

THE COMPASS

EDWIN L. McILVAINE

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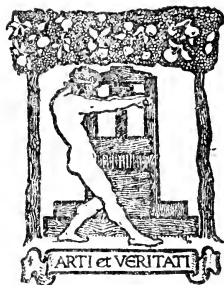
BR 125 .M34 1918^A
McIlvaine, Edwin L. 1873-
1962.
The compass

THE COMPASS

By

EDWIN L. McILVAINE

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TORONTO: THE COPP'CLARK CO., LIMITED

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THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON, U. S. A.

TO THE MEMORY OF
JAMES DAVID MOFFAT
TEACHER, PREACHER, MASTER-CHRISTIAN
THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

FOREWORD

AS the years roll on, and the experience of life broadens and deepens, it is very natural that certain truths and principles of life should come to appeal with peculiar power to the man who thinks. The same truths will not appeal to all. Each will have his own peculiar choice, determined in large part by the temperament of the individual, the home influences to which he has been subjected, and the educational bent which he has received.

In the pages which follow, the author has striven to set down in a clear and helpful fashion a few of the great truths of the religion of Jesus Christ which have had peculiar value to him, and which he has seen prove themselves of great practical value in the lives of many others during the past twenty or more years. It is in the hope that these truths may, through this means, reach a much wider audience and bring to many others a measure of added comfort, inspiration, and strength of noble manhood and womanhood, that they are now offered to the world that reads and thinks.

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THE COMPASS

I

THE COMPASS

“Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

(SAINT PAUL, Philippians 4:8).

IN the days of old, when the mariner started upon his voyage, he sought his compass in the skies. Standing, at morning, face to face with the rising king of day, he knew that behind him was the west, at his right hand the south, and at his left hand the north. Thus was he enabled to determine his course for the day, and to hold to it without wandering. When the night hour came he fixed his gaze upon steadfast Polaris, the star of the north, and though darkness was upon the face of the waters, continued, straight as an arrow from the bow string, toward the haven of his hopes. In these later days, with eye fixed upon the compass upon his own deck, whose magic

needle points ever northward toward the steadfast star, he pursues his unfailing course, though waves may beat and storms may roar, across the pathless waters. But the compass must be before. If he find it in the skies, or in the magic needle upon his own deck, the same. He must have it. Without it he is lost; with it he is at home on every sea.

Life is an ocean, and we are all mariners. It has its sand bars and sunken reefs; its whirlpools and its undertow. It has its times of calm and times of storm; its waves rippling in the summer sun, and its waves foam-capped and mountain-high before the storm. A lost wanderer is he who does not have a compass to guide him straight through its confusion and the deadly peril of its sin. Here is to be found the secret of those well nigh countless disasters upon the shores and in the deeps of life's ocean. A magnificent life barque, of the very greatest promise, sets out upon its voyage, and all seems well. But in a little time we see it again; and the spars are gone, the masts broken, the rudder hanging useless, a dismantled hulk on the ocean's shore. The mariner had lacked a compass, or had lost it, or had failed to read aright its reckoning.

Again we see a beautiful vessel leave its port and start upon its voyage. Day after day it holds unswerving on its course until the middle of the vasty deep is reached. Then a storm arises, and

in the midst of the storm she is seen to act as if bewildered; she loses her course, and, at last, is driven on the rocks and goes down, a wreck. Again the compass has been lacked, or lost, or its reckoning misread.

Another life barque we see unfurl her sails and set out upon the untried sea. Almost immediately she begins to sail amid shoals and rocks, and upon her the breakers beat, and about her the tempests roar. Yet through it all she moves majestically on her way, and arrives, amidst the acclaim of waiting multitudes, safe in the haven on the farther shore. The secret? Only this: with his eye upon the compass, and a strong hand on the helm, the sailor had won the victory. He could not fail.

Friends, all—I bring you such a compass at this hour. By it you may guide your life unerringly, if you will. Fix your eyes upon it! Listen to its directions! “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Noble words those, surely, to describe the content of any life—“true,” “honest,” “just,” “pure,” “lovely,” “of good report!” Yet they are not too noble! They set before us a high ideal. Yet it is not too high. Why? Because our natures are so constituted

that it is ever necessary for us to aim higher than the mark which we hope to hit.

Many of you probably have seen, at some time, gunners aiming a gun at an object a great distance removed from the place where the gun was standing. How did they do it? Did they do it by pointing the gun directly at the object which it was proposed to hit? Not at all! On the contrary, the gun was aimed, as it were, high above the object, and to the untutored it must seem as though they were indulging in an act of the sublimest folly. But if the observer were to stand and watch for a little time he would be convinced that he, and not they, had been guilty of folly. Their action was most profoundly reasonable; for they knew that there necessarily must be a strong attraction between the earth and the heavy missile which they were to cast, and they must make allowance for that attraction, and overcome it, or else miss the object at which they had aimed.

It is not different in relation to the matters with which we are dealing at this time. There is an attraction in the things of the spirit just as strong as in things material. When the spirit seeks for high attainment it must make due allowance for the attraction of that world of spiritual evil which surrounds, and so influences, the life of every individual, and it must in some way overcome that influence or else it will miss its goal, and be disappointed in the effort to attain to its ambi-

tions. This is the reason we never rise as high as our ideals. This is the reason we must place before our minds, and keep constantly there, the goal of perfection in all things in order that we may be able to do our best with the imperfect powers at our command. Place before your eyes, therefore, the goal of perfection as the goal of your lives. Expect it! Live for it! But be not disappointed if you do not attain it; for we live in the midst of a world of sin, and as long as we are possessed of a sinful nature, sin will influence us, and our best effort will be weakened by it. The one thing for us to do is to strive; and in the striving to gain strength, grace, and glory.

And, now, to the reading of the compass itself. I know not how better to impress its meaning than by examining somewhat carefully the import of each of the words which Paul, the Apostle, has chosen to express the various aspects of the ideal character. They are not chosen at random, and it is solely because of the profit that I know must come to us all from this study that I venture to enter upon it at all in this presence. This is a verse of scripture replete with significant words and deep meaning. Even the word in which we are bidden to think of these things is one of very unusual significance. We are not to think of them casually nor loosely, but deeply, seriously, and in such a way as to lead to definite and worthy conclusions. In order that I may impress this

fact, I need say nothing further than that the word in the original language is the very word from which we derive our word *logic*, the name for deep, systematic, correct thinking according to rule. It is thus we are to think on these things, giving to them the total of attention of every power of mind and soul.

Think thus, with every power of mind and of soul combined, on the true! And what is the true? I know of no subject on which our ideas are more hazy than on this; and it will not be amiss, therefore, for us to seek to come, with Paul, to a deeper understanding of his meaning. Whatsoever others may mean, or may fail to mean, by it, he does not leave us in doubt. His word is perfectly transparent. And so we will find it the whole way through. He uses a compound word here, the first part of which is the negative prefix, like our prefixes *in* and *un*, and the second part, the root which means *concealed* or *hidden*. The true, therefore, as he conceives it, is the unconcealed, the unhidden. And it is not concealed, or hidden, because it is so open, so frank, so upright, so free from evil of every shade and degree, that it needs no concealment, no hiding. Ah, hearer mine, do you not instantly perceive the nobility of this conception of life? One life there has been, lived in the presence of men, so open, so frank, so good, that after three and thirty years, when his enemies sought witness against him, to take his life, they

found none. Though with wicked hands they crucified him, it was by the testimony of false witnesses, who hated all the more because no wrong could be found in that life so well known to them all. The true life wears its heart upon its sleeve so that all may see its beat, and may know that every action is but the mirror of a heart that is stained red with the blood of sympathy and warmed with the pulse of love. Brother—sister—bear me record in this—when you find yourself the object of suspicion on the part of others, it may be from the inherent evil of their minds; but the chances are tenfold greater that it is because of the forced concealment of evil in the secret places of your own life. Showing but a partial confidence toward others, you receive from them in return that which you yourself have bestowed. I can covet for you—I can covet for myself—as we are face to face with each other, nothing nobler, nothing better, than this unconcealed life—unconcealed because it needs no concealment.

Think thus on the honest! By this we are accustomed to mean the upright, the fair, the straightforward, the virtuous. But we do not stop thus on the surface today. Again we must let Paul explain himself, and he does it most significantly. He uses a word here which the Greeks were accustomed to use to describe their state of mind and feeling when they approached, and bowed in worship before, their gods. It means,

therefore, worshipful, the possession of those qualities of character and of life that would claim the worship and admiration and devotion of men. This is nothing less than a call to recognize the godlike and the divine in our natures—to live for it—to discard all else. It means the death of selfishness and the enthronement of love for others. It means the debasement of self and the uplifting of others. It means self-sacrifice, suffering, the use of power, the out-pouring of love and sympathy, all—for others, that they may be happy, that they may be blessed. Oh, that now we might understand the meaning of John's wondrous words: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!" If this we could know, then might we also know the fulness of the meaning which the Apostle has written into this one word for us.

Think thus on the just! We stand on better known ground here, and can speak with more of confidence. The word *just* is always used to describe relation to law. 'The man who fulfills all law is a just man. 'The man who is disobedient to law is necessarily unjust. He who fulfills the law of God is just in the sight of God. He who fulfills all laws that bind him as a man among men is just in the sight of men. What are the commands of God—the laws that men must obey

in order that they may be just before him? The Master Teacher has summed them up for us thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." This do and thou shalt live. This do and thou art justified in the sight of God.

We might well stop here, for duty to God well performed means duty to man discharged as well. But on this point we must specify a little. There are various spheres of usefulness which have been entered, or may be entered, by the members of this congregation. Some of you may have entered mercantile life. To use a yardstick that is a fraction of an inch short, or to use a pair of scales that loses a fraction of an ounce in every pound, while it may be putting money in your own, or in your employer's pocket, is not being just to your fellow-men.

Some of you may have entered the legal profession. To twist the truth by giving certain phases of the case an undue prominence because they are of value to your client, while passing entirely over others because they are hurtful to his cause, is just neither to the party in whose interest justice has been defeated, for justice

demands that he should pay the proper penalty of his crime; nor to the party on the other side of the case, for he has been wronged, and the law has simply established the wrong; nor is it just before God, for the lawyer has acted a lie in order to gain his ends, and the ends of his client.

Some of you may have entered the profession of the teacher. If so, it will not be just for you simply to "keep school;" for in doing this you wrong the pupil who suffers by your negligence, the patron who pays you for your services and does not obtain value received, and the school board which gave you its confidence and has had that confidence betrayed, and your own soul in accepting a trust and not discharging it. I use these illustrations simply in order that I may show that the demands of justice are as keen and sharp as a razor blade, and we cannot escape from them in our daily lives and relations with our fellows. Here we might enlarge almost indefinitely, but must not, for other important things call us onward.

Think thus on the pure! Paul's word here is the same root as that which means lamb. What so innocent, so spotless, so beautiful as the snow-white lamb of the spring-time! This the Apostle would have you and me to make the symbol of our lives. Reader mine, of whatever else you may allow yourself to be guilty, let me plead with you to keep yourself pure! Let only pure

thoughts dwell in your mind! Let only pure words pass your lips! Let only pure actions be indulged! Avoid impurity in any and every form; whether it come to you from books to be read, from companions with whom you mingle, or from pleasures which you may permit yourself—avoid it as you would the plague; for if it once fastens its contaminating fingers upon you, there is nothing that is noble, good, or true in your life or character that will escape its defiling touch. A maiden is prized just in proportion as she is modest, chaste, and spotless. May God hasten the day when the same standard shall be mercilessly applied to our younger and older men! Purity! It is thy life! Guard it as thou prizest thine own soul!

Think thus on the lovely! Aye, for it is worthy of thought. The world is in sore need of more beauty, more sweetness, more light. May your lives be fountains of all that is lovely, uplifting, refreshing in man's life! Then, though you may pass your days in humble positions and in lowly service, at the end will be written—glory!

Think thus on that which is of good report! A man's reputation, and doubly so a woman's, is the stock in trade. His reputation for integrity is the measure of his influence for good in any community in which he finds himself. This same reputation is the measure of the honors which he will receive at the hands of his fellow-men. Have

you ambitions? It is thoroughly right that you should have. Build them upon the solid foundation of Christ-like character and reputation for virtue, and there is no ambition that is consistent with the Apostle's earnest admonition to covet earnestly the best gifts, which is beyond your reach or wrong for you to entertain. By all the virtue that is in the world—by all that is worthy of praise, I plead with you to make these the things of your hourly endeavor.

And now, I have almost done. One word more and I am done. Up to this hour, deservedly or undeservedly, your life has been full of very real blessings. From this time onward may it be doubly so. But, above all, let it be filled with that truth, that honesty, that justice, that purity, that loveliness, that golden reputation, which I have tried so inadequately to picture to you in these lines. Then shall the blessing of heaven rest down upon your life in richest measure, and you shall be a blessing wherever you go.

In bringing my words to a close, I can express my last desire and crown this message in no better language than that immortal stanza of Bryant's:

“So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,

That thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and
soothed

By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

II

LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

“And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.”

