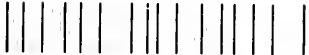


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DREW SERMONS
ON THE
GOLDEN TEXTS
FOR 1908

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DREW SERMONS
ON THE
GOLDEN TEXTS
FOR 1908

EDITED BY
EZRA SQUIER TIPPLE, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



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INTRODUCTION

Drew Theological Seminary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, ever since its formal opening forty years ago to-day, has been not only in fullest sympathy with the Sunday-school idea, but has sought in every possible way to exalt its ideals and to contribute to its success.

This volume of short sermons on the Golden Texts of the International Lessons has been prepared by some of the professors of the Seminary and two score and more devoted graduates in the hope that through this avenue of approach to the lessons of the coming year there may be inspiration and help to the thousands of pastors, superintendents, teachers, and others who are giving generously to the Sunday-school much time and thought.

EZRA SQUIER TIPPLE.

Madison, New Jersey,
November 6, 1907.

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LESSON FOR JANUARY 5

THE WORD MADE FLESH

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—John 1. 14.

BY HENRY A. BUTTZ, D.D., LL.D.,

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THE Gospel of Saint John is at once the simplest and the most profound of the New Testament writings. It is very simple in its literary structure. Most of its words, it will be noted, are but one or two syllables in length, and it is equally simple in the original Greek. One who takes up the Gospel of Saint John feels it apparently plain and straightforward and easily comprehensible, but as he proceeds in his studies, and reads the passages over and over again, he realizes that he is entering into the profound mysteries of the Christian religion.

The text, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" is the concluding verse of what is generally designated as the prologue to Saint John's Gospel, one of the most marvelous productions of either human or inspired expression. To fathom its depths and to expound it with clearness is a task which we may not attempt. This prologue sets forth the dignity of Christ in such an overpowering form of statement as to leave an irresistible impression that He of whom it is spoken was indeed "God manifest in the flesh."

The prologue begins with the announcement that Christ, who is the Word, was from the beginning with God, and was God. The writer affirms further that "all things were made by him," that "he was the life, and this life was the light of men"; the divine mission of John is attested, but it is made clear that the work of the Baptist was only preparatory; that Christ is the

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true, the universal Light, and that while some did not receive him, those who did receive him, to these he gave the distinguished honor to become the sons of God.

And then comes the marvelous utterance of the text, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This is the wondrous announcement of the incarnation so graphically portrayed in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It is here only referred to. For a full study those Gospels must be carefully investigated.

1. The text announces *the pręxistence of Jesus Christ*. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The words "was made" are a translation of a verb which means "to become," that is, to pass from one state to another. Before he came in the flesh he existed. Christ, then, was antecedent to history of which we have any cognizance. History to our conception began with the life of the world and with man. Before the creation, and before there was man to understand it and to explain it, there was no veritable history. When the geologist has reached the furthest limits of his investigations in the surface of the earth he has reached the limits of history. When the astronomer turns his telescope to the heavens and has reached the utmost limits of which his telescope is capable he has reached the limits of astronomical history. The vital question of the time is, Where was Christ in relation to history? Was he the product of history, a development of it? Was he contemporaneous with it, or was he before it? There is a sense in which he was the product of history, that is, history had pronounced him, and both in prophecy, and in type, and in symbol had predicted him; but the coming of Christ was not a development but a revolution. He was connected with history because he was the Son of man, the Son of humanity, and because he was the completion of its anticipations and prophetic symbolism; but in another and in a higher sense the coming of Christ was a break in the continuity of history. When he came a new force struck the earth.

THE WORD MADE FLESH

It was God manifest in flesh. He was the manifestation of God, and with him dawned a new era in humanity's history. It was in the language of the Scripture "the coming age" which he represented, an age which was in a high sense to break with the previous ages, and yet gather up and hold together all that had ever been wrought in the past through all the saints and sages.

We need not trace this doctrine of the preëxistence of Christ through the New Testament. Two passages in this very Gospel fully establish the doctrine of his preëxistence. One passage is in connection with Christ's sacrificial prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And again, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me, that they may behold my glory which I had with thee before the world was."

2. The text also affirms the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The word rendered "dwelt" is "*tabernacled* among us," set up his home. In the incarnation of Christ God entered into human conditions, took upon him the nature of man, or, in the language of the text, "became flesh." He entered into our humanity, bearing its infirmities and weaknesses, but not its sins. Paul in his letter to the Philippians says that Christ was "made in the likeness of men, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The assumption of human nature by our blessed Lord is one of the sublime mysteries of redemption. Into the manner in which this took place and into the nature of Christ in the conjunction of the divine and human we may not enter. Discussions on this point have been a subject of much controversy, and have caused wide divergencies in theological thought, but these various forms of theological expression do not affect the essential doctrine. The great truth is that God was manifest in the flesh. The assurance that once there came into the world one who was both Son of God and Son of man appeals to us in

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our time of struggle. For our weaknesses we have divine sympathy, for our burdens we have divine anxiety, in our struggles we have divine power.

The incarnation of the Son of God as announced in the text is a part of our Christianity so fundamental that it is distinctly indicated in the Gospels. It is so clearly expressed that it cannot be gotten rid of except by a denial of the accuracy and inspiration of the sacred writings containing the life of Christ. We must, then, accept this sublime manifestation of God as a great central doctrine demanding our assent and helping our weaknesses.

3. The form of this manifestation reveals the wonderfulness of his personality. Not only did he enter humanity as a child born of a woman, but also his whole coming and life were so unique as to set him apart from all other men, and as manifesting that he was indeed the Son of God and Son of man. When an eminent stranger is to visit a place there is a widespread anticipation of how he shall look, and in what form he shall appear, and it is often the case that there is much disappointment. He seems so different from what they expected, and yet, perhaps, when they become acquainted, he is grander than they anticipated. So it was with the coming of our blessed Lord. He was all that was anticipated and expected and prophesied, and indeed his coming was so marvelous that it has excited the astonishment and admiration of the world wherever the story has been told from that time until now. He came the babe of Bethlehem: "And they found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." He came the adored of angels: "There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." He came the hope of humanity. The aged and devout Simeon, standing on the borderland of the Old and New Testament dispensation, hailed the infant Christ as "a light to lighten the Gentiles,

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the glory of thy people Israel." He came "the way, the truth, and the life," and these three words find their expression nowhere so complete as in him. He came the light of the world: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He came the bread of life: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." He came the resurrection of his people: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He came bringing with him all possible blessing for the world. Our human thought has as yet not found anything essential for mankind for this life and the life to come which was not foreshadowed and expressed in the coming of Jesus Christ, who was God manifest in the flesh.

But the text further says, "He dwelt among us." For thirty-three years, according to our ordinary chronology, he lived among the men whom he came to save. Between his twelfth and his thirtieth year, his history, so far as the Gospels are concerned, is unwritten. It is a period of the silence, so to speak, of Jesus Christ. At the close of that time he burst suddenly again upon the world, and his light has been shining ever since. During the three years of his earthly ministry he mingled with men in all the relations of life. There was no class of persons with whom he was not familiar. There was no temptation which he did not feel and overcome. There was no sorrow which belongs to our humanity which he did not bear. There was no burden which he did not carry. His life closed on a cross, but the grave could not hold him. He arose and ascended into the heavens from Olivet, and has entered into his glory. There he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The preservation of this doctrine of the text is one of the great duties of the Christian Church. There is danger lest it be obscured in our thinking, as well as in our experience. The tendency to forget our divine Lord

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and to regard him merely as an evolution in the onward progress of humanity is not in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, and is contradictory to the whole trend of evangelical theology. We must stand guard against every tendency to obscure or eliminate the incarnation from the mind of man.

This doctrine is also to us one of great practical value in our ordinary life. We often wonder how God would act if he dwelt among men. The text says that "he became flesh, and dwelt among us." What strength this gives to the assurances of God's Word! "He was despised and rejected of men." Who was it that was despised and rejected of men? It was He who was God manifested in the flesh. We read that he is able to save to the uttermost. Who is it that is thus able to save? It is the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. We wonder sometimes how we should act, or how God would have us act, in the great emergencies of life. We have been maltreated, persecuted, perhaps, and wonder what he would do if he were in our place, and then we read his words in the agony of the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." We wonder sometimes how we should act toward our fellow men, in all the complex relations of this life of ours, in its struggles, ambitions, rivalries, competitions of all kinds, and we ask ourselves what we shall do, and we hear the words of the Word manifest in the flesh, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is the Word manifest in the flesh who animates our sacrifices, gives joy in every hour of sorrow, who stands by every sick bed, and will at last give to all his people a crown of glory that fadeth not away. This Word, who was at once the Son of God and the Son of man, tabernacled in our world, became in his own person a perfect example, offered for humanity a perfect sacrifice, gave to the world a perfect teaching, and brought for all mankind, in all ages and in all climes, life and immortality.

LESSON FOR JANUARY 12

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

GOLDEN TEXT: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1. 29.

BY SAMUEL K. DOOLITTLE,
PASTOR FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY

"THERE was a man sent from God, whose name was John." He was God's messenger to men. He came in answer to prayer and in fulfillment of prophecy. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. He grew to manhood in the wilderness of Judæa, living in the most humble way, beyond doubt spending much time in prayer, meditation, and in the most intimate communion with God. One so filled with the Spirit must have walked with God, and must have known what the Saviour meant when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

When he began his public ministry he was well fitted to be the Voice of God, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." John knew that Jesus would soon begin his work, and had been given a sign of recognition: "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Jesus soon presented himself to John for baptism. John hesitated, and yielded only when told that it was necessary, to enable Jesus to fulfill all righteousness. He saw a wonderful sight as he baptized him. "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him."

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“And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” Some days after the baptism Jesus came to John again. As he saw him he said to those about him, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh (or beareth) away the sin of the world.” This is a wonderful statement, and we may well tread softly as we examine it.

The sin of the world—what about it? The Bible says, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” “All unrighteousness is sin.” “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” The Catechism says, “Sin is any act, word, or purpose in which we disobey God, or any failure to keep his law of love.”

Sin entered the world of humanity in Eden. Mother Eve first felt its power, then Adam. God had said to them, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” or, “dying, thou shalt die.” They disobeyed God, lost his favor, and began to taste this death. In fear and shame and guilt they tried to hide from the presence of God. Through grace their lives were spared, but they were driven from Eden. They were created in the image of God, but their children were born in the image of their fallen parents, destitute of original purity—“born in sin”: with a bent to sinning, under the power of sin.

We see the evil nature of sin in the pride, envy, hatred, and murderous spirit of Cain, in the general corruption of the world preceding the flood, in the sad failure of the chosen people to fulfill their high calling. The history of the ages is stained and saddened by deeds of jealousy, selfishness, hatred, revenge, and ambition. How truly does the Word of God describe present conditions: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings.” “All have

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sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Truly men are separated from God and have a mind at enmity with him. Men are the slaves of sin, and have no strength to break away from this bondage. Sin slowly and surely works toward death—toward the destruction of all good desires in the soul, and its entire possession with evil. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Is there any escape from the guilt of sin—from the curse of the law? Any deliverance from the uncleanness of sin, and its presence and power in the soul? Is there any fullness of the divine life possible for a sinning soul? Is there any salvation from the death pronounced against my sin, and any eternal life of light and love for my spirit? The text gives the answer: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John saw in Jesus Christ the complete fulfillment of all the sacrifices for sin that had been offered on Jewish altars. The firstlings of the flock offered in sacrifice to God by Abel pointed to Christ. The sprinkled blood of the lamb slain at the Lord's pass-over in Egypt pledged the safety of the Israelites from the destroying angel, and points to Christ as our Pass-over. For a thousand years or more, twice each day, in the temple, a lamb had been offered in sacrifice for the sins of the people. These offerings were fulfilled in Christ, who was once offered for the sins of the human race. Every drop of blood shed in any sacrifice for sin looked forward to the coming Jesus, who was to save his people from all sin through his own blood. The sacrifices offered by men had been taken from their flocks, but when John speaks of the Lamb of God he refers to the one provided by God himself. Isaiah says of him, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Peter says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as

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silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "Christ hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." John saw in the Lamb of God, "by his oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ the heavenly Lamb
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

How wonderful is the work Jesus has done for us and for all men! Your sin, my sin, every man's sin was laid upon him. "He bore the mighty load." All sin, past, present and future, has touched Jesus, and through his death and intercession we may get rid of the guilt and penal consequences of sin, of the dominion of sin; may be filled with the life and spirit of Jesus, and may live and reign with Him forever.

How may we obtain all the benefits of his death and passion for us? There is but one answer: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." In order that this Sin-bearer of the world may be my Sin-bearer I must "behold" him. I must see and believe in the great and finished work of Jesus for me, accept his death as a sufficient satisfaction and oblation for my sins. I must do this humbly, honestly, peni-

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tently, completely, and I do this when in my heart I believe the record true and "trust and obey." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth hath everlasting life."

Believe in him who died for thee,
And, sure as he hath died,
Thy debt is paid, thy soul is free,
And thou art justified.

How wonderfully free this salvation is! "Behold the Lamb of God." He is God's gift in love for us. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." We can make Christ, and all he has done for the world, our own possession. We may exult in a sense of pardoned sin, and in a full deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. We may be filled with the life and presence of Jesus on the simple condition of looking unto him. Moses has lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The people are dying from the poison of the serpents. The command flies from tent to tent, "Look and live." "And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." The look that brought healing was a look of faith. The remedy God has provided for sin is Jesus, the uplifted Lamb of God. The gospel cry to men poisoned and dying from sin is, "Look to Jesus and be saved." "Behold" him—not his wonderful teaching, not his perfect example, not his sinless character, but "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

At all times, in every need, with every imperfection and every sin, we may turn to the cross and behold the Lamb of God bearing away our sins.

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

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The message of love, of gospel grace, to every sinner is, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Let us remember that a part of our work as Christians is to point sinners to the Lamb of God. It is said of John, "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." How earnestly, intelligently, constantly, truly, lovingly, and in the Spirit's power we should witness for Christ! At home, abroad, in business, in pleasure, in work, and worship, we should cry, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

What a glorious outlook before the believer! How blessed the day when we will join the multitude in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing"! "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus!"
"Worthy the Lamb!" our hearts reply,
"For he was slain for us."

LESSON FOR JANUARY 19

JESUS AND HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

GOLDEN TEXT: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."—John 1. 45.

By RICHARD H. TRAVIS, D.D.,

PASTOR DUANE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY

"BEHOLD the Lamb of God!" is the announcement that John makes of his discovery of Jesus as the Messiah. Those to whom this announcement is made can understand "the Lamb of God" only as God's atoning sacrifice for sin, and it is in recognition of this understanding that John adds to his announcement that it is he that "taketh away the sin of the world." This knowledge of the Messiah, as we shall see, was from the Word of God as revealed in the law of Moses and the prophets. The time of his coming was uncertain, but not so the fact of his coming. There were those who through the Holy Scriptures were "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and who in beholding Jesus could joyfully say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Among them are those known as the first disciples of Christ.

We have in this scripture the events of the first two days of our Lord's ministry. It results in six disciples gathering around him on the evening of the second day. They had been brought to him in different ways, but the heart of each had been won, and they had attached themselves to him in deathless devotion. In the different ways in which these disciples were won to Christ at the beginning we see the diversity of ways by which human souls have been won to Christ through all the ages. There is no set form or method of finding Christ as a Saviour.

Every one who reads this account of the beginning

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of the gospel among men must have observed how "seeking" and "finding" are repeated over and over again until this chapter has been fittingly called "the Chapter of the Eureka's." After the great discovery of John the Baptist is announced Andrew and John *find* Jesus, and then Andrew "*findeth* his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have *found the Messiah*"; then again Jesus *finds* Philip, making himself known to him, so that Philip in turn *finds* his own brother Nathanael, announcing to him his discovery, saying, "We have *found* him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

In the finding of Philip and then of Nathanael we notice the different ways in which Christ wins men unto himself. "Jesus *findeth* Philip," and it is implied that Jesus searched for him, approached him before there was any seeking on the part of Philip—before Jesus was in his thought. Jesus seeks him, calls him, wins him. It is an instance, followed by numberless others, where Jesus draws near to a heart that has not sought him nor has any thought of him, yet, by the power of his own divine personality, arrests, turns, and wins the heart to himself. How clearly is this way of winning men set forth by Christ as he proclaims his divine mission on the earth: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"!—thus fulfilling then, as he is today, the ancient promise, "Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out."

The finding of Nathanael is quite different from that of Philip. Here it is not Jesus who directly seeks and finds, but a fellow being, his own brother. We also find in him one who at first resists the truth and interposes objections which must be overcome by his brother before he can be won. We hear only a few words uttered, but we do see the result of the loving, faithful ministry of this new disciple in bringing his brother to Christ.

It is this seeking to save that characterizes the spirit

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of the gospel of Christ as essentially a missionary one. The first disciples become the first evangelists and immediately enter upon their work of bringing others to Jesus. This spirit lies in the very nature of the new life in Christ; it cannot remain silent. Such joyful convictions must be communicated to others; such joyful experiences must be shared by others.

There is emphasis placed upon this missionary spirit, as manifested by the first disciples, in the peculiar expression that Andrew "*first* findeth his own brother"; which signifies not only his immediate mission, but that there was another who had also gone forth to find a brother. This other was probably John. Together they had entered the home of Jesus and received the word of life from his own lips, accepting him as their Saviour, and now, going out with hearts overflowing with their new-found joy, each goes his way, as by a divine impulse, to find his brother and bring him to Christ; but Philip is the first to find his brother and say to him, "We have found him."

In this beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ we must not lose sight of the place given to the Holy Scriptures. "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." The law and the prophets are the sure, unfailing guide to Christ. He says nothing about the supernatural birth, neither does he mention Mary nor Bethlehem, but declares that the certainty of the Scriptures has been verified in the discovery of Jesus. Whatever preparation of heart there was for the coming of the Messiah was through the Scriptures; and that knowledge which would lead a soul to expect him, and, when found, to recognize him as the one sent from God, was through the Scriptures. There are those who fail to find Christ in the Old Testament, but to those who search the Scriptures there is revealed a Saviour, producing a faith which is realized in the soul of one who can say, "I have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did

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write." It ought to be borne constantly in mind that the only way to turn the hearts of men in the way of life is by the way of truth; and as to what is truth, concerning Christ, the sufficient answer is that the Holy Scriptures, if received and followed, will lead into all truth, leading us into the experiences which verify the promises and makes known to us our Saviour.

In Philip and Nathanael we have examples illustrating this truth. As children they had been taught and had learned to know the law of God. It could be said of them, as to Timothy, another Jewish youth, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." When Philip makes the announcement that he had found the promised Messiah in Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth, the surprised reply of Nathanael is, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" As Philip had referred to the Scriptures his reply came from the same source: "In the scriptures I find nowhere a promise relating to Nazareth, neither do I find the place mentioned; then how can this be he of whom Moses wrote? No prophet comes from Nazareth." This must be the basis of Nathanael's objection and not in anything pertaining to the character of the place. The prejudice against Nazareth as a Galilean town—if there were any such prejudice—could not have weighed with him, for he was of Cana of Galilee, scarcely a league from Nazareth. He could not have participated in the Judean prejudice against Galilee, as a whole, since he, as well as all of his friends, were of that country; but appealing to Scripture there is no promise, no hint, that it is in any way related to the Messiah.

In a different spirit, but with the same appeal to the Scriptures as the Word of God, did the Pharisees reply to Nicodemus when he advocated the claims of Christ: "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." The objection to Jesus on the ground of his

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place of nativity is sustained by those who go to the law and the prophets; but let there be a knowledge of the facts of the nativity of Jesus of Nazareth and the objection disappears as we behold in him the Babe of Bethlehem.

Whatever may be the evidence, and however convincing it may be to the judgment, yet the final test of Christian truth is experience. The gospel of Christ goes farther than to produce conviction in the judgment; it produces experience, it gives a new life—a life filled with the conscious presence of Christ. Its message is always the same as that given by the first disciple: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This ultimate test is offered in "Come and see." It is a perpetual offer, and the world is invited to know, by testing the truth, that Christ has power to save. "Come and see," said Jesus to the two disciples who would know him. "Follow me," said Jesus to Philip, and from the experience of that hour he could go forth and declare what he knew of Jesus, saying then to Nathanael, "Come and see"; and thus, in offered test of experience, he meets the objections against the truth which may be advanced by ignorance or unbelief.

"Come and see" is the final reply to any objection against revealed truth; it is the unanswerable argument. Objections fall like hailstones upon the granite rock against a faith which appeals to experience. There is no argument that will prevail against the experience of a man born blind who can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." To everyone who will "come and see" there is the overwhelming evidence of experience in the conscious presence and power of Christ which finds expression, as with Nathanael in the presence of his divine Lord, "Thou art the Son of God."

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To see Jesus is to surrender the heart to him; but the power to see is, after all, in the desire to know. We see the truth when we desire to know it, while to others it falls upon darkened understandings. Listen to the salutation of Jesus: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"; thus designating the man who desires to know the truth and comes to him seeking it. He is transparently sincere. Jesus reads his inmost soul; his secret thoughts lie open before him, and he is "without guile." Jesus refers to a recent experience; it was a very sacred one, when he thought no eye saw him but God's. What holy meditations he had there yonder under the fig tree, what yearning after the truth of God! What aspirations to know God! Had Jesus heard him cry, "Open thou my eyes, that I may see"? He might have been seen and heard by man, but a guileless heart can be seen only by the Son of God. He was the honest inquirer after Christ, and to that heart Christ is certain to reveal himself as the Son of God. The honest heart seeks to know the truth, and as he comes to Jesus his doubts disappear like frost upon the window pane when the sun shines upon it. More is revealed to him in a moment as he comes to Jesus than all of his years of searching after light had given him. He has found and knows Jesus of Nazareth as his own divine personal Saviour, and henceforth will declare the message of salvation through Jesus the Son of God.

