered, when the world was full of them. But his miracles of healing were incidental to his higher and supreme purpose, which was to answer the cry of helpless souls for deliverance from the power of sin.

It is but a meager service, comparatively, which a humanitarian renders to his fellows when he puts a better roof over their heads and better food upon their tables, and sends them out into eternity hungry and shelterless forever. He who pursues this plan confesses that in his inmost soul he believes a man to be no better than a sheep; since, in making no provision for the eternal life, he practically assumes that death ends all.

Observe, seventh, the Philanthropist who walked in the porches of Bethesda that day *is still walking among the sufferers.*

He came into a world which Luthardt characterizes as "a world without love;" and by his ministry along the centuries he has splendidly transformed it.

Go find a Bethesda in Christendom to-day if you can! Where are the porches filled with lame, halt and withered, abandoned and uncared for? To find such a "House of Mercy" you must go beyond the charmed circle which is called "Christendom" into the domain of the pagan religions. For the Evangel has come down through the ages, like Milton's angel of the morning, with light and healing in its wings. Go through one of our hospitals;

see the physicians passing along the wards, and the nurses in white caps and aprons moving with soft steps and ministering with gentle touch. Such are the "Bethesdas" of our time. All thanks to Jesus, the exemplar of philanthropy in all its most gracious forms!

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depths can drown;
But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again!
O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

On one of the cross streets leading out of Broadway there is a "bread-line" in which hundreds of hungry men and women stand waiting daily for a loaf to satisfy their hunger. If you follow up that bread-line you will come to the bakery; and in the proprietor of that establishment you will find the motive power. Such enterprises do not work automatically. In accounting for the progress of the centuries which separate between the porches

at Bethesda and the benevolent institutions of our time, we must needs give credit to Christ and his Gospel; else the so-called "Science of Sociology" is at its wits' end.

A few years ago an epoch-making pamphlet appeared with the title "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London." It presented a frightful picture of the shame and suffering of that populous city. It set people thinking about the multitudes who were suffering all about them while they sat by their comfortable firesides. Then a new word was coined: and "slumming" became the proper thing to do. The gentry and the nobility went about visiting the lapsed masses in the East End. Out of that fashion came not a little of wise and permanent beneficence, and with it also much that was shallow and evanescent. There is no real value in merely prying into the inner sanctum of misery. The point is, how can we relieve it?

A better word than "slumming" is evangelizing. For this takes in the betterment of the whole man, body and soul, as an immortal being made in the likeness of God.

The Clinic in Bethesda is over. One of its important lessons is this: it is a grave mistake to go slumming with nothing but bread and a medicine-chest. He that would render true and substantial help to the suffering must go to them not only with temporary help for their secular needs, but with the message of Christ, "Come unto me, all

ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Rest is what they want: rest from hunger and heart-ache and all the ills that human flesh is heir to; but more than that, immeasurably more, they need rest from the burden-bearing of the soul, its shame and vain regret, remorse and "certain looking for of judgment."

For this the Son of Man came into the world; and the world will never be at rest, society will never be regenerated, until the last sufferer has heard and believed that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

8. *PRAYER*

I thank thee, Lord and Saviour, that thou art the same yesterday, to-day and forever. In thine earthly ministry thou wast called the Good Physician; and from thy throne in glory thou dost still hear the cry for help and minister to the needs of all who call upon thee. I beseech thee for all those who are called to bear any cross or tribulation, that it may please thee to sustain them with the sweet comfort of thy Spirit until thou send a full deliverance; and, meanwhile, by their faith and constancy may they glorify thee. To those who carry the burden of unforgiven sin vouchsafe a vision of thy pardoning grace, that they may rejoice in thee. Take me with thee to Bethesda. Help me to apprehend thy loving

kindness with a faith so vital and practical that I shall be a laborer together with thee in all goodness; and thy name shall have the praise forever. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Go, labor on, spend and be spent."

10. *BENEDICTION*

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

TWENTY-SIXTH SERVICE

The Victory of Faith

1. *INVOCATION*

LORD God of Israel, there is none like unto thee in heaven nor in the earth, who keepest covenant with all them that humbly walk before thee. In thy great goodness thou hast promised to commune with those who seek thy presence. Commune with me now, I pray thee; open unto me the treasures of thy Word; accept my praise and prayer, and bless me, for thy Name's sake. Amen.