(SAINT JOHN 3:19)

THERE is an infinite sadness about blindness. It may, with much justice, be looked upon as the greatest physical calamity. It at once awakens our sympathy, and the expression, “poor man!” rises involuntarily to the lips, and tears to the eyes. And why is it so? It is because we know that the light of life has gone out, and there is now naught but gloomy darkness. For the blind man the sun no longer shines, nor the moon gives her light, nor the stars twinkle like the knowing eye of some far-off friend. For him the flowers never spring in beauty, nor the rivulet sparkles in the sunshine and goes smiling on its gladsome way. For him there is no green grass with its velvety beauty, no blue sky that looks down complacently upon his life, no earth-born landscape with its thousand changing charms. For him the rainbow of promise never appears,

the diamond never shoots back the rays of the sun, the ruby never burns and glows with its warm, pure light. He sees the face of no loved one. The smile of gladness, the joy of welcome, the tear that speaks so much more eloquently to the heart than any words, are all unseen and their sweet thrill unfelt. Beauty has no meaning for him; he sees it not, nor can he truly know it. Sad, infinitely sad, is physical blindness!

But even sadder still would it be if we knew that the blindness were self-inflicted. We read with horror of the blindness inflicted in olden days upon Israel's king, because of his presumptuous rebellion. We brand his conqueror as inhuman, as lacking all the qualities of the manhood he disgraced. And yet, all around us are those who are bringing upon themselves a blindness immeasurably worse, and we blame them not, nor warn them, nor give them our sympathy. There is a physical blindness. There is also a spiritual blindness. The latter is more sad than the former by just so much as the spirit is more noble and God-like than matter. This spiritual blindness cannot be inflicted by another. It must come as the result of one's own wilful act. Ah, my friends, when we are permitting our sympathies to run with free rein for those who suffer from physical blindness, let us not forget to give a part, and a large part too, to those even more unfortunate ones, in whom the god of this world has blinded

their eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of the Christ, who is the image and the glory of God, should shine unto them. Theirs is the worse blindness, for it shuts their eyes to the beauty of Christ and to the claims of His salvation upon them.

This is the blindness that is spoken of in the language of Scripture which we study. Just prior to this the Master had been speaking about judgment and the escape from judgment. Here we have the judgment itself described to us, the judgment which is the natural consequence of our sins. Light is come into the world, but we love the darkness, remain in the darkness, and will not come to the light. This, too, is the judgment from which we are to seek escape, that our eyes may no longer be holden, but that we may see the light and learn to love it and live by it.

As the blindness which is here spoken of is not the blindness of the physical eye, so the light is not that of the physical world. It is, on the contrary, that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is Jesus the Christ, the light of the world. When our text says "light is come into the world," it means that Christ has come. And when it says that men, because their deeds were evil, loved darkness rather than light, it means that they loved the world of sin more than the Christ of righteousness, and the darkness of hopelessness better than the

light of assurance and a joyous confidence. When it says that light is come into the world, and men, refusing to come to the light, have pronounced judgment upon themselves, he says that the severest penalty that could be inflicted upon any sinful soul is simply to be unable to see the light as it shines in the Christ life, that sin is its own punishment and makes its own hell. I can conceive of nothing more terrible than that a soul should continue on its sinful way through unending ages. How little do the pleasures of sin satisfy even now! How soon do we become satiated and go wandering about the world, a disillusioned Childe Harold or a misanthropic Solomon. When you would read the book of Ecclesiastes, remember that you are reading the words of a disappointed, worldly, old man, and many of its dark sayings will be explained. In its remorse, useless but keen; in its pessimism; in its final summing up of duty; it gives a fearful picture of the workings of the disappointed mind whose God-like powers have been prostituted to the usages of the life of sin. It gives an insight into the mind of the character in drama, who cries out in despair of ever escaping from his sin, "myself am hell!" There is no torture more keen than this, no sentence more severe than that it should never end. Physical fire is but a grain of sand over against a mountain in comparison with it. The judgment of the sinner, therefore, will be simply this: that his

eyes will be so blinded that he cannot see in Christ the light of the world, and must go groping on in darkness forever and forever.

That Christ is properly called the light is evident from the following reasons: First, He reveals to men the glory of a true manhood. Second, He reveals to men the glory of a true God, in whose image man is made. Third, He reveals to men the glory of an immortal life, the reward of faith, after God and men have been reconciled. These are the great things of life: the answers to the queries, How may I become a better man? How may I know God? Is there a God, and if so, what is He? Does this life end all, or is there a life beyond the grave in which the wrongs and inequalities of this life shall be made right and equal? Get your answer to each in the light of the Christ life, and then thank your God that this light has been given, and that your eyes have been opened to see it and to walk in its ways.

First, then, the light which Christ sheds upon a true and glorious manhood. How strangely and absolutely different is his conception of what manhood is from the world's conception. The world says that he is the truest man who can get the most out of the world. Christ says that he is the truest man who puts most into the world. The world says he is the greatest man who, by the power of his intellect and will, can reign over other men and make them the servants of his ambitions.

Christ says, the greatest among you shall be the servant of all. The world says, the truest man is the man who heaps up riches, by keen business instinct, succeeding where others have failed. Jesus says, the true test of manhood is, "go and sell all thou hast and give it to the poor, and come, follow me." The world says, the strongest man is he who best looks out for the interests of Number One. Jesus says, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be grasped at and clung to, to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross." The world says, the truest man is the self-made man, sufficient unto himself, knowing no law but the dictates of his own iron will. The carpenter of Nazareth says, the truest man is the God-made man, humble, seeking not to do his own will, but the will of Him who put him in the world to do His work. The world says, the strongest man is the man who can give as good as he gets, and who can, in spite of all opposition, rise triumphant through his own unaided arm. Christ says, the strongest man is he who, when

he is reviled reviles not again, when he is angry threatens not, but commits himself to him who judgeth righteously. The world says, he is strongest who can resist most strenuously the enemy and beat him at his own tactics. Christ says, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." The world says, multiply armies and armaments in order to preserve the world's equilibrium and peace. Christ says, "he that killeth with a sword shall be killed with a sword." The world says, he is the greatest warrior who can take the offensive and force the battle. Christ says, he is the greatest warrior who can stand on the defensive, and having done all, stand. The world says, the greatest hero is he who takes a garrisoned fort or city, or destroys an enemy's fleet. Christ says, he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city. The world puts its emphasis upon the active virtues. Christ lays all of His stress upon the passive virtues, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, faith, temperance, which is self-control. The world puts a premium upon acquisitions. Christ rests everything upon character. He is the noblest man, according to Christ's teaching, who is least selfish and most thoughtful of others; who is least unkind, and most kindly in all of his actions and judgments; who is not desirous of keeping his all, but is most self-sacrificing in spirit and practice; who makes his resort, not

with the wealthy and the righteous, but with the poor and the sinner who need him most; who shuns not the house of mourning, but weeps with those who weep; who, not in self-righteous phariseism, holds himself aloof from the pleasures of the world, but mingles freely in them, and by his very presence there seeks to purify and uplift; who, in humble dependence upon God, acknowledging his sin, trusts Him for forgiveness and strengthening and guidance; who, confessing his sin and unworthiness, and asking God to forgive him and to create him a new creature in Christ Jesus, places himself in the keeping of the comforting and guiding Spirit of God to be used, to be made holy.

The world praises him who gets. Christ praises him who gives. The world lauds him who can keep after he has received. Christ lauds self-denial, self-sacrifice. The world permits a shady morality. Christ demands an absolute purity of thought, word and action. The world says, blessed are you when you can carry water on both shoulders so successfully, when you have so little character, as to have no enemies. Christ says, "blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

The world says, "blessed are you when you have seen a little of the world and its sin, and have experienced just a little of its contamination, so

that you may feel more strongly and combat it more intelligently."

Christ says, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The world laughs at mistakes: "he is only a man, you know."

Christ says, "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect!"

Second, the light that is shed by Christ upon the true glory of God in whose image man was made. Before Christ's coming it was practically impossible to understand God aright. No man ever had seen him. The Jews had done their very best to understand him, but they had failed. To them he was merely the Great and Terrible God: a God of unbending justice, who sent fiery serpents among His people on account of their sin; caused them to wander forty years in the wilderness because of their murmuring; slew them at the hands of the children of Ai because one man had been disobedient, and so on to the end of the chapter. Apparently He knew no mercy, for He destroyed whole nations before their approach, and even allowed them to be carried away into captivity, and their whole land to be despoiled. They thought of Him as ordering them to spare none of their enemies, but to put all alike to the sword. The consequence was, the Jews could fear their God, but it must have been very hard for them to love Him. And they were not the only

ones who have that difficulty. The Old Testament idea of God, as it is written plainly in many places, is a stone of stumbling to many, even at the present day.

Jesus Christ came to remove this stumbling block in the way of so many, and to reveal God in His true light and relationship to His people. He is no longer the Great and Terrible God of Nehemiah, but He is the Father—the Father who loves His people, and who, as a proof of that love, in the person of His Son, came into the world, filled one human life full of Himself, laid down His life in order that men might understand Him and His way of salvation, and thus be led to turn from their sins and to give Him an avenue for the workings of His infinite mercy. He came to show that the God of justice is also a God of love, and He commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Surely this is an unerring proof, for greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But God laid down His life for those who were in rebellion against Him, and thus, by His own action, made it possible to extend to them His forgiveness. He came to reveal to men the wonders of God's grace, which made Him unwilling that any one should perish, and caused Him to send His Spirit to subdue our stubborn wills, melt our hearts, renew our minds, and make us willing in the day of His power to accept the

great salvation which His wisdom has wrought; to work faith in us that being united with Christ by faith we might live in Him and bear the fruits of repentance; to continue in us that good work which should finally result in our complete restoration to the image and the favor of God, and bring us home, as His repentant children, from the far country into which we have wandered to the house of many mansions where a place awaits for every soul of man who will do the will of God and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Thus has Christ revealed God; for he who said, let light shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to reveal to us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ his Son. And Christ, in His life, was the embodiment of mercy and kindness; He came to the undeserving, and upon such He expended His effort, and for such He died. He was the embodiment of love and forgiveness; for He wept over Jerusalem when she would not hear Him, and He prayed for the soldiers when they crucified Him. He was the embodiment of grace, for His very presence was a gracious presence, and blessings to the undeserving lurked in His very shadow, clung to the hem of His garments, flew at the bidding of His word. This is the Christ whom we worship. This is our God: a God of infinite mercy, a God of infinite love, a God of infinite grace. This light is seen only in Jesus Christ, and is in the world today

through Him and through Him alone. Can it be possible that any one would love darkness rather than such wonderful, glorious light?

Third, the light given by Christ upon that immortal life beyond the borders of the seen, in the world of mystery and shadows.

There is that within us which cries out for immortality. Tennyson has most beautifully voiced it in his *In Memoriam*, and Wordsworth, too, in words more few, but no less beautiful:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,
From God who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

“Hence in a season of calm weather,

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore!”

It is one of the chief beauties of our religion, that through it Jesus Christ has brought life and

immortality to light. Before His death, death was shrouded in mystery, and the tomb was a place of dread. But now the mystery of death has been solved, and from the open door of Joseph's new tomb ever shine forth hopes the most sacred and satisfying that men of the world possess. Death is but a sleep—a sleep in which the body is locked until that blessed resurrection day when the dead, small and great, shall stand before the judge, "and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Blessed as are many of the experiences that come to us here and now, we reckon justly that they are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.

"We shall sleep, but not forever;
There will be a glorious dawn.
We shall meet to part, no, never,
On the resurrection morn."

The crown which shall be bestowed upon those who have been faithful in this life, is life forever, life unending, life eternal in the presence of the glory of the Father. Christ could think of no more precious boon to bestow than the boon of a deathless, changeless life. Its preciousness is well suggested by the estimate placed by Him and by us upon this world's life. "What shall it profit

a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own life?" Such is almost certainly the true meaning of the Master's question. The life of a man is therefore of more importance than the whole world and all that it contains. Yet, in comparison with the life beyond, the life that now is, is but nothing. A few short years, a little of usefulness, a little of imperfect happiness, and it is ended. But the life beyond is for endless years, its useful service never ends, its perfect happiness knows no palling or loss of charm. Then, praise to Christ because He has brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel!

It becomes at once plain that the judgment pronounced upon men because of their sin is one sufficiently awful to cause any one to stop and to consider. It is, as our text plainly says, that their eyes are blinded so that they cannot see the light, and they go forever on in their love of the darkness. The light to which they are blind is Jesus Christ the light of the world, the light of men. To be blind to Him is to be blind to our truest manhood in this life, to God in His real nature as love, to our immortal destiny in the world of the unknown. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Thy darkness shall become light, thy blindness, sight; thy sighing, song.

III

THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHARACTER

“And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be.”
(THE WORDS OF KOHELETH II:3)

THIS is an Old Testament parable. The preacher is making use of a well known fact in nature to make clear a spiritual truth. The figure, too is one whose significance could not well be escaped. Those to whom this language was addressed could not possibly fail to see at once its import. They had doubtless, many times, seen the tree, uprooted by the tempest, falling in one direction or another, and they knew that it was not only dead, because its connection with its source of nourishment was cut off, but that it was perfectly powerless to work any change in its condition and must lie as it had fallen. By means of this implied truth the preacher seeks to impress the need of the present practice of virtue.

Be full of charity here and now, is certainly the exhortation that is intended; for there will come a day when your charity cannot be exercised. That this is true will appear from a little study of the

context which is closely joined with the words of our study. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." And bread here means all things necessary for the nourishment of soul and body. "Upon the waters," means with a lavish hand, and to those who have no prospect of making a return. Give a portion, i. e., of thy bread, thy soul and body food, to seven, the number of completeness, and to eight, i. e., to even more than the number of completeness. It is as if He said, "give of thy good to all that need, yea, if such a thing were possible to be done, give to more than all." And why so do? Why, because, "if the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." Let us illustrate this in modern thought. The cloud, in the Bible, is significant of evil. Hence the meaning is simply this: when the times of evil are fully ripe, evil must come; and all speculations about this time of evil, of such a character as to make us miserable and illiberal, are vain. In short, the very argument which men of the world urge against liberality, viz.: that all of their surplus must be laid up for a rainy day, is just the argument which the sage presents for a consecrated charity. Be liberal in your gifts, says He, and then when the day of want comes there will be those who will, in their turn, because of good deeds done by you to them, shower upon you of their abundance.