LESSON FOR JANUARY 26

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever."—Psa. 93. 5.

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THE text introduces us at once to the subject of personal holiness, for there cannot long be sanctity to a place without there is holiness of the people. The ninety-third psalm is a declaration of the might and majesty of God, and of the permanence of all that he has established. The house of the Lord is for his people, and its holiness is complexioned by the holiness of his people; and holiness being the perfect wholeness, or health, of the soul, it is the mark of the soul's permanence in the house of the Lord.

We shall consider at this time not the abstract holiness of a place, but the practical holiness of a people. If we ourselves are holy the sanctity of the house of the Lord will easily be preserved inviolate. Note

I. *The Call to Be Holy.* There are many calls to vocations—some are called to the ministry, some to medicine, some to teaching, some to music, some to art, etc.; and, without stopping to discuss the difference in these calls, there can be but little doubt that God calls men and women to these various vocations by the very aptitudes for them with which he endows them. But the call to be holy is not a call to vocation, but to character, and to every one this call comes. We are all called to be saints, which is a call to holiness; and there is no life, however crude or obscure, to whom that high calling of God does not come. This call comes to all because holiness is fundamental to our eternal

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fellowship with God. If we are to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life we must be like him in character: therefore God makes that demand of us. Holiness is the nature of God, righteousness his activity, and love his character. These, of course, cannot be detached. They belong together, but righteousness and love root in holiness. We are called up to this transparent nature, and the most important work of our life, whatever our occupation may be, is to realize our calling in terms of personal experience.

The call to be holy is clearly a call to separation. The Old Testament conception of holiness was that of separation. That is the way God first taught the idea of holiness. Separation in space from the unclean was a symbol of separation in quality from the unholy. The cleanliness required for body and garment was a symbol of the purity required for character and conduct. The tabernacle, in the very structure as well as its use, taught the idea of the separation of holiness.

That separation remained until our great High Priest offered himself once for all an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world, and the veil was rent in twain from top to bottom, and every soul had access into the holy of holies without the intervention of any human priest. The temple was modeled after the tabernacle, to perpetuate the idea of holiness. A holy God in a holy place, to be worshiped by a holy people. God directed Moses to build for him a holy place, but he also commanded him to sanctify the people. Repeatedly in the Old Testament is the command to some leader to sanctify the people, and for the people to sanctify themselves, for only thus could they approach God. Separation in space was used to teach separation in character.

The idea of separation was twofold. First, it was separation from sin, from everything that defiled. In order to deepen and make clear that idea, the ceremonial law of cleanness was practiced. Meddling with what God calls unclean is dangerous business; and those who

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try to justify their living in contact with the world by the example of Jesus must be very sure that they are motivated to it as Jesus was. He did not come to compliment, cajole, or make capital of sinners, but to save them. His sociability was always complexioned by his evangelism. Whatever may be our necessary physical and social contact with the world, we must be separate from it, in the quality of our character. In that sense God's people must be a separate people.

But this separation, in the second place, has a positive side. It is separation *to* all that is Christlike in character and service. "Be ye holy" is a call to the life adjusted to the will of God. By every experience of joy or sorrow, or doing or enduring, God is calling us up into his own likeness. Separation to all that is holy and Christlike in character and conduct is sanctification. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever," means that a sanctified people shall enjoy its privileges, conduct its worship, and administer its affairs. God calls us to holiness.

II. *The Obligation to Holiness.* It is not a matter of convenience whether we shall be holy or not; there is a divine obligation on us, binding us to it. That obligation is grounded, first, in the reasonableness of holiness. It is impossible to unify moral incompatibles. The heavenly hosts are holy; heaven is holy; God is holy. What fellowship could the half consecrated and moderately righteous have with them? But we are to have fellowship with God here. God says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." His holiness is a reason for ours. "How can two walk together except they *be* agreed?"

Second. The obligation to be holy is grounded in God's right to demand it. Creatorship carries with it the right to designate the thing created to a specific purpose. The principle underlying copyright and patent is that author and inventor have a right to the things they produce. God can lay upon us the obligation to be holy. We belong to him. He made us.

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Redemption emphasizes the right of creatorship. Man by sin repudiated his obligation to be what God made him, and delayed God's purpose in him, and destroyed himself. Then, at infinite cost, God redeemed him back to his original purpose. By the cost of the blood of God man is under obligation to realize the purpose of redemption.

Third. Our obligation to be holy lies deeper than either the creatorship or redemption of God, namely, in God's Fatherhood. We are more than redeemed creatures; we are redeemed sons. Sin is ungrateful, unreasonable, and unfilial. A son is, by the very fact of sonship, under obligation to be in character like his good father. The family honor requires it. The family protection and provision, education and privilege, make it imperative. As children of God redeemed from sin, and disciplined to do God's perfect will, and to enjoy his bounty, share his home, participate in the rule of his kingdom, and be in his fellowship forever, we are under obligation by every reason and right to be holy. We are called and obligated to come to our best. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever," carries with it as its corollary, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

III. *The Content of Holiness.* Only a word can here be said on a great subject that would require a volume worthily to set it forth. It may seem trite to say that holiness is soul soundness, wholeness, or health. But we must realize this in experience before holiness will be either sanely lived or taught. Nothing is less self-conscious or more sympathetic and active than health. No one in perfect health would think of belaboring an invalid. No more would holiness belabor one whose spiritual health was subnormal. The effort of both, through warm sympathy, is to help the weak brother up to physical or spiritual health. Perfect health expresses the right relation of the body to the laws of God. Holiness expresses the right relation of the soul to God himself.

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Of course, we recognize that our holiness here in the body is not the perfect and unconditioned holiness of God, nor of perfect spiritual beings who never knew sin. Nor does it lift us out of the realm of temptation. We cannot expect a higher plane of spiritual living than Jesus had. He had his temptations, swift, subtle, and strong. When men have reached a state where they no longer have temptations, that state is not moral mastery, but spiritual insensibility. The devil never lets any man alone except the one who is of no use to God. The holiness which we find everywhere emphasized in the New Testament, and exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, is that state of spiritual life where sin is shunned and hated; where goodness is loved for its own sake; where the will is perfectly homed in the will of God; where the Holy Spirit dominates the life in motive, affection, and action. We may be beset with temptations, but we have the mastery over them. We love Christ supremely and for his own sake. We have a passion to extend his kingdom to the ends of the earth; to see every soul for whom Christ died brought to a knowledge of the truth. We are not free from errors of judgment, or from the failures of weakness and ignorance; but the objective of our life is to do the will of God. Grouping together the eight words in the New Testament which are translated "holy" or "holiness," we get this broad meaning for holiness—strong, reverent, pious, godly, worthy, pure, holy. The life that attains to these will surely be at its best and will realize the purpose of God.

IV. *The Possibility of Holiness.* Neither call nor obligation can ever extend to the impossible. Christ said, "Follow me." God says, "Be holy. Again Christ says, "Be ye perfect." Indeed, space would not permit the citation of even the most prominent passages that bear directly on what may be taken for granted as the possibility of holiness. It is nowhere intimated that this high requirement cannot be met. To require what could

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not be done would be arbitrary and unreasonable, moral tyranny. There are some high human attainments which only the favored few ever may reach; as Ruskin said of the great painter Turner, "There is but one Turner in five hundred years, and God decides without any admission of auxiliary cabal what piece of clay his soul is to be put into." But God is every day lifting the scum of the city up to the light of the world. The Holy Spirit is not a respecter of what piece of clay he shall enter; but into whatever souls that long to know and do the perfect will of God he comes with sanctifying power. We are predestined to be conformed into the image of the Son of God, and every help necessary thereto is at the disposal of faith and obedience. Our subtlest and most dangerous temptations are not to gross and vulgar sins, but to defeat, by neglect, the purpose of God in our lives—to fail to come into the likeness of Christ. We are the real temples of the Holy Spirit. That realized in experience is the possibility of our holiness. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." We can be holy when God dwells in us. Then indeed are we the Lord's house. It is not only expedient that we be holy, it is imperative. That life can be lived. The Holy Spirit is here to sanctify us wholly. This life of holiness which is possible, reasonable, and imperative is ours for the living of it. The domination of the Holy Spirit fits us to maintain the holiness of the Lord's house forever and brings to us the purity and power that enable us to live in the will of God. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 2

JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

GOLDEN TEXT: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3, 16.

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WHAT Nicodemus came for, the story does not say. A mere skirmish of words, perhaps. Like the modern who once declared that he was open to conviction but would like to see the man who could convince him—in such stolid mood may this famous night visitor have come to Jesus. Such, however, is not the impression which Nicodemus leaves upon me. Notwithstanding all his logic-chopping and half-frivolous banter, the soul of the man was both alert and serious. There was evidently something he wanted to ask.

And it was the unphrased question of the man's real self—this which Jesus answered in the subsequent verses of this famous chapter. The text is part of the answer. "The gospel in miniature," some one calls it. But, world sermon though it is, we shall best view it in relation to the seeker whose night visit evoked it. As well study Pinckney's famous aphorism apart from the French impudence which led up to it, or Lincoln's Gettysburg Address without remembering the civil agony preceding, as to ponder this immortal text and leave Nicodemus out of sight. Jesus was talking to Nicodemus. Preaching over the head of a special seeker might be our way of doing things; it would not be like our Master. An audience of one, as in the case of the woman at the well, was immense enough to elicit his best. So here. Multitudes of later seekers might find

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their way to the heart of God through this wonderful word. Just now, however, Jesus was absorbed with the spiritual groping of one soul.

Let us, then, reverently open the text as it may have first opened to Nicodemus: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There are sermons in every phrase. But the start and surprise for Nicodemus would perhaps focus in three particular words: "gave," "whosoever," "life." Take the first of them: "God so loved . . . that he gave." Note the emphasis: not *took*, but *gave!* The world is quite familiar with a spirit which *so loves* that it *takes*.

Such is the characteristic note of commercialism. No one can doubt that Leopold loves the Congo. None but a lover would embark so much and brave so world-wide detestation. But the more Leopold loves, the more pitiable becomes the condition of the native. Through the observant eyes of Richard Harding Davis we have been permitted to look in upon the horrors of Belgian sovereignty in the Congo. Its people are being loved to death, in herds, like cattle. And all because their sovereign *so loves* that he *takes*. Poor Oscar Wilde, whose "Confessions" have recently been re-edited for popular admiration, was a most ardent sort of lover. He lived to love. He was in love with love. His whole life was devoted to the securing of every pleasurable sensation. Nothing that a wanton heart could crave did Oscar Wilde deny himself. He *so loved* that he *took*—whatever the cost.

Such a spirit, more or less refined, has ever been the world spirit. And when men looked up into heaven they were all too prone to ascribe their own spirit to God. Man is forever making God in his own image. If man so loves that he takes, why not God, who may do as he pleases? Heathenism cringes with the terror of its devotees as to what God shall take next. And

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many a Christian mother has looked into the face of her dead child with the grim consolation that God's claim upon her best must not be gainsaid. Nicodemus himself stood before Jesus as the representative of a system which, even at its best, emphasized the exactions rather than the compassions of God.

Think, then, of the revolution involved in the change of a single word. "God *so loved* that he *gave*." It was not a new thought. Since time began the best mothers have been *so loving* that they *gave*. Up in a little New England hamlet lives a sweet, sad-eyed old lady. Her name is not on the roster of patriots. She will never be mentioned among those who *so loved* their country that they made fame or fortune out of it. But she has the mind of Christ. For as her eyes turn to the daguerreotype of three boys whose bodies sleep in Southern battlefields, she says with exultant soul, "I *so loved* that I *gave* them all." And many the mother's son who has learned this most holy lesson. From the turret of the battleship Georgia, where amid spouting powder-flash one heroic fellow deliberately chose death that he might save his comrades from a second explosion; from the deck of the ill-starred Columbia, whose captain went calmly down at his post, still directing the work of rescue; from the everyday chronicles of heroism in homespun, come fresh exemplifications of the spirit which *so loves* that it *gives* its best. Self-sacrifice is of every age. Hebrew story was gilded and glorified by it. And Jesus only needed to refresh the memory of Nicodemus in order to point the truth he was declaring, "God *so loved* that he *gave*."

Then, let it be remembered that He who spoke this word was himself its most perfect illustration. Of all his unstinting gift; of his patience with infirmity, and heavenly tenderness toward weakness of every sort, he dared to affirm—nay, he could do no less than affirm—"He that hath seen *me* hath seen the Father." And more. Jesus was not merely the exemplification of the

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Father's mood. He was the heart of God. Himself was the gift of which he spoke. He offered *himself* to Nicodemus. "Your God *gib* everything," cried a Chinese convert in wonder. "My god take everything I have: your God *gib* everything." From such a gracious word the human heart will never quite turn away. Nicodemus may have gone out of Jesus's presence with scowling face, but you will later find him at Jesus' sepulcher with love and spices. The love which *so loves* that it *gives* will win the world's love at last.

But pass to the second arresting word—"whosoever." Imagine the jolt to an aristocrat like Nicodemus. He belonged to the most exclusive body of the most exclusive sect of the most exclusive people that the sun looked down upon. He represented the "most favored nation" clause in men's treaty with the Almighty: let the outsider stay outside. Yet to this same proud aristocrat Jesus declared the wide open doors of his Father's heart. "That *whosoever* believeth." How slow the world has been to frankly accept that welcoming word! Exclusiveness belongs to every age. It is the offspring of that selfishness which outroots so painfully. Give your baby some new toy, but if you will leave his pleasure unalloyed, give no similar toy to his mate. Everybody applauds Roosevelt's theory of a "square deal and a fair chance"—everybody except those who have already profited by the same.

And what makes the matter far worse is that we have projected our ingrained exclusiveness upon God, and have assumed to measure the sympathies of the divine heart by our own. Well-fenced denominations, ironclad creeds, routines and rituals framed by groups of men for all mankind, with bane and ostracism for all the reluctant and unconvinced—such has been the usual mode of proclaiming the open door! Nor would I be so unfair as to deny the high purposes which human narrowness has sometimes served. Flowers intended for June must not bloom in March. As

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Goethe phrased it, "Everything which frees our spirit without giving us the mastery of ourselves is pernicious." Because we are insular and small, our doctrines must sometimes be exclusive and forbidding. But let us steadfastly believe in the openness of the divine heart. Whatever our personal limitations and preconceptions, let us permit God to keep the lamp burning for every returning wanderer.

And most of all, let us make sure that we put no stumbling-blocks in the path of the weakest child of God, who is struggling toward the Father's arms. "*Whosoever*" is the word. To blazon that upon our banners; to declare the greatest divine helpfulness for the direst human need; to believe in the recoverability of even the scum of our cities; to know that the world belongs to God; and to help him win the most desolate corners of it, is indeed a rich part of daily discipleship.

But the third word in the textual trilogy is "life." It has always been easier to believe in the dominion of destruction than in the final triumph of life. To the superficial eye the universe seems bent on mischief. Pain, blight, defeat, come on every wind, in the presence of which, "God sits in heaven and does nothing," as Carlyle groaned. Just as the waves closed heartlessly over the ill-fated passengers of the *Columbia*, so the present scheme of things seems to swallow pitilessly all love and faith, all brave endeavor and holy sacrifice.

What wonder that such an apparent divine indifference should be matched by ruthlessness in us! Our cruelties and savageries toward each other, our crowding and crushing of the weak, are in part begotten of a theology which enthroned death above deliverance in the world order. Take, for example, our treatment of the criminal. In a burning essay Brierley has recently called attention to the heartlessness of our penal codes. The utmost we usually hope concerning a transgressor is that he will get his full deserts. We cannot bear to see the gallows cheated.

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In such a mood had Nicodemus been reared. To be sure, his own sacred Book lifted occasionally protesting voices. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Of course not! Only a Nero could have such pleasure! But even the "turning unto the Lord," which the text contemplated, seemed a sort of desperate expedient rather than the end and glory of creation.

To such dark mood in Nicodemus Jesus addressed his noonday word. "*Life*, everlasting life." Amnesty for chosen spirits like Nicodemus would doubtless have been good news. The world has always pledged to its rarest souls a sort of immortality. But life for the millions that swarm and suffer; a promise of life to dwarfed and degraded souls; eternally abundant life for the most unprepossessing children of men—this was clear beyond the range of Nicodemus's imagination.

Nor sounds the promise so foreign as it did a generation ago. The materialism which but recently laid its frosty hand on human hope is passing. Earnest scholarship is turning to human hearts with a heavenly optimism. Not death, but life, more wonderful and abundant, is the word which the highest modern thought has to offer. "Life everlasting," as the logic and fulfillment of life reverently lived—on such a theme men like William James and Sir Oliver Lodge bring their mature findings to the feet of our Master. There comes to me the refrain of a plaintive little negro melody they used to sing some years ago. It always seemed to me to have been born out of the dark of some cribbed and cabined soul—"Mamma, are there any angels black like me?" The song ended with the question unanswered. But I have the answer. No, not any souls black by divine decree. Rather a multitude that no man can number, out of every nation, and kindred, and tribe, who have washed their robes and made them white through the redemption of Him who "*so loved that he gave*."

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 9

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

GOLDEN TEXT: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—John 7. 37.

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It was at the Feast of Tabernacles, the last one during the earthly ministry of Jesus. The following spring saw the passion week and the crucifixion. The life of Christ was rapidly nearing a crisis. The year of popularity had passed. Great crowds occasionally followed him, but they did not continue enthusiastically with him as during the preceding year. Even Galilee had virtually rejected him. The opposition of the ruling classes daily grew greater. The religious Pharisees, the worldly Sadducees and Herodians, and the rulers were all against him.

But in the midst of all the popular clamor, unmoved by excitement or questions, undaunted and ready with the truth, stood the unflinching Christ. On the last day of the feast, probably when the procession went to Siloam and brought water and poured it at the foot of the altar, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto *me*, and drink. He that believeth on *me*, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." How startling that seemed on that day! What are some of its implications now?

I. Notice in this declaration *Jesus's consciousness of his Messiahship*. What presumption in that announcement if he were not the Christ! Yea, what blasphemy! The week's festival had brought to the minds of the people the miracle in the desert where God smote the rock and gave the water to the thirsty

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Israelites. Here stands the Nazarene and cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto *me*, and drink."

It has become fashionable in some quarters to assert that Jesus himself never made claim to be the Messiah; that he was a wonderful teacher, even a prophet, but that the Christ coloring has been added by later artists. Forsooth by the adoring women of Galilee, or by the discomfited disciples after the crucifixion, or by the brainy Paul, or by the philosophers of the second century. What absurdity! Here is a saying of Jesus so bound up with the narrative that to destroy it destroys the narrative. And so numerous are passages of like import that to cut them all out as unreliable destroys the entire gospel and there is left no history whatever of the Man of Galilee. If Jesus did not know and declare that he was the Christ, then this passage has no meaning. Shortly before, in the far north at Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus had sounded his disciples. Peter had said, "Thou art the Christ." The Master replied, "Blessed art thou: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father."

But this was not merely a growing notion in the Master's mind. It is foolish to try to explain on pathological grounds Jesus's belief in his divinity. It was not a morbid idea which he entertained and dreamed on until he finally believed it a reality. He had known all the time that he was the Saviour. In the early months of his ministry he had passed through Samaria. To the woman at the well there he said, "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And then he made the wonderful promise, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst." The woman said, "When the Messiah comes, he will declare unto us all things." Jesus replied, "I that speak unto thee am he." Reflecting on these and similar sayings, bearing in mind his declaration that he had power to

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forgive sins, remembering his outstretched arms and invitation, "Come unto *me*, and I will give you rest," this statement at the feast is full of meaning. It is in accord with his other promises and claims.

11. Observe *the deeply satisfying nature of the water of life offered by Christ*. The pangs of thirst were more to be dreaded in Palestine than in our land. The long dry season of summer baked the ground, dried the brooks, and made water a valuable treasure. A well was difficult to dig and was worth fighting for. One of the blessings which the Israelites enjoyed was that they had wells which they digged not. The wells which did exist were often stopped up by an enemy in time of war. And as disappointing as no water at all was a spring of bitter water. Accordingly, water was sometimes sold in the streets of a city by a crier, so rare it was. And the desert! The dread of a long ride over the heated sandy waste with no assurance of a cooling spring. Man and beast suffered inexpressible tortures. And when in the caravan some clear eye first saw in the distance the silvery glitter of a stream, how every heart took fresh courage! Water! How refreshing and strengthening! When the nation traveled in the desert of Sinai and water was scarce, imagine the distress to the many helpless children and women and cattle. Then the Lord caused the hard rock to give drink.

The heart of man as well as his body needs refreshing drink. We travel in deserts and our souls thirst. We find it hard to be satisfied. Satisfaction is a mirage that is ever just a little farther on. Money cannot bear us on wings fleet enough to reach the vision of joy and satisfaction ere it has vanished. The lower pleasures of sense prove bitter water and do not quench the thirst. The delight of subsisting on the applause of our fellows palls. The consciousness of possessing enormous power in guiding the business and politics of the country is exhilarating only for a time. Even the shade of academic groves grows tiresome if learning

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alone be the only inspiration. The fountain of youth and the philosopher's stone are dreams which show that nothing which we possess satisfies us. Whence, then, can man find satisfaction? Where can he discover a spring of water that will refresh his soul?