2. *HYMN:* "Jesus, thy Name I love."

3. *SCRIPTURE LESSON*

Joshua 6:1-20.
Hebrews 11:1-30.

4. *PRAYER*

O God, I thank thee for a place among those who are called and commissioned to work together for the advancement of thy kingdom on earth. No doubt thou couldst have saved the world by the sole exercise of thine omnipotence, flooding it as with a sunburst of glory; but for some inscrutable reason thou hast chosen to accomplish thy pur-

pose through the instrumentality of thy people of whom, thanks to thy redeeming grace, I am one. Point me clearly to the place assigned to me and help me to fill it with cheerful zeal and faithfulness. If it be a small place, like that of a caged bird, enable me to serve there without murmuring. I know thou requirest not of a sick man a well man's stint. Help me to do the next thing, though it be only to lie still and suffer, with submissive and joyful acquiescence in thy holy will. Let the service thus rendered, however small, be great in thy kind eyes. Keep me in line with thy purposes concerning me. Help me simply to trust and obey. Pardon my sins, my transgressions and shortcomings, my wilfulness and restless murmuring; for Jesus' sake. Help me to realize for thee the best that is possible for me. Enlarge my influence for good. Widen my views of thy kingdom and deepen my love toward all who have entered into its franchise of citizenship through faith in Christ. Bless the universal Church with a great blessing to-day. Wherever thy word is preached let it not return unto thee void, but accomplish that which thou dost please and prosper in the thing whereunto thou hast sent it. Behold, O Lord, the multitude of sinners who are calling unto thee for salvation. Hear their cry and enable them to trust in thee. Give them a clear vision of thy Cross.

Help them to cut loose from everything else, that they may believe in thee. And to thy name, O Saviour of the world, shall be glory, forever and ever. Amen.

5. *HYMN:* "He that goeth forth with weeping."

6. *OFFERING*

7. *THE SERMON*

The Victory of Faith

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." (Hebrew 11:30.)

The Children of Israel were at their wits' end. They had crossed the Jordan and could get no further. Two miles up the ravine they could see the fortified city of Jericho entrenched among the hills, and standing like a sentinel guarding the way.

It was little wonder that Joshua's heart sank within him. One night he went out to reconnoiter. From the edge of a palm grove in the moonlight he surveyed the city with its barred gates and towering walls. On a sudden "there stood over against him a man with a drawn sword." A challenge sprang instinctively to his lips. The answer was, "Nay; but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come!"

It was, indeed, the Angel of the Covenant, the same that had gone before Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire. He had come now to mark out a

definite plan for the taking of Jericho; and the like of that plan was never seen in military tactics. The arrangement of troops was to be as follows: A band of armed men were to lead the way; then seven priests with rams' horns; after that a company of Levites bearing the Ark of the Covenant; then another body of armed men. In this order they were to compass the city once a day for an entire week, keeping silence in the ranks. On the seventh day they were to go round about the city seven times; then the priests were to blow upon the rams' horns, all were to shout with one accord, and the walls of Jericho would come tumbling down!

If ever a man's faith was put to a desperate test, it was in this particular case. The plan proposed would not have passed muster before any military tribunal on earth. What was Joshua to do about it? He was a man of faith; and as such he was under bonds to offer no word of demur or hesitation. The outcome proved his wisdom. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

Here is the secret of success in all things pertaining to the spiritual life.

The Jericho that blocks our way to the land of milk and honey is sin. Its walls "tower to heaven." How to get past it into the kingdom of truth and righteousness is the question which concerns the soul of every earnest man. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

At this point the Lord holds counsel with us as he did with Joshua under the palm trees. He has a plan to propose which, in its essential features, is as foolish as the proposition to reduce the fortifications of Jericho by silent circumvallation. Its outcome is as certain, but faith alone can realize it.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down; and by faith the towering heights of sin, which separate between us and our birthright, are removed, so that we may receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God.