And then, as the crowning consideration for the doing of the charitable deed here and now, is presented the argument of our text: "And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be." No charity now, none then either. For, as the condition of the tree, after the fall has taken place, must remain unchanged, so into every life there must come a time when the character shall have become fixed, and can never be changed. Can we make this clear? Let us see! Let us look for a moment at an analogy.

In nature there is a process called crystallization, by means of which every known substance, whether in a liquid, gaseous or soluble condition, may be made to reveal itself in the deposit of certain little crystals from the solution, or the liquid mass, or the gas. There are, of course, thousands of different kinds of crystals, although they may all be grouped under six general heads, distinguished each from the other by the number of sides and angles which each contains. What is the result? Why simply this: whenever any solution, or gas, or substance in a liquid form, is exposed to proper conditions, the crystal will at once be deposited, and then the lynx eye of the chemist, with but little difficulty, will read the record of what has been present in the former substance simply by identifying the crystals which he has secured. Each substance has been made

to reveal its presence by the crystal, peculiar to itself, which is left behind. Just so in the formation of character. Each thought, each word, each action has a peculiarity of its own, and it leaves behind it its own record, its own little crystal which shall enter into the composite crystal of the character of the individual. Just as in nature there are certain rocks whose surface never can be made to wear a smooth or polished appearance, simply on account of the irregular shape of the crystals of the substances that form them, so in human lives there are characters which never can be made to appear beautiful and finished, simply because they are made up of the deposits of so many evil deeds, and impure thoughts, and unwise actions.

In and about the region of the Yellowstone National Park, there may be found, buried many feet underground, whole forests, the trees still standing upright, root and branch and bark, each retaining its original structure and position. But if, after one of these trees has been uncovered, you undertake to chop it with an ax, you suddenly find yourself with an ax with no edge upon it, and scarcely more than a dent made in the bark of the tree. What is the explanation of it? Why simply this: in the ages long since gone by, these forests were buried by great streams of lava, which flowed from a volcano in the mountains not far away. Once buried, they began slowly to decay;

but as their substance wasted slowly away, it was just as slowly replaced by dissolved portions of the surrounding rock. And thus there is retained the well known cellular structure of the wood, although there is not one particle of the wood there. When the tree is split asunder there is plainly visible the grain as it always was; and when a piece is broken across the grain, we may see the rings which mark each year's growth when the tree was still an inhabitant of the upper air.

In this is seen a wonderful analogy to that which takes place in the human life. At birth, the child comes into the world, with all of its capabilities undeveloped, a little pink bundle of nerves and nerve cells waiting to be impressed. Light strikes its eye, and it experiences one sensation, and one part of its brain has been vitalized. Sound falls upon its ear, and another nerve has been set tingling, and another portion of its brain has received its impression. An odor finds its way up the nostrils, and the knowledge of the little one has been increased by just so much. Its little fingers come in contact with some object, and another portion of its brain has been stirred to activity. Thus the process goes on, and thus knowledge comes and character is being formed. The purity of the character will depend in great measure upon the purity of these first impressions. Is it true that these effects are produced, and that they are lasting? Experience proves it so. Famil-

iarize a child from the moment of its birth with the sound of beautiful music, and you are very likely to have a master musician. Give to a child mind only pure and noble thoughts, for a sufficient length of time, and you may be sure of a pure and noble manhood or womanhood, for the character will have become crystallized, and it is the next thing to an impossibility for the individual to depart from it.

In the same way, acquaint the mind with low ideas of life, and of morality, and of God, early in life, and keep dinning these same ideas into the ears, and living them before the eyes, of the growing child, and just as inevitably you will see a man or woman little better than the brute beasts, with whom there seems to be, in fact, some kinship, not even his own mother's honor safe in his keeping, and with no thought of God or heaven. It is simply the law of nature, the development of a thing after its kind, the determining of a character by that which enters into its formation. Men do not gather grapes from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles. "Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The Romish priest but asks that he have the child until it is nine years of age, and he is not afraid of its ever becoming anything other than a Catholic. In this respect he is infinitely wiser than are we. We allow our children to run loose, or else we delegate their training

to others who, perhaps, may be totally unfit for their office. Is it any wonder that we see the results which do present themselves? For the sake of those whom we love, do not let us jeer at this truth, or pass it lightly by! For he who mocks here mocks in the face of God, and he who passes lightly by, neglects one of the most fearful laws of God, in its consequences. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned; he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Will we have all of our work to be consumed and count for naught? Will we be satisfied simply to get within heaven's gate, and nothing more? Will we serve Satan and the world until our characters are all worn and threadbare and mildewed, and then bring them to Him, and ask Him to accept such rubbish? Will not rather a glorious ambition consume us, and goad us on to strenuous effort in the Master's name, in order that we, having turned many to righteousness, may shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever? The mind can conceive of no destiny more terrible, no curse more blasting,

than that of coming to the end of life with no work that shall remain, and of entering into the presence of the Judge bringing no sheaves with us.

“Must I go, and empty handed?
Must I meet my Saviour so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him!
Must I empty handed go?”

Yes, you must, if you build up a character out of poor and perishable material, so that when it is tried in the fire, it will be all consumed.

Prof. John B. DeMotte in his wonderful lecture on *The Harp of the Senses*, or *The Secret of Character Building*, used to tell of an incident which once fell under his own personal observation. On a certain evening he was to lecture in a distant city. The time had just about come for the opening of the evening's program when he noticed a big, handsome young man, who was occupying a reserved seat well forward in the building, get up and leave the room. His curiosity was aroused, and, being a student of human nature, he at once surmised that here might be something of value to him. He accordingly shadowed the young man and saw him finally go into a ten cent museum frequented only by the lowest characters and the vilest spectacular shows. He was interested to know why a young man of such a frank and manly appearance should leave a high class entertainment

and go to such a place, and, accordingly, the next day he took the necessary means to secure an interview with the young man. It was as he suspected, and this is the story: Some years before, the young man, then only a boy, had been enticed by some companions into one of these places of low resort, and the scenes there presented had taken their hold upon his mind and brain. He wanted to go again. He went. Finally there came a day when he realized that he was doing himself an injury, and he tried hard to stop, but he could not. On the evening mentioned above, he had gone to the lecture with the full intention of remaining through it; but as the hour for the opening of his customary places of amusement approached, something, to use his own expression, seemed to take hold of him, lift him bodily out of his seat, and turn his feet across the avenue to his accustomed haunts. That young man, with tears in his eyes, begged of Prof. DeMotte that he would give his message to all young men and warn them against following in his footsteps.

And what was the explanation of his action? Why simply that, by continued catering to a depraved taste he had allowed it to become his master, and he was a hopeless slave. How had this result been reached? By action, long continued and oft repeated, upon the sensitive matter of the brain and the nerves, until they had come to the point at which their action was no longer

voluntary but reflex, no longer the slave of the will, but its masters. Will this take place along such a line only? Oh, no! It will take place along any line. Science plainly has demonstrated that a certain part of the brain may be taken away and the patient will no longer hear. A different part removed will destroy the sense of taste; still another the sense of smell; another the sense of touch, sight, etc. What does this mean? It means that there are certain portions of the brain, practically distinct from every other, which respond to certain sensations. Develop these portions of the nervous mass and you determine almost beyond alteration the character of the person in question. Oh, that I could make this to appear, and that I could impress the terrific consequences which the truth involves! Why, my dear friends, it is nothing less than a matter of life and death, and for eternity at that!

Some of you play the piano or organ. Do you not remember the first painful efforts, how slowly and laboriously you picked out the keys? But now your fingers travel over the keys without apparently so much as thought on your part. You do not have to look at the keyboard, they find the proper places for themselves. What is the explanation? Why, at the first, every effort required a distinct action of the will; but now, by long continued practice, you have come to the place where action of the will is not necessary.

Your trained muscles do the thing of their own accord. This is reflex action, and you could do it just as well with your eyes shut, or even in your sleep. Some of you are acquainted with the click of the knitting needle! Can you not bear me out in this same truth in regard to the mother's homely art? Some of you have solved the equation of equilibrium, and are able to perform the, at one time considered, impossible feat of riding on two wheels, one of which is placed directly in front of the other. Recall your first experience, and then think of your present ease and pleasure. This law which I have been trying to enforce is at work here, and you can now sit on the wheel and ride with as little thought or concern as when you are walking along the pathway or riding in the railway carriage. Reflex action again, and it makes no difference how long you may disuse your new power, it will remain with you. Once learned it is learned forever: it has become a part of your nature, your character.

With these thoughts, to show how character may become, nay must become, unchangeable, we must turn our attention for the few remaining minutes to certain ideas presented by the text:

First, the fact that the tree falls suggests the necessity of death.

Second, the fact that one tree falls toward the south and another toward the north suggests that in death there are differences of destiny.

Third, the fact that every tree lies as it falls suggests that there is an existence after death, but that in that life there can be no change of character. As we are when the dark angel comes to bear us away on his pinions, so shall we be forever and forever.

First, the fact of death is the saddest and most certain in our experience. The changes which we see ever around us, in nature animate and inanimate, in those whom we esteem our friends and long to have remain with us, proclaim the certainty of a day when this mortal life shall cease for each of us. Too often the song, on account of this thought, is in the minor key.

“When thoughts

Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
 Over thy spirit, and sad images
 Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
 And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
 Cause thee to shudder and grow sick at heart:—
 Go forth under the open sky, and list
 To Nature’s teachings, while from all around—
 Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
 Comes a still voice—Yet a few days, and thee
 The all-beholding sun shall see no more
 In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
 Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
 Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
 Thy image. Earth that nourished thee, shall
 claim

Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon."

"E'en the paths of glory lead but to the grave."
Some day the silver cord must be loosed, the
golden bowl be broken, the pitcher be broken at
the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern, and
man will go to his long home. Therefore, since
the day must come, be prepared for it. "What
I say unto you, I say unto all; watch!"

Second, differences of destiny at death! Upon
what do these differences depend? Not upon
worldly position or honor, for the grave is no
respector of persons. With no sign of special
favor for either class, she opens her yawning
mouth and receives alike the high and the lowly,
the mighty king and the peasant. "Dust thou
art and unto dust thou shalt return," is the word
repeated over every form alike. Not upon
riches or poverty, for naked came we into the
world, and naked shall we depart from it. "Thou
fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee:
then whose shall those things be which thou hast
provided?" Evidently search must be made
elsewhere for the secret of these differences! "He

that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding bribes, that stoppeth his ears from the hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world." "Depart ye cursed, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." Yes, character tells the tale: character turns the scale in the balance. Therefore, with all thy getting, get character, and that of pure gold, tried in the fire and precious.

Third, life after death, but character unchangeable! When comes the last sleep, the fate is sealed, the destiny is fixed for aye. "There is no repentance in the grave whither thou goest." This is inspiration's way of dismissing the subject once and for all. If there is no repentance there can be no improvement. If there is no improvement, there cannot possibly be any final attainment to holiness, which is absolutely necessary to him who would see God. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. And he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still. And he that is holy, let him be holy still." "And, behold, I come quickly;

and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

There can be no word plainer in meaning than this. What we are here we shall be hereafter. What we delight to do here we shall be compelled to do hereafter. Consider, then, thy ways! Are you a sinner now? Do you want to continue in sin forever? If not, there is only one way to escape from it, one thing to be done: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, and it shall be well with thee." Are you walking in the paths of righteousness, and is it a delight for your feet to run in the ways of His commandments? This is well: a like reward awaits you, if only you grow not weary in well doing, and faint not. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city!"

IV

THE SURE FOUNDATION

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

(SAINT PAUL, I Corinthians, 3:11)

NO building can stand without a foundation. Upon the truth of this statement all will at once agree. There will also be unanimous consent to the further truth that no building can be of a permanent character without a good foundation. It matters not what may be the materials of which the superstructure is to be composed; it matters not how great may be the differences of opinion as to the most beautiful style of building, or the most artistic style of decoration—the materials may be the lightest of pine or hemlock, or the massive block of granite; the style may be that of the ancient Byzantine castle, rising tower upon tower to the dizzy heights, or the modern, steel-ribbed, ethereal looking sky scraper—be the differences of opinion on these matters what they may, there is sure to be one on which all will be agreed: the foundation must be laid deep and broad, and, if possible, upon a rock.

Not only do we find this fact recognized among builders of buildings, but we hear it uttered by the lips of the inspired teacher, Mary's Son, as He taught the multitudes upon the bleak Judean hillsides. "He that is wise is like unto a man who built his house upon a rock; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock. But he that is unwilling to do the words of the Son of Man is like to a foolish man who built his house upon the sands by the river bank. And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it." For it was built upon the sand, and had no sure foundation.