An ancient singer voiced the true yearning of the human spirit:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

Nothing short of the living God can fill the human heart. It is too large for earthly toys. "O Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and we cannot find rest till we find it in thee," prayed one of the church fathers. The poet wrote:

O God, thy wayward child
Hath oft desired, oft sought felicity
Elsewhere, but comes at last all worn to thee,
And thou art reconciled.

The psalmist sang:

O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee:
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
In a dry and weary land, where no water is.

The Jews had frequently heard these verses from the Psalms recited in their synagogues. And when the book of the prophets was read where it said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; incline your ear, and come unto me," they understood that it was Jehovah who was speaking. But now among them stands the Nazarene, and applies this thought to himself.

The desire of the psalmist is answered in Christ, for whoever sees Jesus sees the Father. Whoever knows the Saviour has eternal life. Whoever comes to Christ finds rest. For his promises are true, and his love is everlasting, and his power is boundless. When he gives to

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drink one feels the new life bounding through his being, for the water that he gives becomes a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

Jesus satisfies the deepest desires of the human heart. How he satisfies the longing for companionship! He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, understanding all our moods, sympathizing with us in our temptations, cheering us on in our highest dreams. And our longing for peace and rest inwardly, our longing to know truth, our desire to see the unseen, our longing for the life hereafter—all the deepest desires of the human heart Jesus satisfies. Why should we attempt to quench the thirst of our soul by bitter waters of earthly pleasure? Why stifle our deepest feelings and longings and spend all our strength in searching for worldly treasures? Drink deep of the gospel spring. The desert may be long. The sun may beat hard. The strength may fail. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

III. *How broad the invitation of Christ!* Any man who thirsts may come to him. The Greek philosophers had a proverb, "Wear not the types of gods upon your ring," meaning that a teacher should not communicate his best thoughts to the public but reserve them only for an inner circle. And so there arose one teaching for the outside crowd and another very different philosophy for the select few. Only a few wise ones were invited to join the select company. But the Great Teacher threw out a broad invitation: any man who is thirsty may come.

The Jews thought, "Jehovah is God for Israel only." Even the disciples at first did not relish going to the Gentiles. But Jesus said, "Whosoever believeth shall have everlasting life." The Samaritan woman said, "Our fathers worshiped in Mount Gerizim, but the Jews say in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus replied, "Not only at Jerusalem, nor in Mount Gerizim, but wherever the true worshippers shall

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worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The self-righteous Pharisees regarded religion as meant only for respectable people. Jesus astonished them by going to the publicans and sinners. He permitted a woman who was a sinner to anoint his feet. And once he said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." He came to seek and to save the lost. The invitation of Jesus includes the outcast and the poorest. And when the church forgets to rescue it forfeits its charter. When we rest content with our select circle, when we pride ourselves on securing respectable people to join our church, when we cease to proclaim a gospel that can make a bad man good, then we have no message or mission.

We see in Jonah an old example of exclusiveness in religion. But in the New Testament we observe that even Peter needed a special vision to appreciate the broad invitation of the gospel. And we need to be aroused lest we fall into narrow views and our sympathies contract. It is hard to care much for people at the other end of the world whom we have never seen and of whose character and habits we have little knowledge. But the poorest heathen has a heart that thirsts for the water that was designed for every man. Christ has become the same satisfying, refreshing, strengthening draught to the Chinaman as to the American. And when Jesus stood that day at the feast and saw the multitude composed of people from many lands, dressed in their various garbs, when he looked down the centuries and observed the countless tribes and nations and perceived the various schools of thought and knew the different ambitions and dreams and fears that moved them all, he understood that with all their differences they were alike in their heart-need of spiritual refreshing, and he opened wide the doors of hope when he cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 16

JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

GOLDEN TEXT: "The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way."—John 4. 50.

By DANIEL W. HOWELL,

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IN this miracle are mentioned three persons: the child, the Master, the father. The child is an unconscious receiver of blessing, due entirely to parental love, service, and trust; he does not exert one atom of faith. The Master is himself, easing the heart burden. The one with whom all the incidents of the scene are connected is the father, and as he is so conspicuous we confine our sermon to him. Of his life we have the merest outline, but sufficient to enable us, by a fellow feeling which makes the world akin, to fill out the splendid character of this extraordinary man. We have no record of his form and feature, but in faith he is a giant; we have no word of his mental ability, but in intellectual vision he is a seer; we have only a hint of his family, but in paternal affection he is a genuine father; we can but guess at his ecclesiastical affiliation, but in openness to truth he is a model disciple; we can simply surmise his attitude of action, but in his determination to fashion his own life and that of his family by the teaching of his new-found benefactor he is strong of will and courageous for right. Take him for all in all, he is a true man and a worthy father. As he makes his appearance the natural question is:

Who is he? He is a prince, probably belonging to Herod's court. It has been intimated that he was Chuza, mentioned in Luke 8. 3. While we have little definite knowledge, it is known that he was of the well-to-do class. But it was not his wealth nor his position

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which made him seek Jesus, but his boy. He had a child whose life was fast ebbing away, and who was nearing the borderland of the next world. Of other things we know little, but one fact we have, he was a father.

Why did he come to Jesus? He had heard of Jesus. It was reported that wherever Christ went he healed all manner of diseases. In Galilee and at Jerusalem he had done that which no other man had ever done, and as the people returned from the feast to their homes they talked of all they had seen and heard. By this means Christ's reputation spread far and wide. It was but slightly more than a year since an unknown boy went out from Nazareth to Jordan to be baptized by John, yet in that short year he had become almost a national character. Crowds assembled wherever he was, and new miracles added to his ever-growing fame. Among those who heard of the power of this marvelous man was the Capernaum nobleman, and he, hoping for some assuring word of comfort, came to Cana, where Jesus was.

He had confidence in the ability of Christ to heal. He was certain that Jesus could restore vigorous life, if he could be persuaded to come to the child. He knew that there was power in the hand, if it could but touch the fevered brow. It was great confidence in Jesus and in the reports he had heard.

He wanted his boy to live. He would go anywhere, do anything, secure anyone, if his child could be helped. Constantly he carried about the burden of the wasting form of his helpless boy; the suffering face was never out of his mind's sight. This father was as the rest of us are: his child was precious and he wanted him alive. We can easily talk of God's providence when dangerous illness is in some other home, but when possible death faces one of our own it is more difficult to see clearly divine guidance. At such a time we will move heaven and earth for help. Our tearful eyes will

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not see as distinctly the brightness of heaven as the first play of a smile on the countenance we eagerly watch day and night. This father wanted his boy with him in this world, and so he came to Jesus.

When he came what did he see and hear? What were his expectations we cannot tell. He had high hopes, and was prepared to make as tender an appeal as any father could possibly make, for the case was urgent. His journey was a long one, not in miles but in anxiety. When, at last, he arrived where he could present his request, what did he see and hear?

A man of austere bearing and cold words. The first impression must have been that Jesus did not really understand him. In answer to the plea of his breaking heart there were unmeaning words about signs and wonders. He had left his boy, expecting help, but the one to whom he came was grave in bearing and cold in speech. Seeing no evidence of sympathetic feeling, and almost hopeless, he cried out, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Then the appearance changed and there was another glimpse of Christ:

A man of commanding ability and positive utterance. Now was heard the language of authority which inspired confidence. This father's heart was thrilled as he listened to these words, "Thy son lives." It was more than he had expected, and the sound was sweeter to his ears than would have been a symphony sung by a chorus of angels. The account seems to indicate that no word was spoken after by the father. It would not be strange if the sudden joy had sealed his lips, and that he was so happy that he would cry if he attempted to speak. Mingled with the confidence of utterance was a softness of tone and a gentleness of bearing which made this happy father feel that he was in the presence of—

A man who could arouse conscience. There was a striking something, either in the words or their utterance, which made them lodge in the soul never more

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to go out. No one had ever made this prince feel as he felt now. He had been satisfied with his own religious condition, but now there was a conscious longing for a something more than he had. He was in the presence of one who was other than a healer of diseases, for Christ did more than speak soundness to body, he lodged arrows of conviction in the conscience. Conscience was pierced because here stood—

A man who could through ordinary experiences convey spiritual truth. Someone has said that "the sovereign proof of genius lies in what it can do with the meanest material." Wordsworth could by verse transform a common flower to a thing of beauty, he was a poetical genius; Carlyle could make sublime the ordinary kingly routine of Frederick, he was an historical genius; Jenny Lind could bring heavenly melody to earthly ears, she was a musical genius; Christ could make the daily round, the trivial task, to convey godly truth, he was a spiritual genius. The ability to see sermons in stones and to spiritualize daily experiences is worthy of cultivation! One other thing this father saw:

A man who could inspire another with his confident thought. Jesus possessed that rare ability of being able to impress upon another his own feeling and to inspire another with his own ideals. It is a fine art to be able to unfold the vision of one's soul so that another can see the beauty of form and feel the pulse of life. Mighty leaders have achieved greatness by the charmed power of infusing into others their own enthusiastic spirits. Jesus by presence, by action, by attitude, by atmosphere, by influence, and by word impressed himself upon this man, and he "believed the word that Jesus had spoken."

How did he go away? The meager account says, "He went his way." Was he the same as when he came? Had he not passed through intellectual and spiritual experiences in this interview so that he never

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again could be the same man he had been before meeting Jesus? As he departed he was—

Thoughtful. There was a strange jumbling in his mind of thoughts about God and man, about things temporal and spiritual. This new prophet was not like other men, he seemed to be able to do all things and to possess everything in himself, for he was healer, teacher, prophet, rabbi, miracle-worker, divine, human. This unusual personality made this prince from Capernaum thoughtful. As he went his way there were feelings of personal responsibility to God and of the necessity of living a Christian life. He was perplexed by problems of his own relationship to this new religion, and he was agitated and stirred to the depth of his nature. As he thoughtfully went his way he was—

Hopeful. It was a hope based upon confidence. He believed the word and he was sure his son was alive. From a careful reading of the passage it would seem that so great was this faith that he did not hasten on his return journey homeward. He had received more largely than his highest expectation, so he was rejoicingly hopeful. As he left Jesus he was—

Prayerful. He came from Capernaum to see a great healer, he met God face to face and he went his way in the atmosphere of prayer. No soul ever met Christ but that the spirit was drawn upward. Zacchæus desired to look at Christ, he did see the King and worshiped; Thomas must feel the print of the nail in the hands, he did see the marks and fell at the feet of his Master; Mary was in sorrow, she looked at the tear-stained cheek of her Lord and prayed. When one truly sees and talks with Jesus he cannot be other than in a devout spirit. This man of our text went away from Jesus to think, to believe, and to pray.

What occurred after he departed? If our study stopped with the text we would miss the climax of the miracle. This verse goes no farther than belief in the word of healing. If he accepted no more he would have

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had only the restoration of his child to health. The words and the scene made a deeper impression, and it is interesting to watch the development of the inner life. In this man we find the gradations of faith: first, faith in a reputation; second, faith in a word; third, faith in a Saviour. He came for the healing of body, he found the cure of soul; he expected a thaumaturge, he discovered a Christ. From faith in material uncertainties he was lifted into the realm of spiritual verities. From the temporal up to the eternal—is not this still the pathway of faith?

The reason for the spiritual transformation of this man and his family can be found in his open mind. He was not only willing to receive a blessing, but he was also ready to accept truth. He was not afraid of a new truth, even though it changed preconceived notions. When he was convinced that it was the truth he readily gave himself and his family training to it. An open mind will bring a more substantial spiritual foundation and reveal a larger Christ.

Through the gift this father glorified the giver. He craved one thing of the Lord, and when he received it he dedicated himself and his family to the worship and service of Jesus, the Christ. Down through the ages the need of this lesson comes to us. In this present time of unparalleled prosperity it seems to us that this one lesson is oftentimes forgotten, and in the abundance of the things we possess we forget Him who giveth liberally. Health, wealth, comforts, influence are God's gracious gifts to us; by them do we glorify him? Sickness, suffering, poverty, and death force us to turn to the divine for help; when we receive that for which we plead, and health, joy, wealth, and life smile upon us, then let us by these gifts glorify the Giver. This man believed the word of Jesus; he received the blessing of Christ's power; he glorified by his life's service the Messiah of the world.

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 23

JESUS AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

GOLDEN TEXT: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—Matt. 8. 17.

BY CHARLES V. GRISMER, D.D.,

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THIS quotation is made from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, one of the greatest of the Messianic prophecies, and refers primarily to Christ as our Saviour from sin. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." But since most of our diseases and misfortunes are traceable, directly or indirectly, to sin (even the sting of death is sin), and since Christ was at that time healing the sick and was not known to the people as a saviour but as a great healer, it was natural that Matthew should make this use of the passage. Christ does take "our infirmities and heal our sicknesses," but he does infinitely more than this: he is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

In the study of this text several courses are open to us. We may allow it to lead us into that unfathomable mystery, the atonement; or it may become to us the gateway into that battleground of centuries, where theologians have contended over the dogma of "substitution"; or it may allure us into the raptures of that pleasing hope of the invalid in every age, "faith cure"; or it may bear us along with the crowds which visit the innumerable miracle-working shrines to pay their votive offerings to madonna or saint, for diseases healed or misfortunes prevented. The question which Christ asked of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt

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thou be made whole?" finds a response in the sin-burdened and afflicted of every age. Like that poor sufferer, we gaze up into the face of our only Saviour in helpless hope. And still we misunderstand.

But I would prefer to avoid all controversies and follow the text into that contemplation of Jesus which makes him everywhere and always "Emmanuel." Such a contemplation of this truth suggests several practical thoughts:

I. Every effort to save man from sin or sickness or sorrow must have in it the vicarious element.

Christianity is founded upon self-sacrifice for the sake of others; and sacrifice always suggests the cross. Every great movement which has resulted in human good has been born in travail and pain. All reformers and philanthropists have borne their cross and traveled the "Via Dolorosa"; and many of them have tasted the vinegar and the gall and have suffered the agonies of the cross. The taunting words of Christ's enemies are true of every would-be saviour of men: "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

When the woman with the issue of blood touched Christ he knew it by the fact that virtue had gone out of him. Too many people would aid men and better the race without the loss of anything on their part. If we would really help our fellow men we must walk with them their rough road, lift at the crosses they bear, and share their losses and sorrows. The kind of service which never feels personal loss or sacrifice may give transient relief, but will never finally cure the diseases from which humanity is suffering.

There is a legend among the stories of ancient Rome that once a great chasm was opened in the heart of the imperial city. The people did everything within their power to fill it up, but could make no impression upon it. In their distress they went to the oracle, who told them that the yawning chasm would not close till the best thing which Rome possessed were cast into it.

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But, what was the best thing which Rome possessed? Her wealth? This they had in abundance. Her beautiful palaces and her magnificent temples? These could be easily rebuilt. It was finally concluded that the best thing Rome possessed was her youth. So they chose one of the most promising of her young soldiers, clothed him in golden armor and crowned him as if he were the victor in a conflict. This youth, the very personification of Rome's ideal and her pride, thus equipped and seated upon the best steed which could be found, rode into the chasm as into battle, and the gulf closed over him. Rome was saved by the sacrifice of her best.

Great chasms have ever yawned between classes and divisions of our race. Nations send their representatives to an international peace congress, while their parliaments vote to increase the army and extort millions from the people to enlarge the navy and strengthen the coast defenses. The rich look with half-veiled intolerance upon the poor, and the poor envy and hate the rich. The employer and the employed regard each other with mutual distrust, which leads both, in their relations with each other, to be ever on the defensive. For the time being, in this country, unparalleled prosperity has quieted many of the discordant elements; but, like the smoldering fires of a volcano, they will burst forth again with renewed violence.

We have made some efforts to close up the chasm caused by selfishness and sin. But many of these efforts have failed because they have lacked this element of personal sacrifice. The gift of a few surplus dollars, the endowment of a professorship, the building of a hospital or an orphanage, the establishment of a library or a home for the poor, will undoubtedly do much good. But when these gifts entail no inconvenience upon the giver, and represent only the unneeded income from ever-increasing wealth, they fail in their real purpose, since they lack the spirit of Christ. God so loved the

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world that he gave his only begotten Son to save the world. The "Good Shepherd" gave his life for the sheep, and says to us, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." What a transformation would be wrought in this world if the Master's rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," were to prevail! Christ taught and practiced absolute self-abnegation. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

II. It brings us into closer personal relations with our blessed Lord.

It is one thing to say, "Christ is the Saviour"; it is quite another to say, "Christ is my Saviour." Such a conception of Jesus transforms every incident of that marvelous life into something akin to personal experience. We are no longer merely students of the early days of the Christian era; we cease to be simply spectators, witnessing the greatest tragedy in the world's history, but we feel that we are personally involved. I have sometimes tried to conceive the emotions of the more thoughtful among the colored people of the South during the dark days of the civil war. To them it meant more than the maintenance of the Constitution, the honor of the flag, or the integrity of the Union. It involved their personal liberties and the bondage or freedom of their people. With what a conflict of hope and despair they must have watched the contending forces as they swept back and forth over those battle-torn fields. Upon the issues of that strife hung the destiny of their race.

The clear vision and superior knowledge of Christ enabled him to see, as we can never see, all that depended upon his integrity. The weal and woe, the happiness and misery of the whole world hung in the balances. The success or failure of his mission would determine the final triumph of the powers of heaven or hell. It was this consciousness of the awful burden of

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responsibility which ever weighed upon the Saviour. When he shed tears over Jerusalem in her blindness, wept in the home of his friends in Bethany, or twice groaned at the grave of Lazarus, it was because he was suffering for a people who knew not their impending doom. Once, alone in the darkness and solitude of the garden, he shrank from the dreadful load which sin had made it necessary for him to bear. By these representative acts and mediatorial sacrifices Jesus Christ becomes the redeemer of sinful men and women, and sends the wonderful announcement into all the earth, to the meanest and poorest of God's creatures, "Who-soever will may come."

III. Our human life is transfigured by the presence of Christ's divine Spirit and his sustaining grace.

The divine plan for our redemption does not seem to contemplate the exemption of man from all those experiences which are the heritage of our common humanity. To toil for a livelihood; to suffer from the reverses of fickle fortune; to lose health, property, or friends; to grow old and feeble with years, and finally to leave all that we cherish here—these are the accidents of our nature. Nor is it well that we should be exempt from all these. They are essential to the development and perfection of our Christian character. Christ did not hide this truth from his disciples, when he said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Even the Son of God was not relieved from this universal necessity. It were better to strengthen the shoulder than to remove the cross, as it seemed better to give Paul a larger measure of grace rather than take away the "thorn in the flesh." But to be conscious of Christ's presence in our lives, and to feel the power of his sympathy and love, and to hear his word of encouragement when the heart grows faint—this is our need and our privilege.

I knew a little boy, who, having met with an accident, required a delicate and painful surgical operation. Before the physician began his work the boy's

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father asked, "My son, you are not going to be afraid?" The little sufferer reached up his hand and said, "No, papa, not if you will hold my hand." Multitudes of God's children suffer in obscurity. The greatest tragedies of life have few spectators. Deep sorrow seemed to come to Christ from the fact that even his most intimate friends turned against him or forsook him. Isaiah well says, "We hid as it were our faces from him." Even on the cross his agony was made more intense by the feeling that even the Father had forsaken him. The road does not seem so long or rough when we hear friendly footfalls at our side. The cross is not so heavy when we feel the touch of loving fingers lifting with our own. We can endure much and suffer long if the Father will only hold our hand.

Men do not mean to be selfish; but we are so busy and life is so intense that we forget. The world is rushing on so madly after wealth or pleasure that there is little time for the consideration of others. When our neighbors are sick we visit and pity them. People who were once foremost in church or community grow old and feeble, while the rising tide of nervous activity sweeps them aside and they are forgotten. Death overshadows the home of our friends and we send flowers and sympathize with them, but we soon forget them in the engrossing cares of life and they are left to weep and suffer alone. To all such the Saviour comes with peculiar tenderness and encouragement, saying, "Lo, I am with you alway." Then, when the form is bent with the weight of years, when the eye is dim and the ears are almost stopped, if we listen we may hear the "good-night" prayer and the swan song of Israel's sweet singer, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: *for thou art with me.*"

LESSON FOR MARCH 1

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

GOLDEN TEXT: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd."—
Isa. 40. 11.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM WALLACE MARTIN

THE dominating personality spoken of in this passage is God. The Hebrew Scriptures tell us that the heavens declare his glory, the earth showeth forth his handiwork. These same Scriptures affirm that the voice of God is full of majesty; you hear it in the thunder: the voice of God breaketh the cedars of Lebanon; you hear it in the crash of the top of mighty trees, when the furious storm wrenches the branches from their trunks. All history when rightly interpreted is a single witness, and an incontrovertible one, to God's doings among the nations. Israel's prophet said, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." Esar-haddon came into Egypt with his armies in 672 B. C., and conquered the land and displayed all his Assyrian cruelty upon the Egyptians; then indeed the heart of Egypt melted. But the Egyptians said that it was the Assyrian that had wrought disaster to their land. The prophet of Jehovah declared, however, that it was God.