The matter in hand is one of supreme importance to every man. There is no occasion for dwelling on the fact of sin. That is as plain as the fortress on the heights. It is equally unnecessary to prove that "without holiness no man shall see God." The question is, "How shall we overcome sin?" The answer is, "Faith is the victory." Let us see, now, how Faith proceeds:

I. *It begins by throwing up its hands.*

On that moonlight night, when Joshua gazed on Jericho with its barred gates and impregnable walls, he knew that he was totally unable to overcome it. But just there through faith was the beginning of his strength. "I will glory in my infirmities," says Paul, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak then am I strong. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

So long as a man believes that he can work his own way to heaven, he will not believe in Christ.

Put that down as a certainty. Faith begins where eyesight ends. Spiritual power is born at the death bed of self-reliance. God's opportunity is man's extremity. He interposes when we are at our wits' end. If you think you can take Jericho, he will allow you to go ahead and try it. Experience teaches. The opening song in the Psalter of the new life is this:

> Not the labors of my hands
> Can fulfil thy law's demands.
> Could my zeal no respite know,
> Could my tears forever flow,
> All for sin could not atone;
> Thou must save, and thou alone!
>
> Nothing in my hand I bring;
> Simply to thy cross I cling;
> Naked, come to thee for dress;
> Helpless, look to thee for grace;
> Foul, I to the fountain fly;
> Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

II. *Then Faith falls on its knees and calls upon God.*

The Children of Israel kept the Passover before they began the silent march. It involved them in a week's delay and gave the enemy a corresponding opportunity of strengthening his defenses. But no matter, the Passover must be kept. The lamb was slain, the altar blazed, the prayers were made; and Israel was brought face to face with God.

The man who is in earnest in the matter of salvation makes a grievous mistake if he does not

pray. God is ever waiting, like the visitor in the moonlight of the palm grove, to confer with us. Why are we so unwilling to talk with him? "Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel, be soft!" The resources of God's wisdom and power are infinite; it is, therefore, the part of immeasurable folly to lean upon our own weakness rather than to confer with him.

III. *Faith next finds out the divine plan and falls in with it.*

Had Joshua followed the usual method, he would have called a council of war. One of his lieutenants might have advised the reduction of Jericho by sapping and mining; another the planting of catapults on the surrounding hills to batter down the walls; and still another might have insisted that the only hope was in a protracted siege and the slow process of famine. But Joshua did the best thing; he hearkened to what the Captain of the Lord's host had to say about it.

The plan of salvation is divinely marked out. It is an old plan; old as the protevangel, "The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head." There are other and newer plans; the pathway of philosophy through the centuries is strewn with them; but not one of them proposes a method of deliverance from the record of past sin. There are ethical systems without number, suggestions of reformation and earnest purpose; but they leave the past uncanceled and the soul unshriven of its

sins. The fortress of Past Transgression, like Jericho, still bars the way.

The only scheme of salvation which has ever met the necessities of the case is briefly comprehended in these words: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." The past is thus disposed of and the future is overarched with a rainbow of hope. And "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

The whole campaign is thus indicated in one word, "Believe"; that is, Believe in Christ and accept him as your deliverer from sin!

IV. The next thing that Faith does is to *get hold of a promise.*

In the case of Joshua, the promise was one which had been given to Abraham four hundred years before. It was now renewed by the Captain of the Lord's host, who said, "I will deliver Jericho into thy hand." That was enough for Joshua. He accepted it.

It is a great thing at the outset to have a promise. A young man writing me from a Western town says, "I am ambitious to come to New York and make my way. Can you give me a word of encouragement? I must have something to bank on." What enheartenment there is in a word of divine assurance! A soul going on to eternity needs something "to bank on"; and the Bible is full of exceeding great and precious promises.

But, as to the matter of personal salvation, they are all reduced to one, namely, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." Here is no if, or perhaps, or peradventure; the word is "shall." Let the doubting soul get hold of that promise, meditate upon it, spread it out before God and rest on it.

As the plan of salvation is an old one, so is this promise a tried one. No man ever trusted in it and lost his life. Heaven is full of redeemed sinners who have accepted it and gone on past Jericho into the Land of Inheritance; and they sing, "Worthy art Thou to receive honor, and glory, and power and dominion; for Thou hast redeemed us!"

V. Then, having learned the divine plan and gotten hold of the promise, Faith *proceeds to business.*

Joshua and the Children of Israel did precisely as the Angel of the Covenant required them to do; they formed in line, took the Ark with them, kept silence in the ranks and went round and round the city.