The Apostle takes this truth and translates it into the language of religion. Life is a building. It must have its foundation. Faith, character, must have something upon which they can rest. This something, this sure foundation which is demanded, says Paul, is found in Jesus Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Other foundation? No, not one! In all this wide, round world there is not one thing which can take the place of the Rock of Ages as the resting place for all that is dear and lasting in our lives. For more than nineteen hundred years the writer of these words has been mouldering in the dust, yet in all that

time they have not been disproved, but rather strengthened in their hold upon the minds of men. The great numbers of those who have proved their truthfulness by actual experience and experiment has increased year by year, and century by century. Men have tried to build upon other foundations, but when the rains descended and the thunders roared, and the lightnings flashed, and the winds swept hurricane-like over the plain, the frail edifices of man's contriving vanished in the swirl of the angry waters. The little lights of man's kindling have burned brightly for a little time, only at last to go out in the blackness of darkness. But high out of the midst of the sounding deep, shining clear and steadfast through the awful gloom, rises the lighthouse of God's word, founded upon the eternal Rock. And forever and forever, the light shall shine on, the lighthouse shall remain unshaken, lifted high above the wrecks of the ages, rising clear of the sands of time, "like a crown of towers," a city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God.

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

“When darkness veils His lovely face,
I’ll rest on His unchanging grace;
Through every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the vale.

“His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

“On Christ, the Solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

It is now our duty to take the measure of this foundation which is laid for us: to find out how deeply, and broadly, and solidly, and wisely provision has been made for our future building. In what sense is Jesus Christ the only foundation that is laid for men? We might answer in a word by saying that he is such in all senses: in every way possible for human thought to conceive or human language to express. But such a way of dismissing the subject would be far from satisfactory, and it would come far short of fulfilling our purpose in this study.

It may be remarked, therefore, first of all, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of an intelligent and reasonable faith. His person, His nature, His work, in short, Christ Himself, underlie all true

theology. In fact, in the light of the New Testament, we might almost throw away the old term "theology," and adopt the new one, "Christology." Without Him we cannot accomplish the task which Milton set before himself: "assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men." We must believe in a divine Redeemer—there is no recourse left us—or the moral government of the universe becomes one dark and confused labyrinth, a mystery of mysteries, "a mighty maze and all without a plan." The problem of the existence of evil in a world that is under the rule of an absolutely good God, cannot be solved, and the moral character of God becomes no more than a mockery to our consciences, unless we can find somewhere a personal, saving, redeeming revelation of the divine love in the same world into which sin has been allowed to find its way. As another has phrased it:

"Till God in human flesh I see
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind."

But just here comes in the blessed truth of which we learn so satisfyingly in another place in the writings of the Apostle: "God—He who said, let light shine out of darkness—hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Given this, and the key to the problem's solution is in our keeping.

But why is it, then, that men do not more generally grasp the meaning of this unmatched truth as they think along the lines of theology? I will attempt to make this plain. The trouble is simply this: that those who have made systems of doctrine about God, even those who have loved and firmly believed in this revelation of God in Christ, have made this revelation a kind of supplement, i. e., a filler-in or a filler-out, as you may desire to look at it, instead of making it the foundation of their thought. Reasoning from their own ideas of infinity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, of justice, goodness and mercy, they have laid down the conditions under which these various attributes are to be exercised, and then have told us what God must be. They have mapped out to their own satisfaction the scope of predestination and foreknowledge, and then have tried to make God conform to this schedule. They have explained, with much show of learning, the mystery of the sacraments and the uses of the means of grace, and then, in the great and complex system they have found a place, a little nook, for Christ, and, perhaps unconsciously, they have carved Him so as to make Him fit into it. This is just the very reverse of the proper way. The true method is first to accept Christ as He is plainly

revealed to us in the Gospel, and then to fit our theology to Him. He is the foundation already laid, and in this, as in every case, the building must be conformed to the shape and size and structure of the foundation. The love and mercy of Christ are God's love and mercy. There is no predestination apart from Christ. The foreknowledge of God is summed up and centered in Him; for He is Christ, the word of God and the wisdom of God. The sacraments are but signs and seals of His love, and they receive their efficacy from Him; while the means of grace are simply the channels through which we partake of Him. Thus our theology becomes Christ-centered, and our faith rests upon the immovable, rock foundation prepared for it.

What is the result? Why, our faith becomes sure and steadfast. Christ, it is true, does not offer us a knowledge of God nearly so full, or so large, as that presented by many man-made systems. But it has this advantage over every other system that may be presented,—it has in it no speculation, but simply solid fact. It has in it nothing metaphysical and hard to understand; but it is simple, fitted to the abilities of our finite minds, adapted exactly to the vital needs of our faith. It is a chain dependent, not upon logical sequence of thought, and so liable to be easily broken; but it is dependent upon the spontaneous order of a real life—a life of true communion with

the Father through the Son, and hence it is a chain flexible and unbreakable, though firm. Christ leaves many things untold, many mysteries unsearched; but it is better so, for with our finite minds we could not bear them now. But He has told us enough; for our salvation, our knowledge is complete.

Again, Christ is the only foundation of a living faith—a faith which has in itself power to right and purify its own life. Thus it is enabled to explode those fallacies and false elements of doctrine which the world is ever trying to engraft upon Christianity. Here are found superstitions and perversions of the truth, and assumptions contrary to the plain teachings of the truth. Here are found cruel and unworthy conceptions of the character of God. Here are found practices, nominally Christian, but in reality totally opposed to the spirit of Christianity and of her King. These, one and all, a faith founded upon Christ at once, and without hesitation, rejects. Look at the great reforms in religion: the occasions of great purification and revival. By whom have they been originated? By men like Paul, like Martin Luther, like St. Francis of Assissi, like John Wesley—men whose whole life moral, intellectual, and spiritual was builded upon the personal contact with the life of Christ.

Once more: the faith built upon Jesus Christ takes away every objection urged against religion

on the ground of false ideas of God, His relation to the world and to men. Many of these objections are natural, in the sense that the very constitutions of our minds compel us to urge them. These all flee from the face of faith as it is in Jesus Christ. Says a great writer: "The God whom we see in Jesus Christ, and know through Jesus Christ, commends Himself to bad men as well as to good men." We will not, as a matter of course, be able to persuade all men to believe in God, and to love Him, and to give Him service. But, if we faithfully and tactfully present Him to the minds of men, as He is revealed in the face of the Son of Man, there will be none who will not be at once ready and willing to acknowledge that here is a God who is worthy of his most unquestioning faith, and his most ardent love, and his most zealous service.

In the second place: Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Gospel of hope for the world. If we remove Jesus Christ, the foundation of the Gospel is gone, and your faith is vain, and our preaching also is in vain. The message which we proclaim has become foolishness, not only to the Greeks, but to all men. This was the point that was most prominently in the mind of Paul as he wrote this letter. Into his beloved church at Corinth other preachers had come, working by entirely new methods, and, as he feared, building upon a new foundation. Personal considerations had been

introduced, and loyalty to certain factions, rather than to the Church as the body of Christ, had been emphasized, until on all sides were to be heard the cries, "I am of Paul," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Christ!" The emphasis was wrong. The foundation was misplaced and out of plumb. The superstructure was splitting, and the Church seemed about to go to pieces. Paul was aroused into the most intense earnestness, and in this spirit remonstrates and reasons with his beloved converts: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Who is Paul? And who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed?" I, Paul, planted! Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase. This must not so be understood as to teach that the Apostle never preached upon any subject but the person of Christ. This we must never say. His sympathies were too wide, his grasp of the truth too broad for that. He dealt with the mysteries of God's life before the beginnings of time. He dealt also with the relations of the inanimate world, and of the animal creation, to the redemption of Christ. No human duty was too small to demand his interest and his word of heavenly wisdom. He spoke of the duties of the slave, and of the slave's master; of the citizen, and the citizen's ruler. But he spoke of

all as centered in Christ, as founded upon the principles of his conduct and teaching. And here is seen the secret of the success of preaching.

There always has existed the mistaken idea about the limits of the themes of the pulpit. Men have thought that there were subjects upon which the minister of Christ was not called to speak. But this is not true. Nothing that touches man's life is foreign to the Gospel; nothing beyond the scope of its teaching. It must touch every spring of action, and in it must be found the ultimate court of appeal for every proposed line of conduct. The iniquity of the thing is this: that many men preach Christ as though He never had lived. It is not the subject treated which is out of place, but it is the method of treating it. Everything which the preacher touches upon he must handle in the light which shines from Bethlehem's manger cradle, and Calvary's uplifted cross, and Joseph's opened tomb. By the facts which these happenings bring before his mind, the very reason must be transformed and made anew; his conscience must again be illumined. Such a man is the greatest power in the world today. He stands upon Jesus Christ, "the power of God."

In the third place: Jesus Christ is the only foundation of the moral life. It is the end of the Gospel to make men good, to transform them by the renewing of their minds into the image of Him whom the Gospel reveals: goodness personified.

The essence of the Gospel is the setting forth of Jesus Christ; hence it must follow that the best possible way to make men good is to bind them by a vital and loving faith to this same Jesus. Of course, it is perfectly well known that some men will smile skeptically at this, and say it is only the fancy-colored dream of a fanatic. But we are not dreaming today. Neither are we dealing with the things of the fancy, but with the sober facts; and facts are stubborn things. I appeal to the intelligence of my reader! Where do we find the hospital for the diseased, the maimed, the blind, the suffering in any of a thousand different forms? Where do we find the asylum for the care of the insane, the inebriate, the helpless orphan, the defenseless widow? Where do we see the sacred relations of home and home life exhibited in all their beauty? Where do we see the nearest possible approach to that human ideal of happiness bound up in the three words, liberty, equality and fraternity? Where do we see governments managed, not for the continued honor and exploiting of a favored aristocracy or royal family, but for the best interests of the citizens of the country to be governed? Is it not in the Christian lands of today, and in the train of the missionary of the cross? The facts are undoubted and indubitable. Ponder them, and see if the claim that has been made is too great.

Look at every forward step that has been taken

in the last nineteen hundred years, and at the head of the advancing column you will see the banner of the Cross, and back of the onward movement you will feel the mighty impulse of a Christian faith. Look at all the uprisings against tyranny and oppression, and injustice and corruption, and wickedness in whatever form it has been found, and be the victory obtained by an appeal to arms, or by the more quiet and less deadly appeal to the ballot, still, behind it all, as the moving and controlling force, you will find the awakened and enkindled sentiment of those who acknowledge the law of Jesus Christ as supreme, and who serve Him as Master and Lord. It is superfluous to say, that, if the Christian sentiment be entirely taken away, the possibility of reform is also removed. And if, after reform has been accomplished, that which caused it is withdrawn, the work must go down in ruin and there remain. It is not the intention to narrow this down to those who are professedly Christian. This would be neither in accord with the teaching of Christ, nor with the facts. "He that is not against us is for us," said the Master; and there are individuals, communities, even nations who occupy this very position. They silently, but surely, acknowledge Christianity as the law of laws, even though they do not mention the name of God in the constitution of the state. But with this we are not directly concerned. What we want to impress is, that

the only security of a moral life, in the individual, lies in making Jesus Christ its foundation. And why is this so? Because there can be no permanence of character, and no consistency of action, where there is not present a clear and perfect, and unchangeable ideal. And this ideal is found in Christ alone. History might be called upon to prove how ideals have moulded the life of generations, of nations, of men as individuals. But time forbids, and we must hasten to enforce in only a few words the fourth and last thought of our study today, viz.:

Jesus Christ is the only foundation of the Christian Church. He is recognized by all as its head. What the body would be without the head, that would the Church be without Christ. He is its chief cornerstone. What a building would be without the capstone or binder upon the wall in order to hold all together, that would the Church be without Jesus Christ. I quote from Lyman Abbott: "How beautiful is this sacred edifice:" "Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. To whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also are builded together a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus the Christ." With this inspired picture of the Church before us, let us permit our minds to wander backward over the ages to the time of Christ, and imagine ourselves

as those who are walking through the broad aisles, and standing in the chapels, and kneeling before the altars of some mighty temple. Strange things will be seen, and may cause some perplexity and astonishment. On some walls improper pictures will appear. On some altars strange fire will burn, and sacrifices will be offered that are not truly of the nature of sacrifice. But all these will pass away, and from behind them will rise the mighty, majestic walls of the completed temple; and as we step within the vestibule of this changeless building, there will be borne to our ears from a sea of voices the words of the creed of Christendom: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born unto the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." And just here a chant sweeter than angels' voices breaks forth among the throng, and swells in mighty volume: "The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee, the Father of an infinite majesty, 'Thine adorable, true and only Son, also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Jesus Christ,—'Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father!"

V

THE MAN BESIDE HIMSELF

“And when he came to himself.”

(SAINT LUKE 15:17)

I have read somewhere the description of a ruined castle in the mountain fastnesses of Bavaria. It seems to be a fitting parable of what is meant in the language of our text. The castle once had been the home of one of Bavaria's most princely families; but sin had come into the life of one of its owners, and had so embittered for him the memories of his home that he abandoned it and went to live and roam in more friendly climes. The castle, thus left without its occupants, fell into decay, and finally passed into the hands of a distant relative. He allowed its decay to continue, and, at his death, bestowed it as a supposedly worthless heritage upon a daughter who had incurred his displeasure. Thither she went, with her husband and her children, to see what the value of her inheritance might be. But she saw only broken columns, and dismantled battlements, and splintered rafters, and falling staircases, and windows with their vacant frames staring as though with empty, spectral eyes.

All was a scene of waste and ruin. The grounds were overgrown with rank weeds; vermin had made there their dwelling place. She seemed in despair of ever again making anything of that which had been given her. But at last search revealed a wing of the castle which had remained almost intact in the midst of the general ruin. Here, by means of hard labor, she and her dear ones were enabled to prepare a cosy and really beautiful home, well suited to their humble needs. Forth from the old castle windows the lights flashed cheerfully once again, and the peasants on the surrounding hills said, "Milord and Milady are living in the ruined castle once again." And there they lived, year after year, in a part of their inheritance, with all around them the ruins of its former greatness and grandeur. It could never be what it had once been, even though its owners were dwelling in it and filling it with all the joys and gladness that cluster around the name of home.