The world, each nation, each individual, must not fail to take God into account, even God whose majesty is declared by the heavens, whose handiwork is displayed by the earth, and whose dominion is set forth by the rise and fall of the nations of the earth. Equally must be taken into account the flock of Jehovah, that company which in every age and under every clime have been true worshipers and faithful followers of

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God. Out of the records of the past, we find in the writings of the Jews the completest and fullest history of this flock of Jehovah.

These words, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd," make an utterance which comes to us out of the period of the captivity, from those Jews who had been carried by the force of Babylon's king from Judah into the land of the Euphrates. Jerusalem had been destroyed, its temple laid waste, her people murdered and only a remnant left, and these were carried away into captivity. Among these captives were to be found the flock of Jehovah, and the prophet asserts with boldness that Jehovah shall feed his flock like a shepherd. It was this flock that said, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." Food, clothing, shelter, were scarce for these captives. Yet the prophet said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." The sentence seems but a cunning irony well fitted to torture the faithful ones. The emphasis, then, cannot be placed upon the one word "feed." Or, should we do so, it could only be done by giving a metaphorical meaning to the word *care*. Then we should read the passage thus, "He shall care for his flock as a shepherd."

A Hebrew scholar, one acquainted with the Semitic idiom, needs no such correction, for as he reads the original the words become translated thus, "As one shepherding his flock, he shepherds." These, then, are the words of the prophet to those Jews who sat beside the rivers of Babylon and wept, those Jews who could not sing the songs of Zion in this strange land. The words also express a universal truth, applicable to every time, always applicable to the flock of Jehovah.

A shepherd indeed feeds his flock. But if the flock is in a land where pasture is scanty the flock is sparsely fed. Yet, in such a place the shepherding of the shepherd is more efficient, more filled with anxious thought. Where food is scarce the range of the flock is over

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larger territory; greater dangers therefore arise from the increased exposure from the wild beasts that inhabit land where pasture is less plenty. Shelter, then, must be found to protect from the wolf and the storm; guidance must be given through the wastes to the streams and the wells. This shepherding of the flock in a land of poverty, where the grass is scant and the water is scarce, calls forth the whole resources of the shepherd, and the life of a shepherd in such a land is veritably given for the flock. If the flock does not perish it is the evidence of good shepherding. The prophet makes very clear what this shepherding consists of. "Jehovah," says the prophet, "shall gather in his arms the lambs, and carry them in his bosom, and he shall gently lead those that are with young." In this way most beautifully is declared the tender solicitude of God for the most helpless, the young, and those who are soon to become mothers. This shepherding of us by the Almighty is a truth that has been made clearer, age after age; in our darkness the truth has been manifoldly manifested; and that the stars in their multitudes shall appear night after night is a truth no more clear to believers than that the shepherding care of Jehovah in numberless ways shall light up their lives.

There are immortal pictures, painted canvases, which spake first to the generation who knew the painters, and since have spoken to each succeeding generation. The artist Wilkie went to the Escorial to see Titian's picture of the Last Supper. Wilkie tells not how the picture impressed him; or, if he does, we forget his words in the words of the aged custodian of the place, who said, "I have sat in sight of that picture nearly threescore years. The visitors have come and looked and wondered and gone their way. My companions have dropped off one by one, but these remain, these painted men. They are the true realities, we are but shadows." Much truer may it be affirmed of the words of the prophet in this Golden Text, for they sim-

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ply him out for us a picture of the Almighty in one of his great relations to us. More than twenty centuries have passed and gone since it was declared that as one shepherding his flock Jehovah shepherds, yet the prophet's words have had ever since living, undying power. But man has perished, those generations that heard these words. We truly are the shadows; the word of God endureth forever and ever.

Yet his flock—of Jehovah—at times has fallen into doubt as to the shepherding on the part of the Almighty. In periods of stress and disaster and loss, at these times his flock faltered and came nigh despair. Such is human weakness, and so often, moreover, do troubles blind us to the sight of God, who nevertheless is shepherding. Bishop Butler was a master mind in his day. When men were led into infidelity by the ungodly thinkers of his time, he wrote, to strengthen the faith of his countrymen in God, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed; also, The Constitution and the Course of Nature*. Yet on his deathbed he had great doubts about God accepting him, doubts as to the shepherding care of Jehovah. But when the chaplain said to the bishop, "The word is, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,'" the bishop cried with joy: "Ah, I have read that text a thousand times, but I have never felt its comfort till now." This shepherding of God is marvelously careful for the flock, for each in the flock, and so complete that God hath given even unto death his own Son in this shepherding.

Who, then, are his flock to-day, those that he is shepherding with a shepherd's care? We are not concerned with the tests of the past. These wrought their own good. The simple and all-absorbing question with a multitude to-day is, "Am I of this flock?" Enumerate the creeds which to-day separate the Christian Church into denominations; is any one creed, are any number of creeds, to be taken and by it or them the flock to be separated from the rest of mankind? The answer is

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not doubtful. The flock is found among them, even among those that hold these Christian creeds. But not the whole of the flock. God's care is truly over all men, like it is over all the beasts of the field, over the trees of the earth. But this providential care is not the shepherding care of God. Thirty years ago the physical scientists swayed thought, and of these some declared that there was no God; others, that God, if he were, could not be known. These gave no heed to God's shepherding, and so were not of his flock. Their followers, and those, too, who live as if there were no God in the universe, likewise are not of his flock. Today the psychological scientist dominates scientific thought. It is Professor James, of Harvard University, who says in his book upon *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, "We and God have business with each other, and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled." This way is the scientist's way of putting the matter; the prophet's way is to say, "As one shepherding his flock, so God shepherds." Each in the flock has the witness of the shepherding care and also knows the voice of the shepherd. The business of God is this shepherding care; the business of each man is to know the voice of the Shepherd and to hearken.

Jeremy Taylor was one of the bright and shining lights of the seventeenth century. His treatises upon *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* are classics in devotional books. His life was one of stormy vicissitudes. He attached himself to the loyalist cause, and in 1642 with others was deprived of his living, we would say of his church, by decree of Parliament. Thrice he was imprisoned; and one of these times only because his publisher adorned a book of his with a print representing Christ in the attitude of prayer. It was this man who said of Christians, "They must learn to practice the presence of God." This is but another way of declaring his belief in the shepherding of God. "Practice the presence of God," and you will most certainly hear his

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voice. "Practice the presence of God," and you will not be found in idle uncertainty and doubt. "Practice the presence of God," and the hardships of to-day will be less burdensome, the denials of the present time less grievous, and these trials of ours will then seem verily as but for a moment. "Practice the presence of God," and there will be no uncertainty in your mind as to the shepherding care of Jehovah.

A modern pastor, but not of our denomination, gives us this incident as part of his personal experience. He says: "Years ago I was called to the sickbed of one who had been singularly prominent and greatly honored in the church of which I have the privilege of being pastor. And as we went to him, on a beautiful spring day, we entered the room and saw that he could live but a little while. Several of us gathered around his bed, and he looked up with a bright, shining face, and said, 'Sing, sing.' Who could sing when his best friend was crossing the river? None of us could sing. Years ago he used to be the leader of the singing in our church; but he had not been able to sing a note for many and many a day. Suddenly, as if a voice had spoken from heaven, his voice broke out, and he began to sing with all the strength and power of the old-time days. And these were the words he sang:

"He leadeth me! O blessèd thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!"

This modern hymn is not more than half a century old. Where the English language is now spoken, there it is sung. It is found in the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Congregational, and the Methodist hymnals. And what else does it teach but the ancient faith, so beautifully uttered by the Hebrew prophet, "As one shepherds his flock, God shepherds"?

LESSON FOR MARCH 8

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life."—John 6. 35.

By JOHN H. WILLEY, S.T.D., PH.D.,
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THE question of food is the question of the ages. The battle for bread has raged on land and on sea from "the dragons in the prime, that tear each other in their slime," up through the long and bloody unfolding by which man has come to his kingdom. The first instinct of the wild is to kill, the first alternative is to eat or to be eaten. And so the first temptation of the man, according to the story of Eden, is a matter of food. It is so elementary and so fundamental, this fierce hunger pang, that it is made the type of all our appetites and besetments.

Moreover, the first petition in the Lord's Prayer which relates to the petitioner is for "daily bread." And the fact that the first temptation and the first personal clause in the authorized prayer refer to the satisfying of hunger suggests how important has always been regarded this universal, unpoetical, eminently practical habit and necessity of eating.

This appetite and need for food has made history. Coriolanus was the proudest patrician of his day, but his refusal to cheapen the price of corn sent him into exile. It was a food failure that made Pompey supreme. His consulship showed Cæsar that even a weak man could dominate Rome. And then a greater than Pompey claimed the purple; a lack of bread had changed the history of the world.

There is no reason for want or scarcity in these

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abounding times. Two thousand million bushels of corn last year, twenty-five bushels apiece, as we stand in line waiting to receive our share. Six hundred million bushels of wheat, seven bushels apiece, with its promise of bread and comfort and health. The soil is producing as it never produced before. The stars in their courses are fighting for us. The genii of the lamp are building our houses and weaving our clothes and bringing our luxuries from across the seas. But the cry of hunger mingles with our harvest hymns; the specter of want sits in our Thanksgiving feasts; and half-starved men and women stagger along our electric-lighted avenues, or crouch in the shadow of our palatial homes. A dinner was given at a great hotel some months ago. There were orchids from Mexico, and mosses from Florida, and roses from the Riviera, and edelweiss from the Tyrol; a fortune spent in mere decoration. On that night a woman stood in the dark and cold, outside the window, looking in upon the tropical display. She held her baby close against her breast; someone lifted the thin shawl with which the little face was covered, and the baby was dead. The doctor said it had died of cold and starvation. One morning last winter a dweller on Fifth Avenue drove forth to get shoes for her pug—they cost eight dollars a pair—and an ermine-lined coat, which cost one hundred dollars more. That morning five hundred children went to school in New York city without any breakfast, because there was nothing in the house for them to eat. A pet monkey is given a banquet, and is dressed in richest silk, and entertains at a table piled with delicacies; other monkeys are invited, and they are waited upon by the wives and daughters of bankers and life-insurance directors and railroad presidents; and that night, at one o'clock, a line of men is drawn up at the Bowery Mission—hopeless men, desperate men, with hungry babies at home; and only by standing thus in the bread-line can they get bread in this great, rich,

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teeming city, whose money is afloat upon every sea, and whose signature can make war or peace among the nations of the world.

This, then, is the problem of all time. We boast of progress, but the procession of want and misery keeps pace with our chariot wheels. We call this the age of enlightenment, but it remains the age of unpaid labor and of unfed children. We cultivate the arts and utilize the sciences; we harness the forces of nature, and exact tribute from the four corners of the earth; but in the midst of it all the low inarticulate moan of hungry millions will not be hushed, for men and women want food and cannot get it.

Into the world tense and vibrant with hunger came the words of Jesus, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger." It was startling. He had struck the keynote of human need, and the response was immediate and tumultuous. The people had asked for a sign. By a strange power Jesus had fed the five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and apparently on the strength of this had demanded the faith and the following of the multitude. But quick and challenging came the protest: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert. Moses never put such emphasis on this miracle; never exacted such homage as now seems demanded. This is not such an extraordinary happening. The like of it has occurred before." Then said Jesus: "The miracle of Moses was on the low level. His bread was not the true bread. This bread cometh from heaven and giveth life to the world; this *I* alone can give." And they cried out with one voice, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

But they had mistaken his meaning. They were still on the low levels with Moses and the murmuring hosts of Israel. The hunger of the body was the highest hunger they knew. They did know that. All men know that; and when the words of Jesus rose to a spiritual climax, when in startling, bewildering figure he devotes

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his own body to the eating, when in the majesty of divine Sonship he offers his flesh for the life of the world, the multitude is filled with angry protest and turns petulantly away.

All that bread is to the body Jesus Christ is to the soul. He too has been the Desire of the nations. Without him the people have broken bounds and overthrown governments. In search of the Christ the Magi came out of the east with "odors sweet, and caskets at their saddlebows." To find him men have gone on long pilgrimages, and whole races have broken their ancient bounds and have been driven across continents in apparently aimless migration. It was to learn this larger truth that the early centuries of the Christian era became a seething whirlpool, and Visigoth and Ostrogoth and Vandal and Hun came sweeping like tidal waves over the Roman empire. There is no rest for a people without Christ. Here is the meaning of social and industrial disquiet. It is because Christ has been obscured. It is because the world has drifted away from the cross. He promises to feed the soul. He is ready to satisfy the life. He will untangle our economic complications and solve our social problems, and supply our personal wants. He can take the tyranny out of the trusts, and inspire them to live and to let live. He can take the bitterness out of the industrial brotherhoods and stop forever the suicidal strikes that cripple the striker and starve his children. He can fill each heart with the gospel of content, and diffuse throughout the world the harmlessness of universal charity.

Moreover, bread is the veritable staff of life. Bread-getting is not a question of convenience, but the condition of existence. There is no continued life without bread; there is no spiritual life without Christ. "I have come that ye might have Life." "I am the resurrection, and the Life." "I am the way, and the truth, and the Life." Hear him ringing the changes on

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Life; putting the eternal emphasis on Life. And here is life all about us, and here it has been from the beginning. Indeed, back through the bewildering arithmetic of geology there was life, giving its name to the successive periods: Cenozoic, or recent life; Mesozoic, or middle life; Paleozoic, or ancient life, until we reach the fire-scarred rocks of the prime which we call Azoic, for here at last there is no life. But Jesus did not come to bring this, and this is not sustained by the bread of his body, and this is not the conquering force of the world.

There is yet another form of the life-force princely and powerful, which might well be the gift of God—the power to think. This is the mightiest of agencies, since it controls and utilizes all other agencies. The lightning is its postman; the sun paints its pictures; the wind wafts its burdens. The shapeless block from the mountain quarry becomes a song or a sermon in stone; the ready canvas under the touch of the artist catches the sunset crimson or the swimming purple of the dimpled hills and holds it fast forever. Homer in the morning of history recites his dreams, and his heroic measures become the drumbeat in the march of warlike centuries. Shakespeare writes his fancies by the tallow dip of the dingy theater, and all the world becomes a stage; and his Romeos and Macbeths and King Lear become more real than historic characters. But this too is defective. No man by searching ever found out God. It is not the brain but the heart that gropes its way to Mount Pisgah and gets a glimpse of “sweet fields arrayed in living green” across the river. If we have received no message save that which comes by reason, there would be no light shining through our cypress trees. The intellect may save a world of railroads and mines and cities, but it cannot save the human soul.

There is another life which may be ours. There is another power we may possess; not to live and breathe and lift heavy weights and go long journeys, for that

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we share with the animal; not the power to think and count, to weigh reasons and to balance probabilities; not this, but the power to receive God, to hear his voice, to grow like unto him in the process of the years. This is the supreme gift of the soul; without it we are mere thinking animals, with no range beyond the vision of our eyes, and no expectation beyond the threescore and ten of our allotted earth life. Possessed of this gift, we are made but little lower than God, with authority to conquer and possess all of God's world to-day; and with doors opening outward into the wide, awful, illimitable fields of eternity to-morrow.

I do not know how it is done. I see the gardener find a wild rosebush growing on the edge of the wood. He takes it up and plants it in a choice spot in the garden. Here the soil is sweet, and the very winds are tempered. But the next season finds only ragged, careless blossoms on the bush. But now he clips the stem and inserts a cutting from the choice plant which grows across the yard, and, look, there is new life. The old gnarled, straggling bush has received a new inspiration and has found new ideals; and when the springtime comes, there on the stem fragrant and splendid glows the Jacqueminot, the Maréchal Neil, the American Beauty, and all the world stops to wonder and admire. I do not know how it is done, but when the life of Jesus gets into a human soul somehow the old pleasures do not allure, the old habits do not bind, the old associations do not sway, and the life blossoms out into a rare and heavenly flower, the world is richer and sweeter, and the angels say, "It is beautiful; it is of God."

I do not know how it is done, but this life, this crowning imperial life, given by the touch of Christ, is sustained by "the bread which cometh down from heaven." Without him there is death. With him life becomes real and vivid, and eternity begins before we have done with time.

LESSON FOR MARCH 15

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the light of the world."—John 9. 5.

BY CHARLES HOWLAND COOKMAN,
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FROM the beginning the world has felt the benign influence of the sunlight. No gift of the great Creator has been more beneficent in its far-reaching helpfulness. Slowly the process of growth has gone forward until the myriad forms are to-day the joy of the One who made them, and the wonder and delight of man. Nor is the end yet seen, for the possibilities of this tireless worker are almost limitless.

When one tries to imagine what the world would become were the sun removed, as he stands enswathed by the blackness of the night and chilled by its dews, and then climbs the summit of some mountain to catch the first rosy light of the morning, while he feels its warmth and inspiration, gratitude rises from his heart as he exclaims with Milton, "Hail, holy light! offspring of heav'n firstborn."

This world-sun is also the most suggestive symbol of moral and spiritual truth. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." He is the truth and has manifested his glory, disclosed his character, sown the fields with light. All the development of men, all they have been able to accomplish, has been due to the assistance of this central source of power. Down through the ages the light has been shining, and now and again rare souls have had great glimpses of the divine glory. Again, because of superstition and sin the light has been obscured and human hearts have suffered from darkness and cold.

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Truth is one the world over, and though we seem prone to separate the progress of what we term profane and secular civilization from the more spiritual manifestation of religion, there remains the great divine Personality who is seeking through every channel afforded, and even in the creation of fresh avenues, to illuminate and transform the world.

When one takes this long look over the world, following patiently the strata which have been laid like bricks by the hand of God; when one traces the multiplication and variety of animal life and comes at length to follow man in the history which penetrates the mists of the far-off years; when one comes nearer and travels the hills and the mountains of discovery and invention, of art and literature and science; when one studies the moral and religious development of races, the rise and fall of great systems, he is ready as never before to appreciate the gift "in the fullness of time" and the everlasting treasure vouchsafed to the world in the one true Light, even Christ. We are disposed too often to confine the power and intensity of this light to territorial limits and the period of history covered by the earthly life of Jesus. We need to see him as the everlasting type and symbol, as the continual preserver, as the manifestation which grows not less but more through all the Christian centuries. We must recognize the wondrous work of God in the soul of that one human life which allowed the heavenly glory to flow uninterruptedly through it, reflecting and disclosing to men the eternal character. Other men have caught glimpses, God has shown himself in many ways, but here is the supreme and all-comprehensive revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The text would better be translated, "*Whosoever* I am in the world, I am the light of the world." That is to say, whether in his incarnation, or before his incarnation, or after it. Or, more inclusively still, "*Whosoever* I am in the world, *light I am of the world.*" Here is at last that for which the

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prophets longed, and which the people expected, the Sun whom John the preacher and "watchman of the night" heralded, and whom the beloved disciple greeted as the expression of the Father. The eternal God is here—Light, Truth, and Life, shining, speaking, living, bestowing upon, arousing, and sustaining men by his everlasting power and goodness.

The sign of the blind man recorded in the narrative, beautiful and wondrously suggestive as it is in its spiritual application, forms the merest incident on the surface of that central and absorbing presence shining always in the midst of darkness and despair, but here, for a little, issuing forth until blind eyes saw and deaf ears heard and those who sat in the shadow of death beheld the light.

We are tremendously in need of the attitude of the poor man when we ourselves are apprised of the immanence of the true light. The question of the "how" and the "when," the substance and the quality, the previous condition, are all intensely interesting and give us a more intelligent view of the case, but for the seeking soul the statement of the fact is the all-important consideration, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." And however wonderful the cure of this man seems to be, and whatever the circumstances as recorded, we must not limit God's power to similar surroundings, but we need to feel that now under other skies and through different channels the same omnipotence is propelling and illuminating mankind. Christ was not simply the means by which several blind men were restored to normal conditions, he is ever the way to light and life for all men everywhere. For our God is the same God through all ages, though in every era his glory is seen in different degrees.

Men have always asked for the truth about God. Nations have recorded their impressions in their sacred books and in their unwritten traditions, but nowhere is

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that truth which satisfies man's inmost heart more clearly portrayed than by Jesus. When men asked, "Show us the Father," he replied, "I and the Father are one." When they demanded a voice in the darkness, he declared, "I am the Light of the world."

The revelation is sufficient when it is tried and experienced. The conception of the Fatherhood of God, with all its inclusive program, received and actually applied, regenerates society, purifies and sweetens the home, and breaks the shackles of the slave and gives hope and welcome to the sinning prodigal. The light of God shown forth in Jesus, unfolding his love and pointing out and gathering up into one great sunburst the true conception of moral life and character, is the most sublime, most practical and satisfying portion which the race of men has ever known.

It has taken centuries for this truth to reach the roots of human society, and the hearts of men are yet far from a full appropriation of its blessings, but more and more the world is acknowledging, "Grace and truth *come* by Jesus Christ."

Men have ever sought for a light in the midst of the encircling darkness of personal experience. Our own generation might be called the age of anæsthetics and humane enterprise, the era of science and education. Every possible device and invention to alleviate, ameliorate, and assuage pain and suffering have been exploited. Every means known to uplift and aid the development of mankind, to insure comfort and afford pleasure, is being applied. Who shall say that the light is not shining through all of these so-called manifold *deeds of men*? Whence cometh skill and wisdom and the incentive to greater works? But withal there remain the shadow and the storm. Beyond all human power to provide against it, the darkness comes on and the bark of life is driven by the waves and buffeted by the winds. We are inclined to bewail our earthly lot and to ask to be relieved. But, as the sainted George

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Matheson, that prince of seers, concludes, "It is not less storm we need but more light." Over against the darkness of our world-picture upon the wind-tossed lake, on the threshold of the stricken home, or within that lonely shrine where the bleeding heart weeps alone, stands Jesus. By his light, which is God's, come nearer, he dispels the gloom and gives grace to bear the necessary burden. He frankly admits that which some deny, "In the world ye have tribulation," while he adds that which others affirm but cannot accomplish, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

There is no philosophy of suffering which can compare in soul-satisfying power with the religion of Jesus. By the side of the Man of Sorrows we behold a new life, and in him the blackest night is transformed and the most hopeless situation irradiated.