On the first day the guards standing on the ramparts of Jericho saw the strange procession come down the road from Gilgal and begin its march.

On the second day they, no doubt, remarked upon the singularity of the proceeding.

On the third day they exchanged glances and smiled.

On the fourth, many of the citizens of Jericho turned out to see the grotesque pantomime.

On the fifth, there was increasing hilarity.

On the sixth, they laughed aloud and shouted at the marchers. There were the same priests, the same rams' horns, the same wooden chest, the same solemn, silent procession. If the onlookers were given to rhyming, they said something like this:

"The King of France, with twice ten thousand men,
Marched up the hill and then marched down again."

On the seventh day the procession, having completed its singular performance, did not turn again into the Gilgal road, but kept on until it had compassed the city seven times. Then on reaching the great gate of Jericho it paused; the priests lifted the twisted horns to their lips and sounded a blast, whereat all the armed men began to shout with one accord, "Jehovah nissi! The Lord our banner!" Thereupon the people standing on the walls felt the solid foundations under their feet begin to shake and tremble as if ten thousand giants were tugging at them. They laughed no more, but clung to one another with blanched faces; and in another moment the bulwarks reeled, tottered, and fell asunder! Then, amid the cries of the wounded and dying, over the ruined walls the army of Israel marched into Jericho, "every man straight before him." The faith of Joshua was vindicated. The word of the Lord endureth forever. His name is Yea and Amen.

God honors faith. Faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Faith is the secret of eternal life.

But faith without works is dead. The man who truly believes proceeds to act. "Whatsoever the Lord saith unto you, do it." The pathway of salvation is that of exact obedience. A passive faith is no faith at all. People do not reach heaven by sitting in their pews and singing hymns.

Off yonder is a vessel on the sea; let us hail it:

"Ship ahoy!"

"Aye, aye."

"Whither are you bound?"

"To Canaan's happy shore."

"Where's your skipper?"

"Down below."

"Where's your helmsman?"

"Down below."

"Where are your crew?"

"Down below."

"What are you doing?"

"Drifting."

"You'll never get there!"

And they never will. People do not reach Canaan's happy shore that way. The Israelites did not pass the fortress of Jericho by staying in camp. Our Lord said that heaven is for those who "strive to enter in."

So, then, the secret of life is to believe in Christ and act accordingly. It is to take God precisely at his word, when he says that the blood of

Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. This is the Gospel which, as Paul says, is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks; but to them that believe, the wisdom and power of God.

In the possession of this secret, and in pursuance of the divine plan thus marked out, the followers of Christ are moving on to the conquest of the world. Their only weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Their preaching, by force of example as well as in pulpit ministration, is destined to overthrow all strongholds of evil. It is, indeed, "the foolishness of preaching," and of itself as incompetent to save the world as were those rams' horns to blow down the walls of Jericho. To human eyes it is a hopeless task. This marching round and round, this blowing of horns, this silence, this shouting—is this all?

Nay; add the power of God and you have victory. God must not be left out of the reckoning. God being with us, we shall win the world yet. We follow the divine plan. "He never fails who sides with God."

The Church is on the march. Shall I fall in line?

One of the memories of my boyhood is of an old soldier who had been a drummer boy at the battle of Trenton. How his dim eyes would glisten when he told of the part he had taken in the war for independence! A boy with a drum, only; but he did what was required of him.

Thus in pursuance of the divine plan all Christians are laborers together with Christ, compassing the walls of the enemy and awaiting the time when they shall march in, "every one straight before him." To hold aloof from this holy war would be the mistake of my life. The unspeakable joy of heaven will be that I had a hand in it.

8. *PRAYER*

I pray for a simpler faith, O Lord, and for a spirit of more implicit obedience, an obedience that shall be not only immediate and exact but cheerful and enthusiastic. To that end enable me to believe more fully in thine infinite wisdom, power and love toward me. I now consecrate myself anew to thy service. Be pleased to use me, wherever and howsoever thou wilt; only be with me, and help me to realize thy presence even unto the end, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

9. *HYMN:* "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah."

10. *BENEDICTION*

The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift upon thee the light of his countenance and give thee peace. Amen.

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