The castle is a picture of the life of men. To every one is given a magnificent home to dwell in. With the birth of his soul is born also a material body for the soul's indwelling. The two grow together, the expanding soul having always a correspondingly expanding body to do its bidding, or its pleasure. There is a beautiful symmetry and harmony here. All is joy and light and sunshine in this castle of the soul. But one day sin

enters into this home. It brings with it a strange, new, thrill. For a time the thrill continues; but suddenly the soul awakes to find that the thrill is all gone. Bitterness succeeds, and the soul seeks without itself to escape the memories that plague continually. The owner of the castle is away from home. It is falling into decay. Days pass, years roll by—all has been tried, and all has failed and turned to bitterness in the mouth—and the owner of the castle comes home again. He finds left nothing but the ruins of its former beauty and greatness and grandeur. There are rank growths ever obtruding themselves before his eyes. But in the midst of it all he finds a little citadel, which, though injured in the general wreck, is still capable of being repaired and of giving his wandering soul a home again. There he takes up his dwelling. Little by little the foreign growths around the castle are cleared away, and yet it serves only to make more clear the wreck that has been made of life, in the midst of which he must now live on forever. Yet there are great possibilities there, for happiness, for the truest usefulness; for the soul is at home again. It has come into itself.

This is but the figure that is used in our text as it occurs in the original language. Literally translated it would read, “and when he came into himself.” It is exactly the same word that would be used of a man entering into his own home.

Evidently the Master intends to teach us that the prodigal son had been away from home. We know that this was true in a purely physical sense, for he is represented as leaving his father's house and going away into a far country. But the home return that is spoken of here is not the return to his father's house, for this change had taken place before he ever thought of returning to his father, and while he was still in the far country. It is pretty evident, therefore, that the prodigal had been absent from home in some other sense which was of infinitely greater importance than the sense mentioned above. In short, he was outside himself, and before he could do the right thing it was necessary that he come into himself again. There are in every man two selves. The one is the true self; the other is not so. The one self is base, ignoble—of the earth, earthy. The true self is noble, heaven-born, divine. When the base, ignoble self—which manifests itself in laziness and selfishness and weakness and sensuality—is present, the true self is away from home. And when the true self comes home again, the earth-born sinks into its true insignificance, and noble impulses sway and noble deeds are done.

In every calling of life, before there can be any real attainment, it is necessary for the base self to vanish and the true self to appear. Isaac Newton, lying lazily on his back under his father's

apple tree, was Isaac Newton away from home. But Isaac Newton seeing the apple pulled to the ground by the force of gravitation, and reading there the action of the law that binds star to star and earth to sun, was Isaac Newton at home. The philosopher and the mathematician had been awakened and he was ready for his life's great and lasting work.

U. S. Grant, the dolt at school, at home, and in the tannery, was Ulysses S. Grant before he had come into himself. But Ulysses S. Grant at West Point, an object lesson in stolid diligence and in ability to sit any horse that might be given him,—Ulysses S. Grant in the Mexican War,—Ulysses S. Grant the victor over the Confederacy's most gallant and brilliant commanders, yea, the Lieutenant General of the forces of the North, and the purchaser of freedom for a race in bondage, that is Ulysses S. Grant after he had come into himself.

And so it is with all who attain greatness of whatever kind. In every life there is the time of apparent slumber; then comes the awakening, when the soul of the man enters into himself and gains possession of him, and he is a new creature. Here are other illustrations of it. Samuel F. B. Morse was a boy just like other boys. He grew up among his fellows, and in his home, bright, cheerful, full of noise, just like many others in the same community. He was a little more given to

sober thought, perhaps; but nothing more than this distinguished him. One day he became interested in electrical science. His interest grew into a passion, his passion into a fascination. He had entered into the secret chambers of his own soul; and Samuel F. B. Morse, at home, gave to the world the electric telegraph which conquers time and distance and makes all nations kin.

Cyrus W. Field was a quiet youth, even more retiring and unremarked than the majority of boys are likely to be. He kept himself in the background, and no one ever dreamed that in the bashful boy there lurked the man that should by his magnificent works make a world his debtor. But one day the awakening came. Shrewd business ability had already placed him at the head of a large mercantile house. He withdrew from active business life, and began to live in retirement. He spent several months in South America, and on his return was applied to for his help in building a telegraph line across Newfoundland to the city of Saint Johns, to connect there with a line of fast steamers and bring Britain within a week of America. As he sat thinking over the project, suddenly the idea flashed through his brain, "Why not carry the line itself across the ocean?" The home coming had arrived. With a new interest and energy, he gave all of his tremendous sagacity and insight to the testing of the idea. Three times he tried it, and as often failed. But

he was a man of one idea now, and naught but success could stop him. The fourth effort was made and proved successful. Then, to crown his success, an expedition was formed and sent out which repaired and completed the third unsuccessful effort, and England and America were bound together, not by one cable of steel, but by two, and the earliest great triumph of modern world enterprise, the Atlantic Cable, was a reality to bless the world. It came, because one man suddenly came to himself.

William Ewart Gladstone grew up in the home, through the school, and in the college, much as other boys. He engaged in their sports, was full of animal spirits, and distinguished in naught, perhaps, other than a very particular liking for the old classics, and an ability to construe them in their true spirit. He graduated with high honors, and almost immediately entered politics. The finding of his true self came early; for he was led to espouse the cause of the people in the great battle which led to the repeal of the Corn Laws, and from that day onward he was the people's champion, whether at home or in the colonies, maintaining always that consistent attitude which gave him, though he was often defeated, the entire confidence of the nation, and gained for him the sobriquet, "The Grand Old Man" of England. It was deserved, for few grander ever have lived and served a devoted people. He was enabled

to do this, because early in life he found his true self and his true mission, and he always followed where they beckoned.

These examples are few, but they are far-reaching. Newton was a philosopher; Grant a soldier and statesman; Morse an inventor; Field an engineer; Gladstone a political leader and statesman. In every line, success came with the finding of the true self—with the entrance of the individual into the secret chambers of his own mind and soul and his abiding there.

Religion is not different. It is only when we have come thus into our true heritage as the children of God that we can accomplish anything along the line of the religious, heavenly life. The prodigal must come into himself before he could make up his mind to return to his father's house, confess his sin, acknowledge his unworthiness, show his humility, and be received with forgiveness, have special honor paid to him, and be joyed over as one come again from the dead. But when the true self once has been found thus, there is no stopping place for possible attainment. We come into our castle here when we first recognize that God is our Father, and that against Him we have sinned grievously; when we are willing to return to Him and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son; yet receive me, I pray Thee, through the infinite merit of thy Beloved's sacri-

face! Let me be Thy servant, O Lord, and with the strength that Thou dost give, and in the way that Thou dost make clear, for Thy glory, I will labor on; for Thine is the work, Thine the power, Thine the way, and Thine, too, the glory!"

Thus Paul, the greatest figure in the world's history save one, entered into himself, when, on the road to Damascus, he cried out in the presence of that overwhelming glory, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The persecuting Saul is not the same as the enduring, patient, beheaded Paul. Saul was the old man, base, ignoble, earthy. Paul was the new man, noble, heaven-born, divine.

Thus, too, Augustine, the greatest figure in the Church's history since Paul, came into himself. He was the son of a Christian mother and a heathen father. Although he was taught faithfully the precepts of the Christian religion by the sainted Monica, he heeded them not, but began to tread in the ways of vice and impurity. As shown by his *Confessions*, he became a very monster of iniquity. Finally he came in contact with the sainted Ambrose and listened to his preaching. But the more he heard, the more he steeled himself against persuasion. But fight against it as he would, the truth burned its way into his mind and heart, and he could find no peace. One day, in despair, he threw himself down on the ground in a solitary place in his garden. There he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, in the Latin tongue, "*Tolle,*

lege!” “Take up, read!” Surprised beyond measure, he sought his Bible, opened it at a hazard, and found confronting him these words: “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness—But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Instantly the light broke through the windows of his darkened soul, and he was at home to himself. His understanding was enlightened, his doubts were dissipated like the mist before the rising king of day, his heart set in glow by a flame of holy zeal enkindled there. The change was instantaneous, and as marvelous as that which came to Paul. It was followed by results scarcely less remarkable. It was Paul’s part to impart the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. It has been Augustine’s to explain and systematize that truth so that he who runs may read and understand. This man is the father of modern theology, the spiritual father of John Calvin and John Knox, in whose footsteps we, and millions such as we, delight to tread. And it was because of his keen insight into, and giant grasp of, the truth that we have retained to us the Word, in all of its simplicity, through all of the conflicts and the darkness of the benighted centuries, when error was rampant and truth seemed crushed to earth, never to rise again. It is simply impossible to estimate what the modern Christian world owes to this one

man. It is indebted to him, because on that dark day, in a secluded part of his garden, he entered into himself—and the child of God was come home again.

I suppose that no more illustrious example of this same truth can be found in modern times, than the life of George Mueller, the founder of the Bristol Orphanages. In his earlier years he was a man of notoriously impure character and life, dissipation in all of its forms being well known to him. But one day there came a change, and the new man in Christ Jesus entered into his temple. Immediately the change was manifest. He sought for opportunities for the doing of Christian work. He was consumed with a burning zeal. He preached, he taught, he counseled—anything that he could do to show his gratitude to the Master who had brought him to himself. He became convinced of the power of faith and of prayer. He started the immense asylum for orphan children, which now accommodates more than two thousand children, without one cent of money in sight. But as it was needed, it came—in answer to his prayers of faith. It often came anonymously; but it came. By these methods he was enabled to do a work as large and daring as that done by any man in generations. No more remarkable testimonial to the power of God in the human life can be found than just the record of the experience of George Mueller, who had been

wandering on the barren mountains for many, many days, and came home one day to find himself a child of God, and to enter upon the enjoyment of his inheritance which he had well nigh forfeited.

Other names might be mentioned of those who are well known: John B. Gough, the apostle of temperance to two continents, the saviour of countless multitudes of men young and old; Jerry Macaulay, the bright and shining light among the down-trodden thousands of our great metropolis; Sam Hadley, the equally marvelous successor of Macaulay in his great work; Melvin Trotter, of Grand Rapids, the living and flaming apostle of the simple Gospel of Christ for the saving of men. But they are too many; we cannot mention more. These all came home from their wanderings, and found that within themselves they had a temple more glorious than the temples of earth; and then, in gratitude to him who had discovered themselves to themselves, they went forth through the earth with tongues of fire, to warn, to entreat, to save. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as he is." "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." Beloved, is there any wandering one among you? Are you far

from home on the mountains? Come home, O,
I pray you, and find in yourself a child of God
and an heir of heaven! Come, and receive your
crown!

VI

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

(SAINT JOHN 13:15)

MACLAREN of Manchester has beautifully said that when we enter upon the study of the thirteenth chapter of John's Gospel we have stepped across the threshold of the Holy of Holies of the New Testament. Up to this point the Master has been addressing Himself to the multitudes. From this point onward, He is speaking to His loved disciples only, in preparation for the sadness of farewell and final parting. We may therefore expect that His words will be especially full of meaning, and so, indeed, we find them.

Lying as a background behind the meaning of the words of our study is all of the wonderful first part of the chapter from which it is taken. We get the force of the Master's words here only as we first understand what is written in that which goes before them. There are two pictures which I must draw for you in order that you may understand in any full measure what is contained here.

For the first picture we must go to the story as told to us by Saint Luke. He shows us Christ and the disciples on their way up to the city of Jerusalem for the keeping of the Passover feast, and, as they pass along, the disciples are disputing among themselves as to which of them shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Though they have been in most intimate relations with their Master for three and a half years now, they have failed utterly to understand the manner of man He was and the spirit that dwelt in His heart, and which should also dwell in their own. Christ knew of this unlovely discussion, and reproved them for it. This is the first picture.

The second is seen after they have reached the room that had been secured and prepared for them in which to keep the Passover feast. It is a composite picture in which we are given to see clearly many things. The host had made preparation for the entertainment of his guests in all things save one. The tables for the meal were there; the couches for their reclining at ease while partaking of it were there; the water for the cleansing of the feet of the travelers, according to the well known oriental custom, and the towel for wiping them were there; but there was no servant provided for the performance of this menial office for Christ and His disciples. The bitter fruits of the discussion along the way remain with the disciples, and, though they see clearly what

they ought to do, not one of them will so far surrender his pride as to do it. Peter is jealous of James, and Andrew of Thomas, and all of them of John, the best beloved disciple of all. With lowering looks they recline about the room and wait; and it seems as though they were going to be compelled to do that which would have been a very real sin to the loyal Hebrew: eat the Passover meal with their bodies uncleansed. Then it was that the Master Himself rose from the table, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Why did He do it? Is He setting before His disciples an example that He intends they shall afterward exalt into one of the sacraments of the Church? There are those who think so, and so practise. I do not think so. If we are to find the answer to the questions that have been proposed we shall be compelled to look somewhat more carefully into the analysis of that wonderful background to which reference was made a little time ago. As we look, we find given to us there the clearest possible revelation of the mind of the Master, and the purposes which he would accomplish by this deed. Let us look together!