And when the soul soars, as soar it will, to seek the realities of the life beyond, when it comes actually, or in imagination, to the last milestone of the earthly journey, there is no light so strong and sweet as that which He who is ever Lord of Life casts back for its comfort and forward for its guidance. New signposts of science—itsself one of the bright stars in God's firmament—point with increasing clearness to a continuance of life; but no word of man is equal to that assurance of Jesus that he was going to the Father, and that those who believed in him have now eternal life, and shall not be hurt by death.

And so from whatever standpoint one looks at the world and its needs, at whatever time—in the morning with its hopes and aspirations, "at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime," or at evening when the shadows lengthen—there is light enough to flood its darkest avenues and to surpass in brightness the glory of its meridian sun. It is Christ the Light of the World, yesterday, to-day, and forever, who is the sufficient portion of his people.

It is well for us, however, dwellers in clay, that the

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gift is given as we are able to bear it, lest we should be overwhelmed by its exceeding brightness.

God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by.

But the day comes when the curtains of the golden west are drawn aside and we see the fullness of the celestial splendor. For the vision of the seer of Patmos is not a mere figure to eyes which here have caught a new light and have been born from above. Redeemed souls the world over, and weary hearts and lonely which have seen the star of hope and have found peace, project the enlarging experience beyond the span of these earthly years. And more and more as the light breaks they are illuminated and glorified until they stand before God himself, who is the eternal light of life.

O thou the Lord and Maker of life and light:
Full heavy are the burdens that do weigh
Our spirits earthward, as through twilight gray
We journey to the end and rest of night;
Though well we know to the deep inward sight
Darkness is but thy shadow, and the day
Where thou art never dies, but sends its ray
Through the wide universe with restless might.
O Lord of Light, steep thou our souls in thee!
That when the daylight trembles into shade,
And falls the silence of mortality,
And all is done, we shall not be afraid,
But pass from light to light; from earth's dull gleam
Into the very heart and heaven of our dream.

LESSON FOR MARCH 22

REVIEW: LIFE AND LIGHT

GOLDEN TEXT: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."—John 1. 4.

BY ROBERT KNAPP,

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A MAN who had known Jesus Christ in the flesh is thinking of that wonderful life. Many years before on the banks of the Jordan he had heard the Baptist witness to the Messiah, calling him "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." From that hour he had followed Jesus. He became one of his most favored disciples; he was well acquainted with his earthly ministry; he witnessed his death, and was among those whom Jesus blessed "when he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." John knew him "in fashion as a man," the Firstborn, like unto his brethren in all things, except sin. From this intimate acquaintance with Jesus he became thoroughly convinced that he was the promised Messiah, the Light of Life, the Saviour of men. Lest men should mistake the purpose of the fourth Gospel, he boldly declares that these things are written "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name."

The Life of God. "In him was life." What does he mean? The answer must come through the words of Jesus. He says, "I proceeded forth and came from God"; "Before Abraham was, I am." He speaks as one on whom time has no effect. He is the "I am" of God's ancient people. With him there is no past, no future; he is unbeginning, unending Being. "I am from above"; "I am not of this world." "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself." According to Jesus the life which was

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in him was nothing less than the life of God. He existed "in the beginning" with a self-sufficient life. All things were made by him, but his is the uncreated life. It is impossible to conceive of any stronger assertion of Deity than this: "In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was God." In him, in the beginning, was life, and the life was the life of God.

What that life was, and is, we know only as God has revealed himself in Christ. In the Incarnate Son God comes out of the secrecy of his Being and makes himself known to man. It was indeed an unveiling of God. No man can see God and live. It is not possible to look upon the unveiled glory of the King Eternal. But we may behold him in Christ, who became man that he might show us God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The Light of Men. We must not suppose that the revelation of God through the Eternal Son began with the birth at Bethlehem. Christ is the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "His life was the light of men." It was his power that caused every atom, every organism to gleam with the wisdom of God. It was his voice that men heard in the storm, and in the silences of the night. Through him man received all those intimations of the existence and character of God which came to him through conscience and the intuitions of the soul. But all this knowledge combined was not sufficient to deliver man from the power of sin, or to answer the longings of his heart. With an irrepressible yearning he was groping in the dark after the unknown God who became known in Christ. He needed light from on high. Disguise it as we may, the human heart is seriously concerned about the question of salvation. It has been so in the past. It is so today. We are in a world of sin and death. Made in the image of God, yet are we drawn away from our own ideals by sensual passions and selfish desires. Temptations beset us within and with-

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out. Loved ones go "into the eternal shadows that gird our life around." The terrors of the tomb appall us. From whom can help come if not from God, whose lost children we are, whose voice echoes in our souls?

Jesus Christ is the light of men because he solves the mysterious problem of life. He delivers us from the slavery of sin. He gives peace to the troubled conscience. He inspires our souls with love to God and man. He sustains our hope and courage in the darkest and most trying hours of life. He dispels the terrors of the tomb, and assures us of a blessed immortality. In the words of the late Philip Schaff, "He, and he alone, has a balm for every wound, a relief for every sorrow, a solution for every doubt, pardon for every sin, strength for every trial, victory for every conflict."

The gospel of Jesus is the revelation of God. The whole plan of redemption originated in the Father, it came from his heart, and Jesus reveals to us the divine Fatherhood. With Jesus, God and Father are identical. The word Father was ever on his lips. Through it is made the fullest revelation of the Godhead found in his teachings. Its spirit fills his teachings, and under it he gathers all the experiences of his life. "I came not to seek mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." It governed his life: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." "This commandment have I received from my Father." The doctors in the temple were astonished to hear the Holy Child ask his parents, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and the word falls from his lips while offering himself in sacrifice on the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

With what care he described the life of a true child of God, in terms of the Fatherhood! We are to pray to "Our Father which art in heaven." The will of the Father is to be done on earth as in heaven. We are to be perfect even as our "Father in heaven is perfect."

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Heaven is "my Father's house" in which there are "many mansions." And so man, who had built costly temples and altars, hoping thereby to propitiate the stern Judge of all the earth, learned that the heavens breathed love and not hate; mercy, not wrath.

This knowledge of the divine Fatherhood Jesus would make real to the life of men. He does not use the word with the meaning that all men are the sons of God. There is a looser and lower sense in which this is true. God is the author of our existence, and the provider for our wants. But he is all this to the lower creation as well as to man. Nor does he include any who reject his love and disobey God. The prodigal was far from the father's house, but still a son. The possibility of his return lay in his sonship. It was a "son that was lost" that was "found." Such sonship, however, afar from God, disobedient, sinful, is not sonship in the family of God as taught by Jesus. He refers to spiritual relationship, actually realized in mutual affection and spiritual likeness. It is graciously offered to all who believe in Jesus, for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." There can be no real sonship without spiritual birth. As sinners we are "children of wrath"; as believers in Jesus we are "born again" and receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

This is the experience of the Christian. He can truly say, "I commune with him, rejoice in his glory, and praise him for his love and care, for he is my Father. Obedience to his will and service in his cause is a delight, for he is my Father. In times of trial and overwhelming sorrows my Father's hand upholds me. In life, in death, his love surrounds me, his presence guides me and comforts me with the assurance of better things to come." Have we such an experience? Do we know God as "Our Father," and Jesus Christ as our Saviour? Have we become true "sons of God" by being "born again"? Does the Spirit itself bear witness with our

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spirits that we are the children of God? Such a knowledge of God in Christ, such a restoration in us of the lineaments of the divine likeness, is more than a scientific theory of light. It is sunrise.

But in making God a new Being to man Jesus made man a new being unto himself. By his union with Christ, life, for man, was no longer a crushed and feeble thing, dependent for its joys upon its earthly environment, but a free and joyous fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

When we study the Gospels we make much use of the miracles of Christ. Here we pause and wonder. Here we strive to interpret his power and explain his methods. Why do we forget *him*? What he *was* is full explanation for all his words and works. We forget that the greatest miracles of Christ are spiritual. He makes men, and fills all life, worthy of the name, with his spirit of love and sacrifice. When he called the Galileans to follow him, he began to work the greatest of all miracles. Fishermen, taxgatherers, publicans, seemed common material, and of no special value to anyone but Jesus. Later a cultured Greek, Celsus by name, poured contempt upon the Christian religion because its followers invited the ignorant and uncultured to embrace its faith. That which the Greek thought its shame Christianity has claimed as its glory. The power to make the wicked good, the mean noble, the selfish generous, the cruel loving, the despairing hopeful, the vile pure, and the sinner a saint, is the divinest power known to man. Christ called men to himself "not as made, but that they might be made." He taught them his truth; he showed them his way; he filled them with his life. He made them the founders of a new faith, that has changed the life of the world. They were new men in Christ Jesus. He gave them new hopes, new motives, new desires, a new heart, and a new life. Man thus renewed became a "new creature in Christ Jesus, created in righteousness and true holiness."

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This quality of life Jesus called eternal, everlasting, ageless. With him existence is not life. To eat, to drink, to exist; to live in a monotonous, passive way, without the exercise of the spiritual faculties, is not life. Such a man is dead while he liveth.

Still less is life to be interpreted in terms of food and raiment, houses and lands, for "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Such possessions and enjoyment may be sufficient to satisfy a beast of the field, or a man whose existence is on the same low plane, but it is not life.

The real life of a man, as seen in Christ, is fellowship with the Spirit of Christ. It is having the mind of Christ; being ruled by the motives which were in him. It is a certain obedience to the will of the Father; a certain faith and hope and love which involves life-union with Christ.

This is the purpose of the gospel of Christ. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." For this he lived among men, that they might see his life so full of grace and truth. For this he suffered on the cross and gave his life a ransom for many. Christ alone can satisfy the desires of the soul. Out of him life is an impenetrable darkness; in him it is full of light. Out of him there is nothing but doubt, and a "certain fearful expectation of judgment"; in him there is certainty and peace in this world, and life everlasting in the world to come.

Holy Jesus, Fount of Light!
As crystal clear, forever bright,
Thou Stream o'erflowing, pure and free;
The brightness of the cherubim,
The glow of burning seraphim,
Are darkness when compared with thee.
Be thou my pattern bright,
My study and delight,
My all in all.
O, teach thou me, that I may be
All pure and holy, like to thee!

LESSON FOR MARCH 29

TEMPERANCE LESSON: AT THE LAST

GOLDEN TEXT: "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."—Prov. 23. 32.

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At the last! He who would catch the swing of the author's emotions and measure the sweep of his argument must consider well the significance of this phrase. Aside from their connection with the text these words are startlingly suggestive. They flash danger signals. They are weighted with warning, they are packed with pathos. They run crimson with the blood of broken hearts. They are solemn with sad requiems.

At the last! Recall the career of Samson the prophet, of Saul the king, of Absalom the prince, of Judas the apostle. What endowments, what splendid opportunities, were theirs. The prophet? A sightless grinder of his enemy's grain. The king? A monumental failure, a miserable suicide. The prince? A beaten rebel hanging from the oak limb, his heart pierced by Joab's darts. The apostle? A traitorous bargainer, strangled in a noose of his own making.

There are rose-arbored paths that lead to pain. Folly dances along the way while the roses nod, but *at the last* comes weeping and gnashing of teeth. Intemperance is such a path. Alexander walked in that way, and the world's conqueror was conquered at the last. Paracelsus, founder of modern chemistry, father of modern medicine, died a drunkard. Poe, most original of all American poets, was cut down in his prime by the effects of intoxication. In that path there is no assurance of safety for any man. Wisdom hath an eye

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for the direction as well as for the condition of her road. On this principle the text sings its protest against the wine cup's fearful sway.

The wisdom of the Hebrews, as a distinct intellectual development, we understand to have been produced not by theologians and metaphysicians, but by practical philosophers and popular poets, men of rare gifts, studious habits, and serious purpose. They were neither prophets nor priests, but they contrived high ethical standards and produced a literature destined to become a dowry of delight to the ages and to the nations. Its language is exquisite, its logic invincible. To such a body of literature the Book of Proverbs belongs. From such a source comes this eloquent appeal ringing down the groove of time:

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkleth in the cup,
When it goeth down smoothly:
At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.

How beautiful in color is the wine when it is red! Red, like the royal ruby in Cleopatra's crown; red, like the Jacqueminot that glorifies the garden; red, like the cherry's cheek, or the outer rim of the rainbow's arch, or the alternating stripe of the best of banners. How fascinating! In the color, too, is the carbon dioxide fountain of diamonds. They sparkle, sparkle like the glittering stars on the curtain of night, like tiny drops of dew shimmering in the new morning. How winsome is the wine! What an inspiration for the artist's brush, the poet's fancy, the dreamer's vision. This ancient philosopher did not minimize the charms of the cup. Nor was he deceived by the apparent innocence and the bewitching beauty of the charmer.

A question or two must be answered, questions concerning possible accumulations of effect, final results, sum totals of influence. What, then, is the relation of wine drinking to the mental, physical, and moral inter-

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ests of the individual and to the weal of organized society? How has it affected the issues of character, the stability of states, the purposes of civilization, the destinies of the race in all of its struggles, its hopes, its capacities, its ideals? The correct answers to these questions reveal the diabolism of drink. *At the last*—when it has been allowed to work its own iniquitous work, when the reports are all in and the accounts balanced, when it is too late to undo what has been done, when the ship has gone down, when reputation has been sacrificed, and hopes blasted, and homes cursed, and fortunes squandered, and the battle lost, and ruined fragments of character indicate ironically what once was, or what might have been—at the last, there is no mistaking the truth. It culminates in disaster. “It biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.”

As to the metaphor, it is woefully apt. The adder is said to be the only venomous viper known to England, hence the English translators apply the name to the fabulous creature mentioned in the original. We may learn from the naturalist about the snake’s fang, through the groove of which the fatal fluid flows from the poison sack. The pathologist knows the effect of that poison when through the wound it finds its way into the circulatory system. Its noxious character is universally recognized.

Here, then, is the keen edge of the analogy. Alcohol, the intoxicating principle of wines and liquors, is a poison which acts upon the nerves and brain, affects the stomach, intestines, and liver, producing an enslaving desire for increasing quantities. Physiologists also assert that this craving may be inherited—a fearful heritage indeed! The Moqui Indian snake charmer may handle his pets with impunity, but he must not house them in my parlor. The chemist will find medicinal properties in the contents of that poison gland, but we would not make a habit of swallowing it. Whisky is an

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antidote for the snake bite, but whisky's bite has slain thousands and tens of thousands. The mountaineers of the South are engaged in the more or less lucrative employment of hunting and selling indigenous reptiles. The commercial element involved creates no feeling of fellowship with the rattler's fang. No more can we look with complacency upon the horrors of the liquor traffic because it figures as a source of revenue in the nation's budget.

No, no; that which was wisdom in the olden time is not foolishness in this great age of progress. Wine is still a mocker. Strong drink still rages. Because of it there is poison in the veins of the body politic—poison of vice, poison of pauperism, poison of crime, poison of idleness, poison of despair, poison of insanity, poison of disease, poison of inebriation, poison of incompetence, poison of illiteracy, poison of demoralization, poison of death! Where sparkles the wine, there crawls the serpent. It was not the voice of an ecclesiastic supposedly impractical, and traditionally fanatical, but the voice of one who spoke with the authority of reason; a voice strong with conviction, yet tremulous with emotion, and resonant with the eloquence of a noble passion, affirming, "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

This is the verdict of the centuries. Samuel, Daniel, and John the Baptist are among the total abstainers of the Bible. One of the precepts of ancient Hinduism was, "Drink not liquors that intoxicate and disturb the reason." When the Persians were rising in glorious conquest under the magnificent leadership of Cyrus they were drinkers of water. It was an evil day for them when they instituted the custom of drinking wine. Mohammed declared wine an abomination and snare of Satan. Charles Dickens wrote of the wine shops of Paris as chapels of the poor where hymns were sung nightly to the demon of demoralization. Shakespeare, the myriad minded, was a mighty delineator of the

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drunkard's dilemma, and wrote of "every inordinate cup unblessed and its ingredient a devil." There is every warrant in history for the declaration of the Discipline, "The Church of God should be always and everywhere the courageous, hopeful, and unflinching foe of this enemy of all things pure and good, and should continue its warfare until, like the crime of slavery, the saloon has become a thing of the past."

The ravages of the enemy have been terrible. We may not attempt to depict them here, nor can any tabulation of statistics adequately represent them. But we are living in a day of progress and promise. The fires of reform are blazing high in every state. The army of the better day is mobilizing. The foe is retrenching. More than thirty-three millions of our population are living in sections where the saloon has been outlawed. The great day is hastening on, the glad day when the United States of America shall stand before the nations arrayed in a new strength and with a new word of prophecy for the world, with lips touched by the living coal, and having renounced forever this accursed throne of iniquity. Before the twentieth century shall have passed the first quarter milepost there will not be found a state in all our blessed Union retaining among its statutes an act legalizing the sale of liquor throughout its borders—an anticipation possibly extravagant to some, yet one which facts make reasonable. Thus driven from its legal nest, the obnoxious thing may be hunted down and killed in the name of the Lord of Hosts.

This is no time for the poutings of the pessimist. The heart of hope and courage and patience is the requirement of the hour. O that memorable day on Rigi Kulm! The magnificent view we had anticipated was enveloped in a cloud blanket. A veritable London fog it seemed upon the heights of Switzerland. Clouds, clouds, clouds! Rolling in serried masses around us, they completely shut from our view the glories our

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eyes longed to see. The disk of the sun could be but faintly discerned through the mist above us. Our souls cried for the light and the far vision. Some grew impatient and descended the mountain disappointed. Others waited and watched. Hours passed before there was a noticeable thinning of the veil. Then the cloud battalions were seen to be in full retreat. One by one mountain ranges were cleared, peak after peak moved into the light, summits more and more distant lifted up their faces. Then there stretched out before us that panorama of one hundred and twenty miles of glowing, glittering, immaculate snow crowns. Rigi became to us the Mount of Transfiguration where the divinity that is enshrined in all nature broke its bounds. Above were the cloudless empyrean and the golden sun. Below were the bold crags, the wooded slopes, the fruitful valleys, the scattered lakes, the peaceful villages, while over all the landscape brooded the spirit of the mountains. Prophecy had been fulfilled. So shall we outlive the clouds of doubt and controversy and discouragement that have attended the temperance propaganda. The clouds are breaking, thinning, lifting. Soon shall we see that for which we have long hoped and for which our fathers toiled and prayed. Blessed hour of inspiration! Deliverance draws nigh. A new baptism of freedom and power awaits us. God has not forgotten his Israel. In this faith we vow death to the serpent. The ravages of intemperance must cease. The Christian young manhood of America can consecrate itself to no holier cause. May the Church of Christ falter not, but full armored, press the charge to the cannon's mouth. No quarter! No quarter!

When God is with our righteous cause,
His holiest places then are ours;
His temples are our forts and towers
That frown upon the tyrant foe.
In this the dawn of freedom's day
There is a time to fight, and pray.

LESSON FOR APRIL 5

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

GOLDEN TEXT: "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."—John 10. 11.

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THOMAS ARNOLD in writing to Thomas Carlyle speaks of his story of the French Revolution with unfeigned appreciation, and refers specifically "to the wisdom of the book as well as its singular eloquence and poetry." It is this use of the term "poetry" which makes Arnold's remark noteworthy. So few literary critics are gifted with the discrimination which recognizes the poetic element in all true literature. If the literary critics of the Bible had a clearer discernment of the poetic element in the Scriptures much of their so-called criticism would fall of its own weight, and if the preachers could come to a right mind in the same field the world would be spared much needless controversy.

It is clear that Jesus had the soul of a poet, and that his sayings which have come down to us are very largely in the form of poetry. This is notably true of the Sermon on the Mount and the parable discourses in Matthew and Luke, while Saint John, whose mind was closely akin to that of the Master, has preserved a unique group of allegories of which that of the good shepherd is perhaps the most elaborate. It runs through the entire tenth chapter, though the last section of eight verses may possibly have been spoken at a different time. Nevertheless John's instinct feels the unity and correctly joins the two parts.

The text sums up the entire poem in a single line, just as the entire gospel is comprehended in this single

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chapter. Nothing sweeter was ever said or sung in the old covenant than the twenty-third psalm, and the climax of the new evangel is surely sounded in this Johannine Psalm of the Good Shepherd. There the sheep is represented as addressing Jehovah in the third person, here the divine Shepherd in the first person himself speaks to the sheep. There his rod and staff comfort even in the valley of death, here he lays down his own life in the stead of the sheep. There goodness and mercy follow with the promise of enduring life in the Father's house, here goodness and mercy lead with the possession of abundant life immediately granted and enjoyed.

Let us look at our poem a little more deeply and try to appreciate the peculiar virtues of the Shepherd Saviour. Mark at once the exquisite taste displayed in the selection of figure and qualifying phrase. Christ calls himself by preference a shepherd and not a king. He is the good and not the powerful or rich shepherd. He lays down voluntarily and vicariously his own life instead of sacrificing the flock. By this last test we know that he is altogether right. He is the Shepherd, the good Shepherd—the definite article twice used is exactly in place; surely there never was any other Shepherd, there never was any other good Shepherd. Again, his word for “good” is not the common word which ours suggests, but the fine old Greek term generally translated “beautiful”; and here again is taste and poetry and precision. Now, this article and this adjective and this noun together with the following predicate, that the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, and the fact that Jesus selected these terms and solemnly asserted this thing about himself, makes positively the finest utterance which ever proceeded out of the mouth of either God or man. We cannot charge his hearers with dullness at the lowest when we read that they at once divided, some saying, “These are the words of one divine”; others, “These are the sayings of one

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possessed with a demon." It was clear to them and it is clear to us that there are no two ways about it, they are either the one or the other and all men must stand or fall with them. At last we understand why Jesus began this entire discourse with the words, "For judgment am I come into the world," and we also see why even in this beautiful allegory he does not fail to brand with the most burning terms the bad shepherds who themselves fatten and flourish on the fat and fleece of the flock. He calls them "thieves"—cowardly attacking from behind and pilfering whatever can be snatched away without serious exposure to punishment and sneaking under any convenient cover; "robbers," boldly assaulting in front without warning or consideration, not hesitating to draw blood nor caring for aught but immediate gain; "hirelings," whose mercenary measure of service and selfish concern for personal advantage and safety sold the flock or thrust it into the jaws of the wolf without compunction; "strangers," alien to every instinct of fidelity or affection, holding themselves aloof and above the flock, driving and never leading, repelling and never winning, whose voice inspires no confidence and whom the sheep will not follow.

By such severe censures of the counterfeit Jesus enhances the more his portrait of the true shepherd, and we see more clearly than ever that there is none good but one, and that Christ alone is the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives, the bad shepherd takes. The good shepherd guards, the bad shepherd fleeth. The good shepherd leads, the bad shepherd drives. The good shepherd feeds, the bad shepherd fleeces. The good shepherd saves, the bad shepherd destroys. The good shepherd dies, the bad shepherd kills. As we have already seen, this last is the supreme test, and here the poetic parable merges into tragic prose. The allegory could contribute much and suggest more, but it could never venture to say that the shepherd, no matter how good, could become so utterly devoted as to lay down his life

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instead of the sheep. Here is the mystery of divine love; flesh and blood could not conceive, much less declare, it unto men. No earthly shepherd was ever so foolish as to think to save his sheep by giving up his own life. Doth not the proverb declare that when the shepherd is smitten the sheep must be scattered? How can one save others by losing himself? Surely if the shepherd be slain his rod and staff can no longer give comfort. It is clear that no earthly analogy can fathom these profound depths. It is also clear that no mistake has been made in the record of Jesus's words, for he repeats them again and again. But as we keep listening and wondering we perceive that there is something very vital being added: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again," and, "no man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here we come upon the unique, the unworldly, yea, the divine, philosophy of the cross. We remember that startling series of calm, cool predictions that the Son of man must be betrayed into the hands of sinners and must be put to death, a decease must be accomplished at Jerusalem, but since the event and since he himself has patiently opened to their minds the Scriptures we recall that every prophecy of his crucifixion closed with the clear, ringing statement, "and the third day he shall rise again." He could not have risen had he not first "descended into the lower parts of the earth." He could not have taken it again had he not first given his life for the sheep. He could never have manifested his power to take it again had he not first voluntarily laid it down. Surely now we see how it behooved the Christ to have suffered, that he might thereby enter into his glory; and now we understand the better how it came to pass that the Father should love him because he laid down his life of himself, that he might take it again, and how the Father must commend such exercise of the right to lay down his life and to take it again.

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When we think long and patiently upon these things we come at length to perceive that nothing in all this universe could so deeply please the heart of the sovereign Lifegiver himself as to see the lives which he himself had given and endowed with like sovereign and supreme powers to his own, giving themselves in turn and exercising those powers for the lives of others. What more natural, probable, or inevitable event could take place while the blessed Son of God was here upon earth, than that the heavens should break forth into audible praise above him and the Father's voice should be heard again and again saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him"?

But although Christ is the supremely Good Shepherd and only Saviour, yet he is at the same time the first among many brethren and the proper model of all the flock. John the Baptist preferred to call him "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." It is fine to realize that, though the figure changes, the fact does not change: as shepherd he gives his life for the sheep, and as Lamb he yields his life a ransom for the sins of the world, and in his character both as shepherd and as sheep he is the head of the flock. He is the door, through him they begin. He is the way, by him they proceed. He is the life, by him they have abundant life. He calleth his own sheep by name, for he knoweth his own and his own know him, and he leadeth them out and his sheep follow him; and just as the Father hath sent him into the world, even so has he also sent them into the world, and thus the sheep become shepherds in turn; and as he laid down his life for them they are expected to lay down their lives for the brethren. Thus the good shepherd comes ardently to love the sheep of his fold, and he gives unto them eternal life and no one shall by any means snatch them out of his hand; and the Father who hath given them unto him and is greater than all also loves them and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. Thus

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in part at least the mystery dissolves, and all becomes as simple and elemental and withal as profound as life itself. There are as many good shepherds as there are good sheep, and life that is laid down on the earth is life that is laid up in heaven, and life that is generously given is life that shall surely be taken again; and if one has ever attained unto the power to lay it down of himself he has truly got the power to take it again. The grain of corn which is buried in the earth and dissolves away shall beyond doubt bear fruit again, some thirty, some sixty, and some as high as a hundredfold.

LESSON FOR APRIL 12

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

GOLDEN TEXT: "I am the resurrection, and the life."—John 11. 25.

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THE coming of Jesus to the home in Bethany was revolutionary. He changed the atmosphere from morbid despair to intelligent hopefulness. This change was wrought not simply by what he did, but as well by what he said. The resurrection of a dead man was only one of several acts in this mighty drama. Like the Great Physician that he was, Jesus diagnosed the case of bereavement which distressed the sisters and their friends, and found the deeper cause of their sorrow. To them the only cause of their distress was the death of a beloved brother; to him this was only the occasion of their grief—the cause lay further back. He saw that clouded spiritual vision and feeble faith were responsible for their most poignant suffering, and therefore he dealt first with these.

Of the morbid conditions which prevailed when Jesus came we may not speak, except to say in general that the fetid atmosphere from the low plains of materialism which the sisters and the Jews were breathing seemed suffocating to the spirit of the Son of man, and hence that "groaning" of which we twice have record. In the margin of the Revised Version we read in place of "groaning," "being moved with indignation." Why this indignation? Surely not at the natural grief of the sisters, for he himself did weep; not because the Jews' sympathy was insincere, for there is nothing to suggest this in the narrative. Rather he was indignant with that indignation which marked

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him when, in the storm on Galilee, he arose and rebuked the disciples because they had permitted a tempest to blot out their vision of God; he was indignant as on that day when walking in the temple he met the stifling atmosphere of corrupt commercialism and drove the profane traffickers from the sacred precincts. It was the indignation caused by the revulsion of a soul accustomed to live and act on the conviction that the unseen was the eternal, against the prevailing assumption that the visible and temporary were paramount in value. His attitude throughout the entire incident is expressive of revolt against the emotional and spiritual depression which he encounters. Does Martha mournfully tell him of death's victory won while he was away? He replies, "Thy brother shall rise again." Does she protest that a future resurrection is but a feeble comfort for present grief? He insists that resurrection is a present fact, saying, "I am the resurrection, and the life." Does she protest against the futility of attempting to revitalize a body four days dead? He replies that God's glory can shine in the gloomy grave if only faith be strong.

Thus Jesus shows himself to be both life and resurrection. He has brought life and immortality to light through the glad tidings which he has brought to this grieving company. The raising of Lazarus thus comes to be but the logical conclusion from the life in himself which he has been manifesting ever since he reached the stricken household. The text simply gives a name to that power which the incident shows him to possess. He has been evidencing the correctness of John's description, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." The stricken home in Bethany was like a battlefield fresh in its gory demolition till Jesus came. He found its faith and hope among the slain and its theological convictions badly wounded. But at once he raised its hope and faith to life and restored to health its failing creed of immortality. The fact that death arrived at Bethany before he did caused him no con-

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sternation. He makes no obeisance to the King of Terrors. Napoleon once said that Jesus showed himself to be the Son of the Eternal by his utter disregard of time, and with equal truth may we say that he shows himself to be the Life by his utter disregard of death.

Now, having shown himself to be the Life, a resurrection follows. He is the Resurrection because he is the Life. The prophets and the apostles raised men to life by becoming the medium of a life which was not their own. Jesus raised men because he was that life. This is the explanation of his own resurrection. Peter describes it perfectly when he says that "it was not possible that he should be holden of" death. It was possible that others should be held by death, and even those who in certain instances exercised a power over death were themselves compelled to submit to the ordinary authority of death which forbade their return to earth when once physically dead, but for Jesus such submission was unnecessary.

This brings us to the plain teaching of the text, which is the supreme value of personal character. The important question is not what death is, but what we are. Whatever may be the mysteries of death; however little we may know of resurrection as a process; where-insoever we may stumble at the interchangeable use of the term "death" to signify physical dissolution or moral reprobation, the one truth that stands clear and luminous is that what we are in personal character determines for us what death shall be. This is the teaching of the text, directly concerning Jesus and indirectly concerning men.

First, the direct teaching is that Jesus sustains a unique relation to death and resurrection because of his unique personal character. Because he is the resurrection and the life, because there is in himself a spiritual character of the highest order, therefore death is a different thing to him from what it is to men, or at least to those who do not know him. This peculiar

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relation of Jesus to the events of his own life has not always been appreciated. Take, for example, the relation he sustained to the miraculous. It was a relation totally different from that of other miracle-workers of the Scriptures. Not only was it different in that his was the exercise of an inherent power, but chiefly because it occasioned the display of an unmatched Personality. The only difference between a miracle wrought by Elijah and one wrought by Elisha is a difference of detail. The personality of the miracle-worker is not the important consideration, and even though the one prophet is totally unlike the other in personal characteristics the miracles have practically the same significance. Not so with the miracles of Jesus. Beyond their philanthropic value, beyond their display of an inherent supernatural power, they are of value because *He*, who was the summit of moral and spiritual perfection in personal character, performed them.

This view reverses the former conception of the value of a miracle. We conceived of it as a proof of him; now see him as proof of it. The fact that Jesus performed miracles lifts the miraculous to a loftier plane.

(a) It takes miracle from the realm of the lawlessly unnatural. Jesus, who came to fulfill the law, whose life was the perfection of moral and spiritual regularity, and to follow whom is to emerge into a life eminently law-abiding in the highest sense, is One who cannot well be conceived of as ignoring the orderly processes of the natural world for which he evinced so profound a respect. Miracles at his hand could not have been capricious processes nor erratic interferences with natural law. Nor, on the other hand, could these miracles have been clever manipulations of occult forces, deluding the disciples and the multitudes with the idea that they had seen the supernatural. His manifest love of truth and his unequalled practice of it in all other particulars preclude such a possibility. Because, then, he was the personification of obedience and of truth,

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it is unthinkable that his miracles were either lawless or deceptive. From him we gather that conception of a miracle which Bishop Gore so well states when he says, "Miracles are God's protests against man's blindness to Himself, protests in which he violates a superficial uniformity in the interests of deeper law."

(b) But again, if we hold firmly to the supremacy of personal character in all the miracles of Jesus, we see how they become absolutely inimitable. Some years ago, one, Tanner by name, undertook to show that any ordinary man could fast for forty days as did Jesus in the wilderness. With utmost effort that nearly cost him his life, he moderately succeeded. But what of it? At best it could only show that without supernatural aid a man might do that which seemed miraculous. Now, if the purpose of Christ's miracles was to do something physically which a mere man could not do, then the miracle of fasting is seriously invalidated. But the value of that miracle was not in the fasting, but in the Person who fasted. If Tanner could fast physically as Jesus did, it would still be Tanner and not Jesus, and this would separate the two transactions by an immeasurable distance. Thus, though all the miracles of Jesus were to be reproduced by men, his miracles would still stand solitary in their divine grandeur because pervaded by and expressive of his personal character.

This is the teaching of this chapter concerning Jesus. His personal character looms larger than this greatest of his miracles. What he is and what he says is of greater importance than any mere fact of return to life of a dead friend and brother. If he had been there before, Lazarus might not have died; now that he is there Lazarus may live again—these are all secondary considerations. The vital fact is that he, the Life, is present; that whether present or absent he is the Friend of the Bethany sisters, and therefore whether he raise Lazarus to life or not, if they only depend on him, they have no reason to be in despair nor be afraid.

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Second, the indirect teaching of the text is the supremacy of personal character in man. Too often have we thought that assurance of resurrection and immortality, so that we would be guaranteed immunity from the defeat of death, was all that we needed. Jesus emphasizes the contrary. Mere resurrection as an isolated fact is of little worth. To live after death or to rise again is of small importance if our personal character be unworthy. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul derives much of its significance from the character of that soul. Plato's "It must be so" is a logical conclusion only when we have greatness of character as a premise. We do not feel the urgent natural necessity of immortality for the man of evil life. There is a strong implication in the words of Jesus, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die," that one who has not the Christ-life will, in some real sense, cease to live when physical death passes upon him. Not that men without Christ are annihilated at death, but that, living a life which is little more than physical existence, the total loss of physical being which comes at death will leave so small a life that relatively it will be death. But the very desolation of such a state shows the opposite with contrasted glory. The life in Christ makes a man superior to death—"though he were dead, yet shall he live." Though physical death rob him of bodily encasement and earthly surrounding, he has lost nothing essential to his highest well-being. Measurably is it true of the disciple as of his Lord, "it is not possible that he should be holden of death," for death only holds the physical, and on the spiritual life that Jesus gives death has no power. Thus is Jesus life and resurrection to us in proportion as we live in him. He does not raise us out of physical death by an arbitrary resurrection fiat, but by the impartation of his life creates in us a supremacy of character which survives the article of death.

LESSON FOR APRIL 19

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

GOLDEN TEXT: "We love him, because he first loved us."—
I John 4. 19.

By HOUGH HOUSTON,

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KINGSTON, NEW YORK

THE emphasis of this scripture is subjective. This is made clear by the Revised Version: "We *love*, because he first loved us." Everywhere in the New Testament emphasis is placed upon the atmosphere in which a soul moves, and never upon the object toward which it moves, except for the purpose of generating a healthful atmosphere. We love, adore, worship God, not that we may honor, glorify, exalt him, but that out of such service there may come the exaltation of humanity. The worth, the glory of a lofty ideal is not in its attainment, but in its inspiration. The end never justifies the means. Souls are judged by their attitudes and never by their attainments.

Love to God and love to man are the two commandments of life. Love to God creates within us love for man. Love in the realm of humanity saves the lover and saves the man loved.

Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul,
May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
While he who walks in *love* may wander far,
But God will bring him where the Blessed are.

Love is the basis of all excellence. I. This is a truth of divinity. "God is love." If there is in God the excellency of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, it is but the expression of his nature, which is love. Back of the heavens, back of the earth, beneath the mighty deep, is his eternal love. He did not create and

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then love; he created because he loved. First he loved; then he wrought. The works of his hands are mighty because back of his hands is a mighty heart. He loves is the reason for creation; He loves is the reason for revelation; He loves is the reason for redemption. God, the loving God, is the Creator, Lawgiver, and Redeemer. Such a God we see in the face of Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus came out of the bosom of the Father—from the heart of God to the heart of humanity.

We know God is love.

1. We have evidence of his love in nature. God has made a beautiful world for the present habitation of man. The vast expanse of azure sky, curtained with cloud of ever-varying form and hue, lighted up with the dazzling splendor of the sun by day, and the serene magnificence of the moon and stars by night, has a fascination for mankind everywhere, and in all conditions of life. The fields with their golden harvests, the gardens with their blushing flowers, the mountains with their precious ores, and the oceans with their liquid streets, make glad the universal heart of man. Wherever there is need provision is made to meet it. God's laws are laws of life. When disobeyed they seem to have in them the sting of revenge, but it is only the pain of mercy. God's laws are not man's enemies, but always, and forevermore, they are man's friends. Were there no corrective in God's love man would soon lose his kinship to the divine.

2. We have proof of his love in the cross of Calvary. He so loved the world that he gave his Son. Notwithstanding all the beauty God has put into the earth, and sky, and sea, sin has filled the world with trouble. Humanity's face is often wet with the tears of sorrow, and its heart pierced by the pain of grief. We sometimes wonder if God cares. Yonder is a little boy limping upon crutches; one leg is gone. He is trying to make a living for himself and sister by selling a few

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papers. They are orphans. Yonder is a poor widow battling with all her strength to provide food for her hungry children. Yonder is a great mass of submerged humanity, weary, hopeless, desperate, tramping the streets of sin. We wonder how God can look upon all this suffering without a breaking heart. As we wonder there comes out of heaven a voice saying, "The heart of God has broken. It broke in the death of his Son on Calvary's cross." Calvary, blessed Calvary, is the mount of transfiguration for our broken lives. Downward from that lofty Golgotha flows the unceasing stream of his atoning blood. Because he, God in Christ, was lifted up, the weary world can never be the same again. He draws us, he lifts us, he loves us, he saves us.

3. We have proof of his love in the soul's consciousness of regeneration. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." The soul knows that it has had an experience more real than the vision of the eyes or the hearing of the ears. Its certainty dispels doubt and scatters darkness. The impulse that starts souls in the right direction is a heart conscious of divine renewing and filled with divine love. The soul's certainty of God rests in the love of God. God is love is the message of nature. God is love is the message of the cross. God is love is the message of the soul. He loves us not because of what we are, but because of what he is in his nature, and because of what it is possible for his love to make us. From this love nothing can separate us. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Love is the basis of all excellence. II. This is a truth of humanity. "Love never faileth." We love, because he first loved. If love, with all its kindred sentiments and sympathies, is the basis of all excel-

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lence in God, so is it the basis of all excellence in man. God is omnipotent because he loves, and love is the only influence that can make man omnipotent in all spheres—in science, in art, in literature, in philosophy, in statesmanship, in business, and in character. Love has the vision of a seer, the imagination of a poet, the authority of a king.

1. Love makes man supreme. The one condition of growth, power, success, everywhere is earnestness and enthusiasm born of love. "Back of the Reformation," as some one has put it, "stands a great heart named Luther." The Emancipation Proclamation was forged in the heart of Abraham Lincoln. The black man of the jungles was given a new chance because Livingstone's heart was all on fire with love. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a flame from the altar of Paul's heart. The Sermon on the Mount is a heart-throb of Christ. Nations, ages, civilizations, and races are measured by their men of heart. The Bible is more than science, more than logic, more than theology. It is the Book of life. It is the record of the heart-throbs of a people trying to find God. Make a cross section of it and it bleeds.

2. Nature reveals her secrets only to the lovers of nature. She reveals them to the artist who ventures into her secret chambers for some new pageant of beauty to give to the world; to the scientist who discovers her laws behind the working of earth's forces in human life; to the inventor who gathers up her laws, which sometimes hurt and even kill, and makes life richer and sweeter; to the naturalist whose joy is in being out in the verdant fields "listening to the tales of love the leaves are whispering to the flowers." Into whatever field you may go with a heart all aglow with love the secrets of that field will yield themselves up to you. The highest art in music is expressed only as the musician comes into touch with the highest love. The highest art in painting is reached only when the painter

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knows how to love. The highest art in literature is developed only when the author builds on love. It is impossible to do a thing badly when it fills your whole soul. When soul enters into the fabric it becomes superior goods. Master artists after long seclusion come forth pale. They have wrought life into their art. A man not in love with his art may render music but nobody will listen to it; he may paint pictures but nobody will buy them; he may carve statues but nobody will admire them; he may write books but nobody will read them. An artist who painted a portrait of Christ hung it in the proper light, and then invited a friend in to see it. He drew aside the curtain and hid himself in the shadow while his friend gazed upon the picture. It was a picture of marvelous beauty. With eyes suffused with tears the friend said, "How you must have loved him to have painted him like that!" The artist answered, "Yes, I do love him, and when I love him more I will paint him better." Love paints the best pictures, sings the best songs, writes the best books, sells the best goods, gives the best gifts, and lives the best life. Love glorifies work everywhere, and lifts the worker into the dignity and honor of a full and perfect manhood.

3. Love is the only power that can bridge the chasm between ethical ideals and ethical practices. Men know better than they do. In all ages and among all classes of people the intellect has discerned truth and light that the will has refused to fulfill. The mind of Robert Burns was of the first order, but his will was sluggish; his character trailed in the dust. Lord Bacon was one of the brightest and meanest of men. Nero was an intellectual giant, but an incarnated fiend. Herod the Great was a man of the finest intellect, but there were blood spots on his hands and leprous spots on his soul. Bigotry and intolerance abide in the intellect, not in the heart. Heresies are intellectual, not spiritual. After all, it makes but little difference

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in what theory of life you believe, or in what theology,
if you do not love.

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel that can bid the gates unroll;
And when He comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;
His way may lie through darkness, but it leads to light at last.