“Now * * * , when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father.” The hour was about to

strike on the clock of destiny. Jesus was acting in full consciousness of that fact. This was the time for words and acts of the most tremendous significance. The time was short, and there was much to be done before He could say farewell. The disciples, into whose hands He must commit all the future interests of His mighty work and kingdom, must somehow be made to understand. They must be prepared for the great responsibilities that were to be theirs, that they might be able to bear them in the spirit of their Master, and successfully. How natural it is for us to treasure last words; to give to them a special significance and sacredness. The Master knew of this natural impulse of the human heart, and He knew how later every word and act of that night would be engraved indelibly upon the minds and hearts of His disciples, and so He wrote the significance of last words into these words which we study today.

“Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Here is some more of the background. And what does it mean? Does it mean that He loved them to the end of their lives? Or of His life? Or of time? Or of eternity? Yes, it means all of these. And then it means an infinity beyond the point at which they all stop. It means that He loved to the end of love. There is no point of love beyond which His love for them could go. “I have loved thee

with an everlasting love." "Yes, and I have loved thee with an infinite, boundless, love." And, so loving, there was no point to which He would not go in order to serve them, and no sacrifice that he could make that would not be a sacred privilege, if in any way he could serve and bless them. So, He is willing to become a servant and wash their feet if only they will learn from Him, and come to possess His spirit, and be fitted for His work. Aye, He was even willing to go to the cross if, by so doing, He could save them and the world that should afterward believe through their word.

"And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him." And what does that mean in such a connection as this? Surely a strange and jarring note it is! Yes, it is, if not properly understood. But it is anything but that, if we get its true significance. It is just the crowning application of the words we were studying just a moment ago: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." We must never forget that one of "His own" was a traitor and a betrayer. He is simply giving to the traitor his last chance. The great love which He bears to Judas, who, He knew full well, was to betray Him with a kiss, led Him to demean Himself before him, and, as a servant, to wash his feet. He would say to him, by His action if He could

not by His words, 'this is what My love for you would lead Me to do for you;' 'this is the manner of master you would treacherously send to His death for a few paltry pieces of silver;' 'will you not repent of the purpose which you have intended before it is too late?' It was to say this to Judas—at least this was a part of His meaning—that He rose, and took a towel, and girded Himself, and began to wash the disciples' feet. By the very love which He bore to Judas, expressing itself thus in lowly service to him, He would break the heart of the traitor and turn him from his evil purpose and his awful end. But when he saw that it was all in vain, He said, "What thou doest, do quickly," and Judas went out into the blackness of the night.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God." The marvelous crown of it all! He who washed the disciples' feet at the last supper was one who knew Himself to be, beyond all question, the Son of the Living God. And, oh what a glory it casts on the scene, and how it illumines and transfigures every word and act that have a part in it! And what is more, the disciples knew this thing just as clearly as did He. And the reason for it all is this: their stubborn wills and hearts must be conquered; by whatever means might be necessary, they must be made to see and to understand. The hour was already at hand in which the tremendous issues of His work

and kingdom must be committed to the hands of these few men. Whether for weal or for woe, theirs was to be the chief responsibility for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God among men from this time onward. And so Jesus was not merely cleansing soiled feet there in the upper room that night. He was engaged in a task infinitely more important, and infinitely greater than that. He was cleansing soiled hearts and preparing men for the most glorious mission that was ever entrusted to the hands of men. It is in the light, the transfiguring light, that shines forth from and through these wonderful truths in the background of our picture, that we must interpret the meaning of the words and acts that pass upon the real stage. This—all of this—which I have been striving to make clear, must be clearly in our thought, if we would understand what the Master meant, when He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

Christlikeness: this is the last word in the definition of Christianity. I commend to you, therefore, reader mine, Jesus Christ as the great example of your life, that you may learn to walk in His steps. And I commend Him as your example in the following particulars:

First, in the state of mind, or, if you please, the inner spirit, of your life.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be grasped at and clung to, to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the necessity of guarding our minds and controlling our thoughts. It is by this means of entrance that impurity and sin find their way into our lives. Every act and purpose of life is present first in the thought and the conceptions of the mind. To keep these pure is to purify the life at its source, and that means that all will be pure and right. “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”

Second, in those activities which are the natural expression of the inner life.

This means the words and the deeds, of our lives.

With regard to the words, there is no point at which we need to guard ourselves more carefully than just here. How truly and wisely said the Apostle James: “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity in the midst of our members: so is the tongue that it defileth the whole body, and setteth

on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. . . . Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." How true this all is! Words of thoughtless profanity; words of deliberate blasphemy, against God! Words of cruel criticism; words of malicious gossip; words of deliberate reputation and character assassination, against our brother men! Words that belittle religion; words that sow thoughts of impurity in the minds of those who hear; words that stir emotion and passion until they burn as a consuming flame in the body and the mind of those who are lacking in self-control. Words of unmeasured condemnation and denunciation, rightly directed and richly deserved, maybe, but spoken in a spirit of bitterness and a lack of love, which can make them only evil in their fruit! Ah, words, words! How easy to speak; but how impossible to recall! How simple in appearance and sound; but how deadly in reality! How they prick, and rankle, and burn, and curse! If we would be Christlike we must set a guard at the door of our lips.

With regard to the deeds, the biography of Jesus Christ is the briefest and the most eloquent ever written. It is contained in five words: "He went about doing good." The biography of every true follower of Jesus Christ, if it is written properly,

must be written in seven words: "Like Christ, he went about doing good." The relief of suffering, the assuaging of sorrow, the strengthening of the weak, the feeding of the hungry, the pointing of men to the Saviour who alone can save them from their sins, these are the good works that lie ready to the hand of any who will walk in the footsteps of the Master and invest their lives in the ways that will mean the utmost of good to the world therefrom.

"O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

"Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way."

Third, in his intimate and unbroken fellowship with his Father. This, after all, was the secret of all of his wonderful life. You will recall his habit! At every time of stress, and of burdens pressing extra heavily, he would retire into the uninhabited place, or the mountain height, in order that he might be alone for a time with his God. And he always came away from such seasons of fellowship with his strength renewed, ready again

to take up the burden of his work and to bear it strongly and triumphantly for the Father's sake and glory. But you will get the clearest possible setting forth of my thought just here, in the words of the Master Himself. He was standing at the tomb of Lazarus, Mary and Martha were weeping at His side, and the sorrowing friends were uttering their lamentations all around. He himself wept in sympathy for their sorrow. And then He lifted His eyes to heaven, and He said, "I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always; but for the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." And yet He had said never a word! In the silence, no audible word of prayer being uttered, His heart had gone out to the Father, and the Father had heard and answered, and He had the assurance of the answer in His own soul. What a wonderful picture of the intercommunion of spirit between Him and His God! But this, and nothing less, is possible for you and me, and God wants us to possess it for ourselves. That at any time, in the presence of any need, we may just lift our hearts to God, whether we be in the closet or in the crowded mart, and in the silence of our spiritual communion, receive His answer and His blessing. If this becomes the habit of our lives, as it was the habit of Jesus the Christ, there is no measure of His image or His perfection that is beyond our reach, even here in the life of the world.

“Sow a thought and you reap an act.
Sow an act and you reap a habit.
Sow a habit and you reap a character.
Sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

This chain of causation is true for the life that is evil. Thank God, it is also true for the life that is pure and good. To the life that wills to have it so, the highest reaches of heaven are easily within reach. He has only to do the right, and trust in God, and follow Christ.

VII

MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS AND VISIONS

“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.”

(SAINT MATTHEW 17:8)

THESE words introduce us to one of the mountain scenes and one of the mountain experiences of the Bible. I know of no exercise that could be of greater value for a leisure hour than just to sit down in the companionship of the Book, and, leafing it over from the earliest pages of Genesis to the last of Revelation, find out for yourself the part that has been played by these mountain scenes and mountain experiences in the history and development of God's chosen people. Upon Moriah, one of the mountains of Palestine, Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, met the supreme test of his life, and proved his worthiness for the great task and honor which God had in reserve for him. It was here that his faith stood the test of offering upon the altar of sacrifice to God the life of his only son, the son of the promise, believing that God was even able and ready to raise him from the dead rather than that the

promise should be allowed to fail. There is a majestic justice contained in the tradition that this very spot was afterward the one chosen for the site of the great temple of Solomon, and those which in their turn succeeded it, the visible symbol of the presence and glory of the great God among men. It ought to be true, and it will do us no harm to believe that it is so.

At a later day, when the single household of the old patriarch had grown into a multitude, and God would lead his people forth from slavery and mould them into a mighty nation for his service, and the service of the world of men, it was to Sinai that he led them. And there, before the mountain that smoked, they waited for the Lord until He should reveal Himself to them. Then, from the glory of that mountain height, and of his days and nights of communion with Jehovah, there came Moses the servant of God, with his face shining as the face of an angel, and bearing in his hands the tables of stone upon which were written those laws that have been the foundation of all righteous laws enacted from that day to this. And Israel was ready for her mighty destiny.

Time rolls on and the nation has conquered, and entered into peaceful possession of its land of promise. Prosperity has come, and Jeshurun has waxed fat and kicked. Israel forgets her ancestral God and turns aside to the worship of the idols of the nations. Then it is that she is summoned up into the heights of Carmel, another of the

mountains of Palestine, and the test by fire was had. From morning until noon the helpless prophets of Baal cry, and leap upon the altar, and cut themselves with lancets so that the blood gushed out upon them; but there was none that heard, neither voice that made reply. But when the hour of evening sacrifice is come, Elijah, the lone prophet of Jehovah, calls upon his God, and the holy fire falls from heaven and eats up the sacrifice upon the altar, the stones of the altar itself, and the water in the trench that surrounded the altar. Amazed at this manifestation of power, and pricked in conscience because of their unfaithfulness, the people went down from that mountain height crying out with glad hearts, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" and the work of stamping out idolatry from the life of the kingdom of Israel was well on its way.

And when, on the morrow, the man of God learned that the effect of it all had not been what he had fondly hoped for upon one sinful and stubborn woman, the queen, Jezebel, he fled away a day's journey into the wilderness and laid him down under his juniper tree and prayed that he might die. Then it was that God, by His angel minister, fed him and quenched his thirst, and then sent him, upheld by that God-given strength, to Horeb the mount of God. And there, in the mouth of the cave, He gave a marvelous revelation of Himself and His ways. "A great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the

rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." And Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle, for he knew that he was in the presence of God. And armed with the strength that was given him in that vision he went down from the mountain height to take up again the burden of his life's work, and to carry it manfully and triumphantly until the day that, in the fiery chariot of Israel, and drawn by the fiery horses thereof, he was taken up into the glory of the God whom he had served so well in his life in the world.

And when, at a later date, Jesus the Messiah came, what man of the mountain heights and the mountain experience was He! The initial sermon of His ministry was preached upon the Horns of Hattin, one of the mountains of Palestine. It was a habit of His throughout His ministry, when times of peculiar stress came upon Him, to retire into a desert place or a mountain height alone, and to spend a whole day or a whole night in communion with His Father. And we well know that He always returned from that time of fellowship with His Father renewed in strength and courage for the mighty tasks which were His to perform. The transfiguration scene, from which the words of our study are taken, is but one of the mountain experiences of the life of the Master, and in its

course He was transfigured with a divine glory before the eyes of His wondering disciples. When, at the end of that wonderful life, He was to be offered up upon the cross as a sacrifice for the world's sin, it was upon Calvary, another of the mountains of Palestine, that He was lifted up between earth and heaven in order that He might draw all men to Himself. When His work on earth is fully done, and He is to return to the right hand of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God, it is from the slopes of Olivet, another of the mountains of Palestine, that, with hands extended in blessing, He is caught up out of the sight of His wondering disciples. And there also they received His gracious promise that He should in like manner come again to receive His own to Himself: the bulwark of men's faith to the end of time!

And now, why has all this been said? For a very good and practical reason and purpose. Life, it seems to me, is just like a great panorama from nature. It has its low level of the plain, with its heavy and miasmatic atmosphere, its tiresome and deadly routine, its disappointments and its despair: the low level of the work-a-day life of the world, where men live and labor, and sorrow and suffer, and die. And then it has those experiences which are like to the little hills, up into which we come, and we get a farther and clearer vision, and we breathe a purer and more life-giving atmosphere, and we understand more fully and help-

fully the plans and purposes and love of God. These are the unusual experiences of life that come to us from the hand of a good and loving Father to relieve its awful tedium and to make its sun shine the brighter and warmer. Then there are those supreme experiences of life when, like Paul, we are, as it were, caught up into the very third heaven of blessedness, and we see things which apparently it never was intended that the eye of man should see, and we hear things which apparently it never was intended that the ear of man should hear. We get the clearest and farthest possible vision, and we breathe the purest and most life-giving atmosphere, and we come to understand in the fullest measure, in which the mind of man can understand, the plans and purposes and love of God. We have been alone in the mountain height with God. These are the supreme experiences of life, infinitely rich and blessed.

Has it ever occurred to you that it was with definite purpose that God caused His church to be called Mount Zion in the midst of the earth? Here is the mount of vision up into which we come in order that we may be fitted to see eye to eye with God, to think His thoughts, to speak His words, to live His life in the world. Here is the mount of encouragement upon whose heights we get the new strength that will enable us to take up anew the crushing burdens of life and carry them to the glory of God and the blessing of the world of men. Here is the mount of transfigura-

tion where our lives are changed into His very likeness, from glory to glory. This, and none other, is the purpose of her morning and evening services on the Sabbath day, of her services in the midst of the week, of all her appointments for worship and fellowship with God. Oh, let us come to prize her at her real worth, and let us give to her our love and loyalty and unstinted, devoted service. She is the Church of God!