The need of the age is not more truth, but the inspiration of men to practice truth already known. This inspiration is not developed, or evolved, for life comes from above, not from below. We love because he loves. This love is life from above. God in the person of Jesus has come down and taken hold of us. We could not go up until he came down. He first loved us. We love, because he first loved. Our love has an upward and an outward reach—a reach toward God and a reach toward man. We stand before God as reflectors and deflectors. The light of his love falling upon our souls is reflected—we love him. It is also deflected—we love our fellow man. We respond to God's call for enlargement of soul capacity and to man's call for the communicated life of God. Responding to his own with a reciprocal love, we not only recognize him as Lord of lords and King of kings, but even while our eyes and hearts are fixed upon him we find, as in Hawthorne's fable of the Great Stone Face, that we are unconsciously transformed into his own image.

There are many kinds of love, as many kinds of light,
And every kind of love makes a glory in the night.
There is love that stirs the heart, and love that gives it rest,
But the love that leads life upward is the noblest and the best.

LESSON FOR APRIL 26

JESUS TEACHES HUMILITY

GOLDEN TEXT: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you."—John 13. 34.

By RALPH B. URMY,

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A GREATER than Moses is here. Part of the Mosaic code Jesus abrogated, part he illuminated with a spiritual meaning unknown to Israel's great leader, and to the ten words of Sinai's law he added another. In the Sermon on the Mount he gave commands and enjoined obedience. All his teachings are heavy with the weight of truth. His authority is such as springs from a rich revelation of the divine will, a perfect teaching, a sinless life, and a saving grace in the hearts of men—the authority of the Son of God.

This commandment cannot be called "new" in the sense that never before had love been required of the disciples of Jesus. On the contrary, they had been taught that love was the chief note of the gospel. The message of salvation began in the heart of God, and was designated to fill every human heart with love. Jesus commanded such a love as could be measured only by the benevolence of a heavenly Father who, in his tender care, knew no distinction between the good and the evil, and who gave himself lavishly to a sinning and unlovable world.

But the commandment was new in the emphasis it placed upon the love these disciples were to have for one another, in the importance it gave to the intimate and loving fellowship that should mark the members of the kingdom. Up to this time the Master had been the magnet that had held them to one another as well as to himself. But now he was to be taken away. They

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would be alone, tempted, attacked, driven. The little band was in danger of being broken up into the wreckage of failure. But love would hold them together. Obedience to the new commandment would knit their hearts and steady their hands and plant their feet immovably. The life of the company, the success of the kingdom, the saving of a world depended on their loving one another.

It is our loyalty to the primary or elemental relations of life that determines our faithfulness to those that are larger or more complex. The papers have told the story of a woman who while a missionary in a foreign land sent her little children home to be educated. After years had passed she returned. They met her at the dock; but she was as a stranger to them. They did not know their own mother. She is praised as a heroine, a martyr to the cause of Christ. Perhaps so. But one wonders if the Lord would not have been as well pleased had she been a better mother if a poorer missionary. The children lost forever what she alone could give; the heathen gained what a hundred others might have supplied. Truer to the primary instincts of her motherhood, she would have been truer to the world and to God. This new commandment called the first disciples, as it also calls us, to begin with love at the center, that the kingdom or the church, fused with the heat of a great affection, may burn its way through all the world.

The second reason for calling this a "new" commandment is that the love of Christ for his disciples is offered as the model and measure of their love to one another: "That ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

Notice a few of the marks of this love. In the first place, it was genuine. Jesus really felt a deep love for these men. It was not a religious conventionality. It was not a pious theory. It was not a patronizing mockery. It was not a gilded counterfeit, passing current as

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a bit of fashionable politeness. The love of Christ for these Galilean peasants rang true wherever it fell. It was natural; without apology and without shame. He loved without trying to love,

As effortless as woodland nooks
Send violets up and paint them blue.

This love was without self-concern. It was careless of reputation when it chose uncouth fishermen, a hated tax-collector, a treacherous thief, and a few other men out of the common crowd to be his intimates; when it dined with a leper, sat with social outcasts, and permitted the weeping caresses of a woman of the street. It was careless of human honors when, girded with a towel and bearing a basin, it stooped over the dusty feet of tramping men, knowing not that thus to the end of time it had glorified the instruments of humble service, and made of every menial task a sacrament. It was careless of ease when it toiled all day and into the night amid diseased and faithless multitudes; when it arose from the sleep of weariness to calm the tossing sea and the shaking hearts of men; and when, in the darkness of the olive garden, drinking a bitter cup and hoping for human sympathy, it could pray on, without reproach, while trusted disciples dozed away near by. It was careless of life when it sent a Judas out on his midnight errand; when it stood alone while the pull of the ebb-tide carried every man away; when with patience and sorrow it faced a mocking, murderous world; when it walked up the hill outside the walls, and there, by cross, and nail, and thorn, and spear, paid "the last, full measure of devotion."

The love of Christ was a saving love—such a love as had a purpose in the betterment of those upon whom it was spent. The heart that loves may find therein merely its own delight; it may experience an inward exaltation and joy, and rest in that experience. But the love of Christ finds its satisfaction not in the pleas-

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ure it may give his own soul, but in the good it brings to those he loves.

Therefore he loved his disciples *patiently*. There was shown a lenient attitude toward their mistakes and sins. The Master would cover with his own great-hearted charity the blots and blunders of his pupils, writing their lessons of life. Never is he petulant or despondent over their dullness, their narrowness, their stubbornness. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe," said he to two of them, after the resurrection; but he took up his task, and, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Yet he is not lenient to the point of weakness. There are faithful wounds from this Friend. His love brings rebukes and chastenings. His loyalty carries him beyond mere indulgence into the realm of sternness and correction. There is tenderness here, compassion, forgiveness, sympathy; and therefore there is strength, firmness, faithfulness; and out of both these elements there comes a larger life to the men he loves.

Now, our Lord by his commandment makes it plain that such a love as this must be the chief mark of his followers. There should be no other basis of fellowship among Christians equal to this. The church is first of all a great brotherhood. After that it may be what it pleases. It may have its symbols, its creeds, its art, its eloquence, its literature, its wealth, but it *must have love*.

But does the church present any such aspect? Is love indeed the reason for our unity where we have it? Do Christians associate with one another because of their mutual regard?

It would seem that other reasons take precedence of this one in actual life. We let this love of Christ, which should fill our hearts, take the lesser place, while we plant our fellowships on such minor reasons as similarity of taste, a common faith, on culture, or position,

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or family, or nation. Do we put the emphasis in the right place? Have we not inverted the true order? We need to hear again the words with which Christ challenged the world: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me." Our relation to Christ, and to one another through him, is the first relation.

And when we see this love in the church, shall we not have a care that it is like his? Shall we receive all we need from this abundant love of Christ, and make our own love to others poor, vague, critical, impatient? The task that confronts us is no greater than the inspiration and strength that spring from his example. His commandments are not grievous.

Two great results follow from the presence of the love of Christ among his disciples. The first is given us in the language of the Lord himself. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." It is the proof of our fellowship with him. It is the great defense of the Church in her claims to a divine nature and calling.

But the church will try to prove her claims by argument. She will appeal to the world with her creeds, and say, "Here is the logic whereby we establish this proposition, and thus and so do we prove the other view. You must see that the syllogism is correct, and the great conclusion is inevitable." "Of course," says the world, nodding and yawning. The church will appeal to the sacred writings for the teachings of the Master and his apostles; she will apply her brilliant scholarship to their elucidation; she will walk through the centuries and muster the hosts of her mighty works; she will show her long, unbroken line of priest and pope; she will point to literature, art, science, and philosophy as her children; she will lift her banners and sound all her trumpets, and make the earth shake

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with the marching of her multitudes—and a fine showing it will be. But the Lord will not be in the thunder or the wind or the fire. "By this, by *this*," saith the Lord, "shall all men know, if ye have love one to another." The church can prove herself Christian only by her Christianity, and Christianity is love. The man on the street to-day regards Jesus as divine not because he wrought miracles, nor yet because he taught the truest ethics, nor even chiefly because he lived a perfect life; but because he loved men at their worst, and gave himself for them. Your average man cannot prove the lordship of Christ through any logic, but he knows a big, compassionate, Godlike heart when he sees it, and he finds that heart in Christ. The disciple is not above his Master. The church will prove her greatness only by her love, for in no other way can she be truly great.

The second result of this love is like the first. It gives to the church her only means of triumph. In the great propaganda among the nations of the earth, love counts for more than wealth, learning, statesmanship, or faith. The work of missions is hindered more by a low standard of life among Christians than by the power of opposing faiths. Ancient religions are crumbling, old civilizations are passing away, there is room everywhere; but the faith that makes its way among the peoples of the earth is the one that has melted its own followers to oneness by the fires of a great love. Out of its own intensiveness will spring the extension of that world-wide fraternity wherein every man is a brother and a son of God.

LESSON FOR MAY 3

OUR HEAVENLY HOME

GOLDEN TEXT: "In my Father's house are many mansions."
—John 14, 2.

BY HORACE W. BYRNES,
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If we suppose, with most writers, that these words were spoken while our Lord was still in the chamber where he had celebrated his last passover with his disciples, and had instituted the memorial of his own death, so soon to occur, the words of the text stand indeed in all the glory of their divine simplicity.

But if, as others think, they were indeed uttered while with his disciples the Master was on his way to Gethsemane, it would be in harmony with his custom to give his priceless truths as they journeyed, and the words, and the truth itself, would seem to come most naturally and most beautifully from the suggestions of their surroundings and circumstances. We can see the Lord with the eleven pass out of Saint Stephen's gate down the slope and across the brook Kidron, then up the path that leads to Olivet. They pause now and again while he speaks to them his parting words, and then while he uttered his matchless prayer to his Father. In one of these pauses they look back toward Jerusalem and gaze upon the many-mansioned city, and behold as a diadem upon a queen's brow the marvelous temple glistening white upon its summit, and beautiful beyond compare in the silver splendor of the passover moon at its full. But in its sacred precincts he had just been rejected. "He came unto his own (his home), and his own (his homefolk) received him not." He had no mansion in all the city, and when he needed it no one of the many chambers, surrounding the court in the temple, was

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placed at his disposal, and so he had just observed the passover and instituted his own memorial supper in the house of a friend, in the guest chamber that was prepared for him. There was no welcome for him in his own beautiful mansion in Zion. As there had been at the first no room for him in the inn, so at the last there was no room for him in the temple. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests," but it was true indeed that he their Lord, and Lord of all, had no place to lay his head. And as he was rejected, so would they, his disciples, be. They would be outcast, Jerusalem would drive them forth, and they too should be rejected of men, and must flee from city to city, and forsake indeed father and mother, and houses and lands, for his sake and the gospel's. Their Master had a little before left them his legacy. And what was it? Alas! "In the world ye shall have tribulation." In the clear moonlight we can see him look upon them as they surround him, and his gaze is tender and full of divine sympathy and love. And then as though his look rose above the temple, and he saw a vision in the sky, and caught sight of the city of God with its many mansions, he directed his disciples' vision beyond the temple, and the city, and the gates of death, and gave to them and to the believers of all the ages, and to us to-day, the vision of the home of the soul, the matchless promise of the text.

Did not he know the home-longing? Did not he know what it meant when there at Capernaum Peter and Andrew and John and James forsook their nets and followed him, and when Peter, you remember, said, "We have forsaken father and mother and houses and lands," did not he know how great was the sacrifice? Ah, yes, and so it was that he replied that whoever made such sacrifice should receive a hundredfold in kind here, and then a myriadfold in everlasting life. Yes, he knew the home-longing, for he had got very near to men, where he felt the strong, warm heart-beat of humanity, where

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were crippled folk and blind folk, where were the dumb and lame and the sick with all manner of diseases; he had been at wedding and funeral, at fast and feast, in hut and palace, in city, in village, by the seashore and on the plain, in the mountain and in the desert places, and he knew men and he knew the home-hunger of the human heart, and in sympathy with it he spoke to them and to us the words of the text.

And so come promise and prophecy and appeal. The domestic instinct is a mighty one. To gain a home men endure the hardest denials and sacrifices. To preserve it they forego all the comforts of life. To perfect it they undergo most arduous toil. To defend it they spill their blood. Perhaps the dearest song in all the world is

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

Yes, mankind is as a little child and longs for home—

“Home” where mother is,
“Home” where bounty is,
“Home” where shelter is,
“Home” where rest is,
“Home” where laughter is—

and song, and consolation, and companionship—home where is love.

And so the word comes to a universal heart-hunger of humanity. “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, . . . that where I am there ye may be also.” We open our hymnals and we read:

The homeland! O the homeland!
Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling.
I’m but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home,—

and sometimes we rebuke our hymn writers, our compilers, and our singers for dwelling so much on heaven. Is it indeed, as some declare, only a sort of sickly religious sentimentality? Or is it not the natural language

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of longing souls, answering Christ's appeal and believing Christ's promise as he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you"? And so, as the church has sung for over seven hundred years as she was taught by the good monk Bernard of Cluny, will she continue to sing while time shall endure:

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest.

But not only did our Lord, reading humanity's heart, appeal to its deepest longings, but he also made a positive declaration to meet that longing, for he spoke of the heavenly home as the "Father's house." I think that it was with design that, at just the time he said "My Father's house," he spoke of God as his "Father" and of the heavenly home as his Father's house; that not the thought of the almightiness of God, his resources for creating a home of splendor, of glory, of infinite beauty, not his ability to afford ineffable enjoyment—not these were made prominent, but rather that the thought of his love, of the highest and yet tenderest relationship, was suggested. It was his Father's home, infused with his Father's love and expressing his Father's love—"My Father's house."

I wonder if they thought it strange when the Master said "many mansions." I fancy that many of us have at times wondered a little. "Many mansions"—ah, what did our Lord mean? Perhaps we cannot tell which ones are correct of the various interpretations of the figure. Was it as though he said, "All the universe is my Father's house; this temple is indeed one, but only one, of his mansions, there are many besides"; or perhaps, "This world is only one of the many fit to be

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dwelling places for intelligent beings; I am going to prepare for you another planet, or sun, or star"? Or were the different "mansions" the dwelling places of different orders of angelic beings, and was another to be prepared for redeemed mankind? He said, "I go to prepare a place for you—a *place*, and he used the word *τοπος* (whence our word "topography"), and, "where I am, there ye may be also": all exact words locating place. It may be indeed, since it is difficult to conceive of confining spirits to place, that this is only the familiar use of terms of speech which we can understand to describe as best they may things we cannot understand. But somehow it seems as though the Master, who had warned the wicked but presumptuous rulers that they should see the patriarchs *in* the kingdom of heaven but would be themselves cast *out*, who pictured the beggar Lazarus at a celestial feast with Abraham, and who said to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," meant that the disciples should understand, and that we should understand, that he was actually going to leave the world, and that he would make ready a heavenly place, where at least his believing ones should come and be "at home" with him.

As the disciples heard those words, "I go to prepare a place for you," how different may have been the vision invoked in their various minds! It may be that the disciples indulged each according to his temperament in speculation, but if so they did not think them worthy of record. And so perhaps it is as well to accept the simple faith which was that of P. P. Bliss, who, you remember, before boarding the night train that took him to heaven by way of the fatal Ashtabula disaster, sang to a great congregation as his farewell hymn,

I know not the form of my mansion fair,
I know not the name that I then shall bear,
But I know that my Saviour will welcome me there,
And that will be glory for me.

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But without taking any far flight into the realms of speculation, of this we may be sure, that that "place prepared for you" will be divinely suited to our individuality, and that the exhaustless resources of infinite power, of infinite wisdom, and of infinite love were pledged to Peter, to John, to Thomas, to Paul, to you, and—let me say it reverently and humbly—to me, when our Lord said, "I go to prepare a place for you." He did not ask James, who was so soon to go, or the others, what each would wish that his "place" should be like. Probably they would have made as great mistakes as would we. Did you ever wonder when you read Milton—Milton the sublime—how he would really have been satisfied through eternity with the heaven of his own conception? The Lord himself will prepare our place, not we ourselves. He who knows us will interpret our longings in the terms of his knowledge and love and "prepare a place" for us. I fear that we should be as the babe that cries for the moon; but the mother, out of the resources of her wisdom, her ability, and her mother-love, finds a way to fill the baby hands vainly reaching out into nothingness, to still the cry, to quench the tears, and to fill the little heart with gladness. So will our Lord in his love "prepare a place" for us. Ah, yes, it will be God's heaven, not our heaven, to which we will go.

"I go to prepare a place"—I who have lived among you and know you so well, I who was tempted in all points like as ye are and yet without sin, I who am now about to enter Gethsemane and know its agony and drink its cup of bitterness, I who so love you that I am about to die to save you and make this wonderful thing possible—I your Saviour—"go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

LESSON FOR MAY 10

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOLDEN TEXT: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."—John 14. 16.

BY WALTER A. CHADWICK,
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THE mission of the Holy Spirit was to take up and carry forward the work of Jesus in the world. He was to be to the disciples, and to those who should believe on Jesus through their word, all that Jesus had been to them; nay, to do for them and for us more than Jesus had been able to do in his bodily presence. To take up this mission he came in his own distinctive personality, at a definite time, to abide in the world. Pentecost was the hour of his coming; the history of the church is the evidence of his abiding. The Holy Spirit is an influence only as he is a person. Jesus constantly spoke of him as such. Jesus had been a Comforter to his disciples, the Holy Spirit was to be another Comforter, one to stand by their side as Jesus stood, ready to respond to their call for aid as Jesus had been. If it is asked in what sense he is in the world after Pentecost other than before, we answer, in the same sense that Jesus was in the world after the incarnation as he had not been before. Jesus had always been in the world. The world was made by him, and he was ever the "life and light" of men. But as the revealer of the atoning love of the Father he was not in the world until he came in the flesh and began that journey of obedience which ended at Calvary. So, also, the Holy Spirit was always in the world. At the creation he brooded over the face of the deep; never a holy man spake but as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; and nowhere has God left himself without his witness in human hearts. But as the interpreter

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of Jesus in his saving grace he was not in the world until at Pentecost he made the church his habitation. If it was his mission to take up the work of Jesus, he could not begin it until that mission was completed. If he is to interpret the life of Jesus, he could not come until Jesus was glorified. Though the Comforter has his distinct personality, his coming is the coming of Jesus himself. This coming of the Comforter was in fulfillment of Jesus's promise, "I will come to you." The Holy Spirit has no word to speak of himself. He hides himself—as it were, obliterates himself, that so we may see Jesus only. His one work is to reveal Jesus, to interpret Jesus, to make the bond between Jesus and the believer a real and vital one, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

No name can better express the mission of the Holy Spirit than the one which has become so dear to our hearts, the Comforter, if we take the divine meaning of comfort and not the world's meaning. The word itself means not only a consoler, but a helper. The Holy Ghost was not the first Comforter. The burden of the word of the Lord to Isaiah was, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Theirs was to be the comfort of iniquities pardoned; the comfort of human weakness exchanged for divine power. Jesus was a Comforter to his disciples; never were his spirit and method better interpreted than at the very time when he gave the promise of the Spirit. "My comfort," he said to the disciples, "is not like that of the world." Now, the Holy Spirit is with us as the Comforter. He is the Spirit of truth, and so will comfort us in the true and not the false way. He is the Holy Spirit, and so will make us realize that comfort can never be separated from holiness. With this thought, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter even in his conviction of the world of sin. As the wise physician probes the throbbing flesh, though it hurts him to give pain, that so he may work a perfect cure, the Comforter leads us along the pathway

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of penitential sorrow, though he grieves to cause us bitter tears, that so he may lead us to a perfect salvation. The mission of the Comforter is fulfilled in a world saved from sin by faith in Jesus; adorned with righteousness through the grace of Jesus; delivered from judgment by the victory of Jesus. The Comforter has come that he may create and fashion a new race, even as many as have received Christ Jesus, born of the will of God, to be conformed at length to the divine likeness of their Lord.

In the mission of the Comforter I emphasize three outstanding truths:

1. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to abide in the church. He has never returned to heaven; he is here still, and will abide forever. We are not, then, to think of his coming, or to ask for him, as though he were absent from us. We may indeed ask for a larger manifestation of his presence, for a fuller measure of his power; but we are never to forget that he is with us. So also the Holy Spirit dwells in the weakest and humblest believer; the very fact that he has faith in Jesus is the evidence of the Spirit's presence, for "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." We have much to learn, and the Spirit will teach us; we may be slow of heart to believe, and the Spirit will be patient with us; we are unlike our Lord in many things, and the Spirit knows it and will correct us; but never, never let us forget that "the Spirit is in us, except we be reprobates." It is likewise true that the Holy Spirit is with us in his fullness. He is not an influence that can be given by measure; he is a person and comes to us in all the fullness of his divine personality. There is no lack in him, and he is ever with us. This thought of the abiding fullness and personal relationship of the Spirit has striking illustration in Bishop Thoburn's Church of Pentecost. He tells us that Sir Henry Baker, in seeking the sources of the Nile, encamped one night on the sandy bed of a dry water course. At midnight he

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was awakened by his guide's cry, "The river! The river!" The rains had come in the mountains, and he had scarce time to escape to higher ground before the torrent was upon him. With the morning the whole surrounding scene was changed. Where there had been dry sand was a broad, deep river, flowing calm and full-banked. The birds were singing in the trees overhead; all nature rejoiced; and the peasants along the river were opening the ditches by which their fields would be irrigated from the river's fullness. The river had come for the season. So he suggests is the coming and abiding of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, as the river of life flowing from beneath the throne of God, the Holy Spirit came. That river is flowing beside us to-day.