But the words of our study suggest much more than this. They suggest very clearly the ideal of Christian character and attainment; and that suggestion is contained in the words, "saw no man save Jesus only." What do I mean? This: if you will hold a copper penny close enough to your eye you can shut out the vision of the sun and the glorious heaven in which it shines. I would that we might so keep the loved form of the Master close before our eyes that we would see only Him, or rather, speaking more correctly, that we should see all other things through Him. The result? Why this: we grow to be like those with whom we much associate, those whom we fondly love. As we, therefore, keep the Master constantly before us we shall grow to be like Him; we shall come to think His thoughts, to speak His words, to do His deeds, to live His life, to bear His likeness in our very faces, but most of all in the spirit that abides within. There can be no other result. This is the law of life.

“I'll gaze forever on thy godlike father,
Transplanting one by one into my life
His bright perfections, till I shine like him.”

And this further thought appears: it was only after they had lifted up their eyes that they could behold this ideal of Jesus only, and so grow into His likeness. Ah, beloved, there can be no uplift without the upward look! “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” The Apostle would not throw doubt upon the fact of their having risen with Christ; but he would make clear to them a vital law of the Christian life and growth. The life that would rise high must look to the things that are high and seek to attain to them. You are all familiar, I am sure, with the illustration of this great truth which is given to us by the Bedford Tinker? It is the story of the man with the muckrake going about and raking amid the filth and the offal of the earth in order that he may secure for himself the few and scanty nuggets of gold that are contained therein. And there are some contained therein, for no one would be contented to give his life to these things if there were no return. So, there he is, raking, raking. And all the time, just above his head there is a hand holding a golden crown. His crown! But he sees it not, nor knows of its presence, because with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his mind engrossed with the things to

be found there, and his mind and heart satisfied with the returns of his earth-directed labors, he is totally unconscious that there is anything else or anything better for him. And what a picture it is of the lives of the people of our day! With our eyes turned downward toward the life of the world and the rewards which it has to give; with our minds and all our powers engrossed in the performance of the given daily task, which brings its real, though largely material, reward; with our hearts satisfied with the meager returns that these things can give, we are losing the crown of our lives. Ah, friend of mine, the true life of man is from above, and is found above, in Christ and in God. I pray you, let no man, or influence, or circumstance, rob you of your crown!

There is a last thought suggested in connection with the words of our study. We cannot remain upon the mountain top always. The air is too rare, the altitude too high, the experience too far removed from the real life of men. That was the mistake which Peter made on the mount of transfiguration. He said, "Let us build here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." He would just remain there enjoying, selfishly, that wonderful, that glorious experience. How did Christ answer the suggestion? By not so much as a word. He ignored it. And He ignored it because it was so puerile, so utterly lacking in understanding of the Christ mind and spirit, that it was not worthy of any attention or

answer. But when the time came for Him to teach the lesson which He wanted the disciples to learn from their experience on the mount of transfiguration, He led them down the mountain slopes to the plain at the mountain's base, to find there a father whose heart was sore because a son whom he loved better than his own life had fallen into the power of a spirit of evil, and a son whose life was a living curse because of a terrible malady from which he constantly suffered. And the father had brought his afflicted son to the very persons from whom he had every right to expect help, and he had received none. He had brought him to the disciples of Christ, and they had proven powerless. But when the Master comes, and they tell Him of it, He speaks those quiet, majestic words, "bring him hither to Me," and the word of power and loving sympathy is spoken that restored a young man to his full enjoyment of manhood, and made a father's heart rejoice in seeing his son made whole again, with the rich opportunities of a man's full life before him once more.

And so it is that we learn the lesson of the hour and of our lives. The mountain height is for vision, for seeing eye to eye with God; the mountain is for fellowship that we may learn to think the thoughts of God; the mountain is for encouragement that we constantly may be renewed in strength to do the work of God; the mountain is for the revelation of his glory that we may be

changed into the glory of his likeness. But down in the valley at the mountain's base, where men live and labor, sorrow and suffer, and die; where fathers' souls are burdened and mothers' hearts are breaking because of the wayward ways in which sons and daughters whom they love with a love that is stronger than is death are walking—aye, down in the valley at the mountain's base is the place where we must show the fruits of the mountain vision; where we must make concrete the thoughts of God by doing godly deeds of kindness and helpfulness; where we must pour out like water the strength which we keep constantly renewed through fellowship; where we must show the likeness of the Master in the spirit of Christ that dwells in all of our life, and in the following of his example in going about doing good. Thank God, it is ours, in the full enjoyment of His blessing, to bind up the broken hearted, to pour balm upon the spirit that is bruised, to preach liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison house to them that are bound, to comfort the sorrowing, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, the Gospel of His saving grace to all mankind. It is ours to give ourselves and our all to the fulfilling of those Christly ministries which He left to us when He went back to the glory of heaven and left to His disciples the heritage of an incomplete work and the honor of being His fellow laborers in the great work of the saving of a world, a race, from sin. We must go often to the mountain

height if we would live the transfigured life in the midst of the sin-darkened and sin-cursed world. To serve, that is the great privilege of the disciple of Jesus Christ.

“When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

VIII

THE JOY OF JOYS

"Fulfill ye my joy."

(SAINT PAUL, Philippians 2:2)

COMMANDER Booth-Tucker, of the Salvation Army, in an address at Washington, D. C., some years ago, made a very striking statement. It was: "The joy of joys is to increase the joys of others." A mine of truth in a single sentence! The solution of most of the unhappinesses of life in a formula as clear as the sunlight. In the chain of Christian graces joy is the second link, binding together love and peace. In the grand chorus of human life, joy is the chord next to the fundamental love, barring it, the most necessary, the most sweet. Yet it is such an elusive grace. It is with us one moment, and the next it is gone. Little things produce it; little things banish it from the life. It becomes at once a matter of great importance to determine how this grace may be produced; and, then, how it may be kept.

A great variety of experiences are capable of producing joy. Galileo was filled with all the joy of a boy at play, when, through the telescope

which he had invented, the beauties of the starry firmament burst upon his wondering gaze. With a feeling well nigh amounting to rapture he looked upon the mountains and the valleys of the moon; Jupiter swinging round in his circuit with the accompaniment of his four satellites; the Milky Way resolved into innumerable stars, so distant and so closely joined, that they cannot be separated by the unaided eye. His joy was that which will always be the fruit of a new vision of truth, whatever may be its source or its application; for truth is eternal, and truth is God.

After the battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington, riding with the foremost of his advance guard, was pressing forward in pursuit of the flying French. Little by little the country became less open, and the position of the general more dangerous, on account of stragglers. At last, one of his officers advised him to retire from the pursuit on account of the peril in which he was placing his life. He only met with the answer: "Let them fire away; the battle is won, and my life is of no value now." Intoxicated with the joy of victory, the great general, the Iron Duke, counted his life as nothing in comparison with the joy in his soul.

When James II ascended the throne of England, one of his first official acts was to attempt the overthrow of the Episcopal Church, and the establishing in its place of the Roman Catholic. He demanded the assistance of the reigning bishops in

his enterprise. Seven of them refused. They were seized and tried as traitors. The time came for the verdict, and the populace was waiting anxiously for the jury to appear. Finally the jury filed into its box, and there followed a breathless stillness. The clerk spoke: "Do you find the defendants or any of them, guilty of the misdemeanor of which they are impeached, or not guilty?" Clear and calm came the answer of the foreman: "Not guilty!" One man sprang up and waved his hat. Bench and gallery responded with a shout until ten thousand voices rang as one. The throng without, for the fate of a nation's liberties was hanging upon this verdict, took up the glad acclaim, and from the street and river, craft-be-decked, there went up one mighty shout of joy. For some time the wild enthusiasm swayed the multitudes, at last to give way to a more subdued but not less expressive sign of their emotions, and thousands wept aloud for very joy. It was the declaration of England's freedom: a freedom not of the body, but of the soul.

Such are some of the causes which produce joy in the lives of individuals or of multitudes. They are only a few of very many. There is no intention of being exhaustive; only of arousing thought and arresting attention. But these examples teach yet other things. They teach the strength, the wonderful power of this emotion. It transforms the retiring student into the happy man of society. It makes the great general, upon whose

life depended the success of an army and the destiny of a continent—nay a world—consider that life as nothing. It lifts a nation from the depths of despair and the darkness of hopelessness, and fires it with new life of courage and hope restored. It even has been known, where it was present to excess, to sever the life cord and usher the soul into the presence of its maker, where alone is joy in its fulness found. Nor does the teaching of these incidents stop here. They tell us of the transient nature of the joy which they produced. It ceased almost with the vanishing of that which gave it birth. They who at one moment were joyous on account of that which had befallen, the next were crying out for some new joy, and seeking the means to secure it. This is joy; but it is not the true joy. It is joy beginning without and proceeding inward. The true joy begins within and proceeds outward. And yet, in a very vital sense, it must be borne in mind that every joy is a dependent joy, just as every life is a dependent life. There is no such thing in the world as an independent life. Just so there is no such thing in the world as an independent joy. But there is this difference: the life cannot be independent, because it cannot help receiving from others; but the joy cannot be independent because it cannot help giving to others. Note how beautifully this idea is enforced in the words of our text: "Fulfill ye my joy." Then follows the Greek *hína*, in order that, or to the end that,

“ye may be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” Fulfill ye my joy—not in my life, but in your lives; not in order that my joy may be increased, but in order that your joy may be increased by being like minded, by possessing a common love, by working unitedly for one common end. Do we need more of the divine teaching to impress this great truth? Well, it stands ready to our hand. You will find it in the third chapter of John’s gospel. Jesus, baptized of John, and having undergone the forty days of fasting in the wilderness, had entered upon his full work of ministry. The Jews saw it, and, probably, already moved by envy of him, came to John and said: “Behold he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.” If envy was their ruling motive and enmity their state of mind, how they must have been disappointed at what they heard; for from the lips of John came the noble answer: “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” “The joy of joys is to increase the joys of others.”

The Master, Christ, enforces the same beautiful teaching. In His touching and tender farewell discourse, He plainly avows His purpose in speaking so to His disciples. “These things have I

spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Think of it! Christ, His joy already full, because He was soon to complete His divine work in giving Himself once and for all for His loved ones, speaks to them His parting words of cheer, that a joy like that which He Himself feels may dwell in their hearts and may find its fulness in a like unselfish service for the world of men. As He came into the world to give His life for the world, so He sent them out to give their lives to the world. As He found His highest duty, His supremest joy, in the fulfilling of this service, so would their joy be full when, in God's own time, they should be privileged to work and to suffer. John found his cup of joy running over when he beheld the Christ entered fully upon His work as the result of his witness bearing. Jesus had fulness of joy when He had completed His work for lost men, and, before His mind's eye, already saw them enjoying the fruits of the salvation which He was about to purchase. The follower of the Nazarene shall have like joy—yea, the very joy of the Christ filling his soul—when he gives his life, his all, to bless the world and to lift men up toward God. "The joy of joys is to increase the joys of others."

What, then, is this joy? This question we are hardly yet ready to answer. As in many other cases, it is much easier, and just as instructive, to tell what it is not. So, let us note first of all that it is not the joy of receiving. Mark that! Mark

it so that it cannot be forgotten! There is a joy in receiving. It fills our hearts with a great happiness to receive tokens of esteem and affection from friends and loved ones. We rejoice in the countless blessings which the beneficent Father showers into our lives, and we feel a great gratitude to Him for His goodness. And, yet, have you never noticed how easy it becomes to take gifts as a matter of course, and to lose the sense of gratitude to God the giver of every good and perfect gift? Have you never remarked how one must fight ever to keep before his mind the fact, even, that all of our good things are the expression of God's love and not the reward of our own merit? Yes, there is a joy in receiving. But it is not the true joy; for the spirit can become dead to its influence. Of the joy of joys it cannot be true that it shall ever fail to quicken and to cheer. It is a perennial spring: a well of water, living water, within the soul springing up into everlasting life. Life is not an inland lake into which the waters pour, there to remain until evaporated by the sun, because the lake has no outlet, growing daily more impure and more loathsome. But life is a great open sea into which the waters pour from rivers and innumerable lesser streams; whose waters are wholesome and the home of countless multitudes which sport and live therein. To receive is blessed. There is something more blessed still.

We must note, in the second place, that it is not the joy of possession: of possession merely.

There is also a joy in mere possession. It is a pleasure to have the good things of life. They themselves, of themselves, give to one a feeling of comfort, of security, of superiority over circumstances, that is very akin to joy. It is a pleasure to wear the finest clothes, to live in the best house, to own the biggest farm, to ride behind the swiftest horses or in the most expensive and comfortable automobile owned by any one in the whole country side. It is an undoubted joy to be able to give to your children better advantages of education and culture, better outlooks in the direction of business or profession, than is possible in the case of many of your neighbors and friends. Yes, these things give us a form of joy. But, oh, how narrow it is; how unsatisfying it is! How, deep down in our hearts, it fails to meet our true desires. How, even to ourselves, we are ashamed to cherish it, because we know that it is mean and small—in-describably mean and small. How, if we have any delicacy of feeling, we shrink from showing it, most of all from speaking of it, in the presence of others, because we do not want to reveal our littleness of soul and narrowness of spirit. This is the joy of the miser, who finds his only happiness in hoarding his gold and in counting over his growing pile of doubloons. Wedded to his gold, he becomes like it. His heart grows hard, his face like that of an animal suffering at all times from the gnawings of an insatiable appetite; his hands work nervously as though they are anxious to

close around the object of their desire, which as yet they have failed to clutch—in short, the man becomes hardened, scarcely worthy any longer to be called a man, and you would almost be prepared, should you touch him, to hear a metallic ring in answer to your contact. Though such a life may have its joys, we cannot refrain from a breathing forth of the fervent prayer: “From all such sordid joys, good Lord, deliver us!”

With our way thus prepared and made plain before us, we are ready to advance to the consideration of the question: “The joy of joys,” what is it? It is not the joy of receiving. It is not the joy of mere possession. It is the joy of giving. This is the something more blessed still. To receive is blessed. To give is more blessed. The child comes into the world. It receives its very life from its parents. Upon it they lavish their care. Its life is all a receiving. Is it happy? Is its life full of joy? It may be, and doubtless must be, acknowledged that it is happy as far as its capacity for happiness permits it to be. And that is just the point at which I am aiming. Its happiness, its joy, is of a low order, because it is able, as yet, only to receive and not to give. But in the development of a child there comes a day when it begins to feel the tenderness in its mother’s embrace; when it begins to understand the love that prompts her unceasing care, which throbs in every tone of her voice, which beams in every glance of her eye. Her embrace is answered by

the tender clinging of baby hands that will not let go, even in their owner's sleep. The caressing word or the soothing lullaby is answered with a coo of delight from baby's voice. The eye that kindles with a mother's love, as it looks into the face of its own, meets there a smile as sweet as ever shone upon cherubic face, a little glimpse of heaven. Is the child more happy? Who can doubt it? And why is it so? Because it has passed beyond the stage where life is all receiving, and has entered into that where it is able also to give.

The child grows up into boyhood and youth. As he increases in stature there grows along with his body the sense of his obligation to repay, to some extent, all that he has cost to them who love him most. Day by day he does more willingly the tasks that are set for him. At first they seem burdensome; but little by little they become less so, as the spirit of giving grows, until there comes a day when he finds a real pleasure in giving his young strength and his time to serve those whom he loves. Then there comes an eventful day in his history. The holiday season is at hand. There is a long-coveted article, which has been promised him, and the possession of which alone seems necessary to make his happiness complete. For weeks he has seen it in the shop window, and finally, his pleadings have prevailed, and he is to have it for his own. On a clear, cold morning his mother calls him to her and places in his hand

the money necessary for the purchase. He starts down street with a jubilant heart and a buoyant step. But as he passes along, something in the window of another shop causes him to stop. For a moment he looks at it, and then passes on. But the step is more slow than before. The face is more serious and less jubilant. The pleasure seems to have been somehow extracted from the errand on which he was going. Slower and slower grows the pace. More and more serious grows the face. Finally, he stops, turns around, and begins to retrace his steps. It is evident to all who see him that there is a struggle going on in his mind. Gradually, however, the face brightens, the step quickens, and he finds himself before the shop where his attention had been arrested on the downward way. There is no hesitation now. With unrestrained eagerness he asks for and obtains that which he desires. Then, with empty purse and a light and happy heart, he goes on his homeward way. As he passes along, he is more quiet than before; but the brightness of his face, and the eye that is so full that it seems almost at the point of overflow, do not tell of a sorrowing heart, but rather of one that is too full of joy for expression. He reaches his home, first of all, to seek out his mother and to place in her hands the purchase which he had made. She says not a word, because she could not; but her eyes fill with tears, and, with a swelling heart, she places her arms about his neck and kisses him. There was

no need to tell the story. The son had denied himself of that which he most fondly desired for the sake of the mother whom he loved.

The old routine of duties began again; but not as before. The holiday season passed away, and the boy was compelled to abstain from many of the pleasures of his playmates, because of the act which he had done. Yet, in spite of it all, they were the happiest days which he had ever known, and his cup of joy was full as he heard the before silent voice of his mother singing to herself as she busied herself about the duties of the household. He had learned that it is more blessed to give than to receive. To him it would be no strange message to proclaim: "The joy of joys is to increase the joys of others."

This is the joy that comes to possess the soul of every man who does noble and faithful work for the uplifting of fallen humanity. This is the joy of the Christian who daily takes up his cross and follows Jesus, in his deeds of kindness and words of love, doing the works of the Christ. This is the joy of the minister of the Gospel, who, denying himself the possibility of wealth, or ease, or worldly preferment, voluntarily gives his life to his fellowmen, in order that, by living among them, and by holding ever before their minds high ideals of life and of character he may win them from the life of the flesh and of the world to that higher, nobler, fuller life—the life that is hid with Christ in God. This is the joy of the missionary

of the cross, who, leaving behind home and kindred and native land, and taking with him nothing but his God and his love for his human brothers, goes forth into the dark places of the earth, to let his light shine, to bring freedom for bondage and hope for despair. Yes, and this was the very joy of the Christ, who, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Will you live this life of joy? Is it not the dearest dream of your life so to live: so to live forever? Beloved, it is your privilege. Will you rise to it? I pray God that you may. Then, and not till then, will you understand what it really means to be a Christian. "Fulfill ye my joy!" Yes, but how? Ah, give yourself to the world! Serve your fellow men! Bless those whose lives know no light, no happiness, no true joy. Prove to yourself, in the depth and wealth of your own experience, "The joy of joys is to increase the joys of others!"

IX

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

(SAINT MATTHEW 2:21)

O'er the hills of old Judea,
Rose and shone a wondrous star;
Shone in splendor unsurpassèd,
Shedding radiance wide and far.

Spirits rare, of many nations,
For this star had waited long;
For it was the promised token
Of the king who was to come.

On this king the expectation
Of full many peoples dwelt.
He should bring the promised freedom
From long bondage, sorely felt.

From far eastern land of India,
Persia's plains and Greece's shore,
Came the wise men with frankincense,
Myrrh and gold, their priceless store.

At the royal feet they poured them,
Glad they could rich offerings bring;
And they knelt in humble worship
To the child who was a king.

King of heaven, king of glory,
Was this little, helpless child;
King of love, by God's power coming
To the virgin meek and mild.

Prophets had his birth forespoken,
Angels joined to sing its praise;
Glory in the highest, glory,
Peace, good will toward men always.

Shepherds in the fields abiding
Heard the song and saw the choir,
As the joy of heaven o'erflowing
Stirred and filled the wondering air.

Flocks and dangers all forgotten,
Joying in God's promise old,
They to Bethlehem hasten, wondering
At the tale the angels told.

In the inn's rough, lowly stable,
While the cattle round him fed,
There they found the king of heaven,
With a manger for His bed.

As the wise men, so the shepherds
Knelt in worship at His feet,
Showing how the high and lowly
In His love as brothers meet.

By the Spirit, in the temple,
Simeon saw and knew his Lord,
And his glad soul blessed Jehovah
For the keeping of His word.

Anna, prophetess of Asher,
In His coming saw fulfilled
Israel's hope of glad redemption,
And her cup of joy was filled.

Even so, through all the ages
Since the star of Bethlehem shone,
Have the men of every nation,
Blessed the King who left His throne—

Left His throne by love's pure promptings
That He might salvation bring
To the sin-cursed brothers, sisters
Of the Son of Heaven's King.

By His coming entered blessing
To a world that knew it not;
Struggling up, but ever falling
By the arch-fiend's clever plot.

Life and hope by Him implanted
In the hearts that in Him trust,
Bring, have brought, faith's glorious vic'try,
Proving God could love, be just.

Here the soul by sin dyed crimson
Found its sin-curse washed away.
And the peace that passeth knowledge
Came to be its strength and stay.

Here man finds his full endowment
For the best to live and bear!
God's in birth means God's in living!
Son must Father's likeness wear!

Here has come, in turn, to woman,
Freedom from the shameful past.
She, no longer slave and chattel,
Stands man's equal, now at last.

Here have come to little children
Honors born not of the earth!
Theirs, says He, the heavenly kingdom,
E'en as theirs the heavenly birth.

Here it is the sick and suffering
Find release from all their pain.
Here the eyes that sin had blinded,
Joy to see the light again.

Here it is that they who sorrow
Hear sweet comfort whispered low;
Speaks a voice as never man spake,
Lifting every weight of woe.

Nations great, that wait in darkness,
Praying hope's good day to dawn,
Hear the message of the Gospel
And, with face alight, fare on!

Heart of man, however burdened,
Here finds burdens rolled away,
By the world's great burden-bearer;
And its strength made as its day.

Christ is come! The angels sang it!
Christ is come, the shepherds tell!
Christ is come, cried saint and prophet!
Christ is come! In God's world, well!

Christ is come, divine revealer
Of the heart of God to man!
That God's son might know his Father!
Sin's abyss to overspan.

Christ is come, the world's redeemer!
Friend of man, and brother, too—
Come to pay the price of ransom—
Come, man's soul to love and woo!

Welcome Him, ye heavy-hearted!
Welcome Him, ye children dear!
Welcome Him, whate'er your burden!
See, He standeth waiting, near!

Christ, no more the helpless Baby,
But the King from off His throne!
In His hands and side are wound-prints,
And He comes to claim His own.

If in love you bid Him welcome,
As His message soundeth clear,
Christmas peace and Christmas blessing
Shall be yours through all the year.

X

EASTER JOY

“Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

(SAINT PAUL, II Timothy 1:10)

’Twas a gladsome spring-time morning,
In the city ’mid the hills;
David’s city, mountain girdled,
Like a gem in royal setting,
Which the heart with joy entrills.

But there was no joy of spring-time
In this city fair and bright.
Some there were in whose hearts rankled
Vain remorse for deed unholy;
Hatred with its scorching blight.

Others, still, their hope had followed
To their Master’s lonely tomb;
Where in dark despair they laid Him,
Who should have redeemed their Israel
From its threatened, awful doom.

Some have fled away, to hide them
From the sharing of His fate.
Some, with stronger hearts of courage,
Seeking for their love expression,
For the First Day morning wait.

To the tomb without the city,
At the breaking of the day,
Haste these tender, loving women
That they might embalm His body;
Fend the waste of death away.

Rich and sweet as was their heart's love
Were the spices that they bring.
Since His heart was still and pulseless,
Cherish they His lifeless body,
Whom their love had crowned their King.

But they recked not of the wonders
That their eyes should there behold!
For the tomb, rock-sealed, was open;
The sarcophagus was empty;
Death its victim could not hold.

In the tomb, two radiant angels
Guard the place in which he laid.
"Seek ye Jesus?" said they kindly;
"He is not here," "He is risen!"
"Ye shall see Him as He said."

From the tomb they hasten, wondering
At the strange things they had heard.
Haste to find the true disciples;
Haste to tell the angels' message
Of their Master's own pledged word.

But they leave behind them, weeping,
Mary who had lost her Lord.
There she stood, her heart near breaking,
Facing the dark, hopeless future;
Naught of good it could afford.

But the Master who had saved her,
Could not leave her thus forlorn!
Comes behind her, calls her Mary;
Turns her sorrow into rapture;
Turns her dark to radiant morn.

Even so the other women,
As they hurry cityward,
See a form they love approaching;
And, amazed, fall down and worship
At the feet of their dear Lord.

So, to Peter, the denier,
E'er this mighty day was done,
Came the vision of the Master,
Taught him he was not forgotten,
Gave him strength to fight, fight on!

Came He thus to staid Cleopas,
And his fellow in the way!
Made their hearts to burn within them,
Blessed them as the bread was broken,
Nerved them their full part to play.

With the coming of the even,
In the room in which they share,
Stands He suddenly among them,
Speaks His benison upon them,
Leaves them rapt, triumphant there.

Day of marvels! Day of wonders!
Glorious Resurrection Day!
Day of dead hope new upspringing,
Christ's new peace to men's hearts bringing,
Bidding care and fear away!

Light is victor over darkness,
Joy is mightier than pain;
Men from fear of death have freedom,
Dread no more the veiled future,
Since Christ died and rose again.

This, the capstone of Christ's mission,
We today here celebrate.
We believe not in a dead Christ,
Who must bow His knee to greater!
He's our living Potentate.

This, the faith of the Apostles,
When the Church was but new born!
With this weapon shook they empires,
Toppled thrones, and threw down tyrants,
Who were of their power shorn!

This, the faith of all the ages
Of the Church from then till now!
It has nerved the hearts of martyrs,
Sent the herald on his mission,
Held each true to sacred vow.

This, our faith, who here assemble
On this glorious Easter morn!
Gladdest message of the Gospel,
That just overflows with gladness!
Christ the victor's wreath has worn!

So, as on this gladsome morning,
Here we meet to sound his praise,
Who in heaven's throne is reigning;
Lord of Death, and Life, we'll crown him
In our hearts and love always.

And, as on life's ways we're faring,
Bearing loads that heavy press,
We will wait with loving patience,
Trusting in his care and wisdom,
Till his voice shall bid us—rest!

And, when into rest we've entered,
From the tasks that fret us sore,
We shall share with him the glory,
Which for us has been preparing,
On that fair, immortal shore!

SURE FOUNDATIONS

I know that I am I.
No art of man's philosophy
Shall rob me of my sovereign will.
I am a man, and master of my fate.

I know that God is God.
The starry firmament profound,
The ordered universe around,
Their Master, wise, all-powerful await.

I know that God is good.
The sweet revealings of the Father's love,
In care and guidance from above,
Proclaim Him near in cloud and sun.

I know that God is love.
The witness of the Spirit's voice
In heart and mind, bid me rejoice
Because He speaks to me, His son.

I know that Christ is king.
To me He gave His mighty all!
For me He gave His glorious all!
With right He claims my full obedience.

I know that life is real.
Not senseless flittings of the butterfly;
But purpose fine, the endeavor high,
Become one of my high allegiance.

Let this my purpose be!
To live for Him in pure endeavor,
In this world's life, aye, and forever!
E'en thus love's debt of gratitude I'll pay!

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