2. The Holy Spirit comes to make us acquainted with Jesus. In the promise of his coming Jesus said, "He shall not speak of himself. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." When Jesus was upon the earth his one purpose was to glorify the Father. In his mission among men the one purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus. "We have here a mysterious exchange, and, as it were, a rivalry of divine humility. The Son labors only to glorify the Father, and the Spirit desires only to glorify the Son." Jesus glorified the Father in his person before the eyes of men; the Spirit hides himself that he may glorify the person of Jesus in the heart of believers. When he comes we shall know he is in us by a new vision of Jesus; the marred face in which we saw no beauty becomes the "fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." Not by spiritual ecstasy, nor by a thrill of the nerves, may we assure ourselves of the Spirit's presence, though in his presence there may be hours of even ecstatic joy thrilling our very body; but in such a vision of Jesus as humbles us in penitent faith, leads us to commit ourselves to his care, impels us to yield ourselves in glad submission to his will, and awakens joy in his conscious presence.

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Mr. F. B. Meyer in telling of his experience at Keswick, England, spoke of attending a meeting of prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit. In the tense spiritual excitement of the hour he became so worn that finally he went away quietly to the mountain above the village, and there told God of his need and desire. A voice said to him, "As you took forgiveness from the hand of the dying Christ, take the Holy Ghost from the hand of the living Christ." Mr. Meyer turned to Christ and said, "Lord, as I breathe in this whiff of warm night air, so I breathe into every part of me thy blessed Spirit." By faith he took the gift without any conscious emotion, and went down the mountain. On his way he met a number of young men, who said, "We have received the Holy Spirit; we know it, for we feel we have it," and there was some contention between them. While they were talking a young merchant who had been listening said, "I want to say a word. You parsons have been talking a great deal about the Holy Spirit. Now, I know I have the Holy Spirit when I have most of Jesus; and in my place at Glasgow, if I miss the presence of Jesus for half an hour, I go into my counting room and kneel down and say, 'Holy Spirit, what have I done to thee that thou hast taken from me the presence of Christ?'"

The knowledge of the presence of Jesus—this is the touchstone of the Spirit's presence. When we have so practiced the presence of Christ that we can say with Brother Lawrence, "The hour in my kitchen among its pots and pans is as the hour of prayer in my oratory," then has the Comforter wrought his perfect work in us.

3. The Comforter, as the Spirit of truth, sanctifies us through the Word. We honor George Fox and the Society of Friends for vindicating the inward light. "When the Lord God and his Son Jesus Christ," says Fox, "sent me forth into the world to preach his everlasting gospel and kingdom, I was commanded to turn men to that inward light, spirit, and grace, by which

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all might know the way of God; even that Divine Spirit which would lead into all truth, and would never deceive." Thank God for the inward light of the Holy Spirit, a light which will never deceive, but will guide into all truth! But we must not magnify the inner light above the written Word, or to the exclusion of the written Word. Not by inner impulse and suggestion apart from the Scriptures does the Comforter guide us into all truth. I will not say that he has no message for him who has no Bible. I will not say that he never leads us except by the direct teaching of some Scripture passage. But I will say that to neglect and ignore the Bible is to lose his teaching. Jesus in his prayer on the Passover night said, "Father, sanctify them"—those whom thou hast given me—"by thy truth: thy word is truth." And speaking of the relation of his disciples to himself he said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Abide in me, and I in you." A little later, as if interpreting his abiding, he said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," as though the abiding of his word was the abiding of himself. Again, speaking of the Comforter, he said, "He shall bring to your remembrance the words which I have spoken unto you." It was as the Word that Jesus made the Father known. It is by his words that the Holy Spirit will make Jesus known to us. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. We can have no substitute for it in our conflict with the powers of evil. The Word is the mirror reflecting to us the image of Christ, and we, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Holy Spirit is near every one of us; open every avenue of your being to his incoming. The Bible is the Spirit's treasury; love it, study it, obey it. The Spirit presents a full Christ to your faith; trust him fully, that your life be not as a trickling rivulet, but as a full-banked river.

LESSON FOR MAY 17

JESUS BETRAYED AND DENIED

GOLDEN TEXT: "Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men."—Matt. 17. 22.

BY DORR F. DIEFENDORF,

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JESUS frequently spoke intimately to his disciples. He took these open-minded men into his confidence and declared unto them his inmost thought. It was in such intimate conversation that he made the disclosure recorded in the text. Had anyone else made such a declaration to them they would have given it little thought, but when the Master himself spoke in this way there was no room for any doubt regarding the outcome of his life and ministry among men.

But one asks, Why did Jesus so speak? Did Jesus have self-knowledge such as other men cannot have? Was he possessed of direct insight into the movements of the future so that he was able to foresee that which to other men would have been all shrouded in mystery and confusion? Jesus here makes a very clear statement concerning himself; and does this self-revelation at once reveal his uniqueness, and so his distance from other men? And the answer is both Yes and No. Doubtless Jesus led a life of unbroken communion with God, and doubtless there flowed into his mind from this communion such understanding of the world and of men and of himself as no other person has ever had. God is the God of life, and Jesus dwelt in unbroken relations of obedience and love with this God of life; consequently there came to him such an understanding of life as only one living and working in such close relations with God could have. The very uniqueness of the relation existing between Jesus and the God whose

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self-revelation he was became a source of such knowledge of the deep things of life and the soul as the mind of no other has contained.

But another word must be quickly added. Jesus was related in a unique manner to the ideal of his own life. Not only did he live in such relations with God as have never been paralleled; he lived in such relations with his own ideal as have never been paralleled. Of one life it may be said with all truth, "He perfectly comprehended his own ideal, and he perfectly served it." This is true of Jesus alone. And this unbroken relation to the ideal of his own life was also a source of insight, if not indeed of revelation, to him. Knowing God and human life, the ways of men and the hidden realities of his own soul as he did, it was not strange that a clear light always shone upon his future way, and that in that light he saw not only the value and meaning of his service to men, but the various steps in the ordering of his career which was to ultimate in the redemption of mankind. God spoke to him continually, and he was at home with the things of the eternities. His own ideal spoke to him constantly, and he knew that he would be betrayed into the hands of men.

We may, then, consider Christ's ideal and his devotion to it, and the prophecy which this ideal uttered within his soul; and then we shall be prepared to ask wherein our fellowship with him lies.

1. As all the world knows, Christ's ideal was one of service. These same words might be written of many another life; but they have a meaning quite apart when applied to him. When the full meaning of his life welled up within his consciousness, when the amplitude of his mission lay clear in his thought, all was summed up in the pregnant truth that he was to give himself for the good of humanity, even its redemption to God.

And this ideal was not the simple affair that we sometimes think it to be, accustomed to our Christian ways of thinking from the opening of our lives, as we are.

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It all seems very natural to us as we read the story of the walk and work of Christ in the days of his flesh, and we quite overlook the elements of strain and struggle involved in the accepting and serving of this ideal so easily and simply defined. For do we not at once see, when we seriously consider the matter, that Christ could not give himself to men until men were prepared to receive him, and can we not also see that men could not be prepared to receive him except as they followed the program outlined by Christ as the way in which they were to be reconciled to God? And all this involved and aroused antagonisms within the world of Christ.

Christ's very mission of self-giving brought him into conflict with things that were in the individual life and the social order. For see, when a man has lived the unfilial life toward God and the unbrotherly life toward men there must be a moral revolution within his soul before the pure life of Christ can enter to abide. And an attitude of hatred and antagonism will be aroused within that soul even in the moment when it most eagerly desires the new life; and except for the grace of God that newborn desire will perish in the flame of hatred kindled by the proffer of that which condemns all that the man is.

As to the social order, before Christ can confer his blessings of peace, freedom, fraternity upon human society, society must be prepared for their reception, even as the individual. And so men are led to hate and cry out in revolt against Him who brings the very blessings their souls most eagerly desire, simply because in the very bringing of them he condemns that which exists within society and spreads confusion and death.

We can, then, readily understand that Christ's ideal wherein he saw himself as an offering for the sin of the world, as the medium through which the richest of God's gifts were to be conferred upon humanity, brought him into conflict with men and aroused their antagonisms. And as he stood alone and calmly looked upon his ideal

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it would indeed have been strange had not a voice spoken to him from its depths declaring unto him, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men." There was just one outcome, and the ideal of Christ's life unfolded it before the gaze of his soul.

Two things, then, became increasingly clear: the first is, that Christ having loved and served his ideal from the beginning will love and serve it unto the end; and the second is, that this very love and service of the ideal can have but one issue, his betrayal into the hands of men.

2. And now that we have considered what Christ's ideal was, and have seen how it brought him into conflict with the individual life and the social order, we may at more length contemplate the fact already presented, that this ideal was prophetic of the outcome of his life. For history and everyday experience make it very clear to us that the world of men and affairs is hostile to anyone who sets himself apart for the service of the ideal. If any man sets out to right any form of industrial abuse, any crying social wrong, he may know beforehand that everyone who believes in things as they are will be arrayed against him, and that he must face open hostility. And even the element of betrayal will enter into his experience and be like a sword-thrust within his soul; for some man who by reason of his favored position, his unusual abilities and resources should be the trusted friend and servant of the ideal will play the traitor, and in the moment of coveted opportunity open the way for the defeat of all progress toward redemption. And all this a man may know before the hour strike, for it lies in the very nature of the ideal so to forecast the future.

In the service of truth some man may lift up his voice and speak out against superstition or empty belief. Let him hear the prophecy of his own ideal and remember that while open antagonisms and concerted hostilities will come upon him, said the ancient psalmist,

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“Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.” And this to a day which held with all the strength of religious conviction that if God required anything above another it was that which the psalmist set aside. And we may be sure that this man who raised his voice in the interest of truth, along with many another in the long line of the prophets and sages, knew something of what Christ was experiencing when he lifted his eyes toward his own ideal and caught the message, “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men.”

3. Is there a sense in which these same words come home to us? Have we any fellowship with Christ in this utterance? Our study thus far must have made it plain to us that a distant echo of this truth, which was so immediate and pregnant to the mind of Christ, does sound within our own souls.

As we make our halting approaches toward Christ and his devotion to the life of self-giving we shall discover similar antagonisms among men and conditions, and this antagonism will express itself to us as clearly as in the far-away time it expressed itself to Christ. But if in all our thought and enterprise there is no devotion to the ideal, which is only another way of saying no similarity to the mind of Christ, there will be nothing in our daily experience to remind us of our fellowship with the suffering of Christ. For we shall then be among the large number of those who are satisfied with things as they are; and no shaft of persecution will ever be aimed at us. The cost of devotion to the ideal, the pang of betrayal, the loneliness of worthwhile service among the things of the spirit, will never be known by us, and we shall judge Christ's experience to have been the isolated experience of a soul that dwelt apart with God and knew not our ordinary life.

But there is another side which must have a single word else one of the most vitalizing contacts with this

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entire subject would be lost. Impossible as it may be for us to understand the truth, unable as we may be to square it with much else to which we give the consent of our minds, we know that the very betrayal of men, their aroused and blatant antagonisms, their ceaseless persecutions, their cruelty and perfidy in dealing with the Son of man, were so made to serve the underlying purpose of God as to bring near the redemption of the world. How these things can be we do not see, but that they are certain we know full well. Christ's clear acquaintance with the ideal of his own life, his complete submission to it, his daily service of it, were all prompted by a thoroughly unselfish desire to fulfill the mission to which he had been called by God. There was no lurking selfishness in his unselfishness, no hidden seeking for self-glory in his self-giving, but only a purged and uncorrupted desire to do the will of God. So it was that God working through the life and death of Christ was able to cause the wrath of man to praise him, and to restrain the remainder of wrath.

And this is another point of contact between this experience of Christ and our own daily living and serving. For we too may with much prayer and struggle purge our hearts of their selfishness; we too may have a purpose, not "white as the driven snow," but with all the black marks of pride and self-seeking removed; we too may say with a passion of earnest meaning, "Lo, I come to do thy will"; and then we too may lift our eyes beyond the time of conflict and betrayal to the day of God's victory, which shall be humanity's victory too, and with humble assurance believe that our imperfect lives and faltering services have not been entirely empty of meaning to God. If we stand in the face of persecution and even of betrayal and forget not our high privilege as friends of Christ we shall share in the triumph of God.

JESUS'S DEATH AND BURIAL

GOLDEN TEXT: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—I Cor. 15. 3.

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HARDLY could you find in all the Bible a brief sentence so big with meaning as this. It is a case of *multum in parvo*. "Christ died"—the pivotal point of all history; "according to the scriptures"—the focus of all converging prophetic passages, and the fulfillment of all the shadowings of symbol and types of the Mosaic dispensation; "for our sins"—the heart of the gospel message and the profoundest truth of theology, history, argument, and doctrine, all in one brief statement.

Some events and some lives have so little to do with the progress of the world that an account of them is of no concern. However, when great interests are at stake, facts must be authenticated by the most unmistakable evidence. The succession to a throne and the whole subsequent history of a kingdom may hang upon the record of the birth or the death of an individual. The more a life is bound up with the interests of the world, the more important it is to establish the facts pertaining to that life.

Christ's claims upon the thoughts and affections of men make it of the utmost importance that the events of his life be fully confirmed. The death of Christ is the event fraught with by far the most momentous consequences of any in all history. Great issues rest upon it, issues of untold bliss to all eternity for those who rest upon its merits; issues of inexpressible woe to those who reject its provisions; issues which challenge

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the attention and arouse the opposition of his enemies. As a result they have left no stone unturned in their attempts to overthrow the evidence, but we are rejoiced to know that the fact is so well sustained that it has successfully withstood every onslaught, and stands in all the glory of its sublime meaning for the human race. "Jesus Christ is the center of the world's history, as he is of the Bible."

But his death has an added historical interest for us in the fact that it is the key to unity in our interpretation of the Bible. What shall be our estimate of the Old Testament? That is determined largely by our attitude toward the death of Christ. The text says, "Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures.*" Jesus said, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill." His whole life from beginning to end was a fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Doubtless there have been many fanciful applications of the Old Testament texts to Christ, but this does not alter the truth of Revelation, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

That Jesus regarded his death as a fulfillment of Scripture is confirmed by two incidents. In Gethsemane, when the sword was drawn to resist the forces sent to arrest him, Jesus said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Again, after his resurrection, as he walked to Emmaus with the two, he answered their queries about the events taking place by saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." So the Master himself claims to be the promised One, and this is fraught with the greater importance when we realize that his integ-

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riety and character depend upon the righteousness of his claims.

Old Testament rites, symbols, and types all foreshadow him. What is the value of sacrifices and offerings of Jewish days, if they are not predictive of a real sacrifice? The priesthood constantly offering the blood of bulls and goats can have no meaning, except as they look forward to the Great High Priest, who offers himself—a Lamb without spot or blemish—in the true holy of holies. Read also, if you will, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and then turn to the gospel account of the Passion week, and what unprejudiced mind will fail to see prophecy and fulfillment? Again, in making his defense before Festus and Agrippa, justifying himself for his course in following Christ and accepting him as the Messiah, Paul declared that he said “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should be, that Christ should suffer and rise again.” As Dr. Chalmers says, “The legal is the figurative sacrifice, and the gospel sacrifice is the only real one.” Clearly, then, “Christ died according to the scriptures.”

But that “Christ died according to the scriptures” is only a mutilated teaching while we leave out the three words, “for our sins.” These are the part of the text that gives it its profound meaning for us. Had these words not been here and in similar form in other passages, the death of Christ would never have aroused the hostility that it has. In these words we have the doctrine of the text, the meaning of the event, the gospel of his death.

We have spoken of Christ's death as the fulfillment of Scripture, but he not only died according to prediction, but when it says he “died for our sins” the meaning shadowed forth in sacrifice and symbol is also fulfilled. These Jewish ceremonies had to do with the problem of sin. They were constantly reminded of the reality of sin. Their offerings, their bulls and goats, their day of atonement, their scapegoat, their priest-

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hood, their holy of holies, all these impressed them with the seriousness of the problem of sin. When Jesus came into the world he came to grapple with that problem, and to deal with it in such a manner that it should be solved once for all. Sin was the most stubborn fact in the universe—how terrible a fact we could not realize except by the greatness of the cost of meeting it.

The effect of sin was to separate from God so that there was no more communion between him and man. It not only separates from him, but in Scripture sin is so associated with death that the two must be dealt with together. "The wages of sin is death." There was resting on man a doom to death, a responsibility because of sin that had to be lifted. To meet this emergency Christ had to yield himself to the suffering of death. He could not accomplish the deliverance for the sinful without taking the responsibility of the sinful, even the curse and death of the sinful. As Dr. Denny says, "In his death everything was made his that sin had made ours—everything in sin except its sinfulness." The gospel, or good news, there is in Christ for sinful men is in his death, in the fact that his death is so related to theirs that they may be released from it.

It is for the theologian to formulate a theory of the atonement, it is for the preacher simply to declare the fact that in the death of Christ there is an atonement for man's sins. But we ask, "What was really done when Christ died?" Studied in the light of all scriptures, we find that in Christ's death there is God's perfect provision for lost men to be restored. So far as God could make provision, the atonement is a finished work. He died once for all. Herein is seen the infinite mercy of God. There is no bargaining with men. There is no withholding of the sacrifice until assured of its acceptance. As freely and fully as though every man on earth had promised to accept it, he surrenders himself to bear man's sins. Himself sinless, he yet bears the sin of the world "in his own body on the tree."

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Had men appealed to him to deliver them at so great a cost, it would then have evidenced wonderful love; had he done it without any appeal, but assured that some would accept, it would have been beyond comprehension; but to die for men without regard to whether it would be received or scorned—that is the sublime spectacle of infinite love. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “It is the key to the whole New Testament, yes, to the whole Bible, that Christ bore our sins.” What Christ did, then, is something done *for all men, not in them*—a finished work for their acceptance.

The thing accomplished on the cross is sometimes called a reconciliation. We must not think of it, however, as winning God over to another attitude toward man than he had before. Christ's whole career on the earth was in obedience to the Father. His death was his real vocation on earth. He came to deal with sin in all its effects upon man, and as death was the only means that could meet man's desperate situation, Christ's atoning death “was the Father's way of making it possible for the sinful to have fellowship with him.”

The book of Hebrews presents Christ's death to us as the fulfillment of the sacrificial system of the Mosaic covenant. He is spoken of as the “Lamb.” But we find that the only way a lamb can meet the problem of sin is by the method of sacrifice. It thus goes back to death. Most strikingly, he is presented as the High Priest. One has said, “Fellowship of God and man is made visible in the priest's own person, and through his ministry it must be put within reach of the people for whom he acts as priest.” Christ as the High Priest offering himself to bring God and man together is the divine method of dealing with sin as the barrier between God and man. In this fulfillment of Old Testament ritual and symbol he “died for our sins.”

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Such is the doctrine of the text. It is the essence of the gospel for sinful men. It is the one hope for those who are helpless under the doom and curse and death of sin. It is the central theme of all theology. Take the atonement in the blood of Christ away and the New Testament gospel is robbed of its meaning. As the problem of sin called for the death of the Redeemer to provide the salvation, would that all who consider it might be so moved by its wonderful power as to give such a response that by accepting it, sin will be killed in their lives. On Calvary "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, . . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Hail, thou once despisèd Jesus!
Hail, thou Galilean King!
Thou didst suffer to release us;
Thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, thou agonizing Saviour,
Bearer of our sin and shame!
By thy merits we find favor;
Life is given through thy name.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,
All our sins on thee were laid:
By almighty love anointed,
Thou hast full atonement made.
All thy people are forgiven,
Through the virtue of thy blood;
Opened is the gate of heaven;
Peace is made 'twixt man and God.

LESSON FOR MAY 31

JESUS RISEN FROM THE DEAD

GOLDEN TEXT: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."—Rev. 1. 18.

By WARREN L. HOAGLAND, D.D.,

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THIS is the last and most sublime announcement of Christ concerning himself, made in a vision of dazzling, starry splendor. To "the beloved disciple," as he laid his hand upon him, he said with majesty and grace, "Fear not." The words, "I am the first and the last," "I am he that liveth," imply his eternity of being. They remind us of the declaration of Jehovah, "I am that I am." This everliving One proclaims his own death and resurrection, saying, "I became dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore." He makes mention of nothing else connected with his earthly experience.

The risen Christ is the unique power of Christianity. There is nothing like Christ's resurrection in the history of the world. Lazarus simply came back to his former life. Incarnation was not a novel idea in the Orient and was claimed for Buddha, but resurrection was unknown. The Pharisees held the doctrine, but in a gross and material way.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that this doctrine should be a stumbling-block to men. Some have declared, "It is intellectually incredible." The argument for Christian faith need not and cannot be here presented, but some suggestions may be properly offered.

Men are not required to accept what it is not more reasonable to believe than to deny. It is the boast of Christianity that it is a reasonable religion. The appeal is not to fear, or superstition, nor even to an *unreasonable*

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ing faith. But to deny the supernatural is not to escape or lessen difficulties. "The riddle of the universe" is a still greater riddle without a personal God. It is mentally easier, and quite as philosophic, to believe in a "personal Spirit who creates, maintains, and orders all" than to believe that the universe is sufficient unto itself. And this is true whether we accept or reject the doctrine of evolution.

A miracle does not necessarily involve either a contradiction or a suspension of the laws of nature. It may be simply the action of a personal will developing new and unfamiliar effects. What is unnatural to matter may be natural to mind. What is unnatural to men may be natural to God. It is contrary to gravitation for a stone to rise from the ground, but it is natural for a boy to make it rise. "In my country," said the Fiji Islander to the missionary who told him about iron ships, "when iron is put into the water it sinks." What a miracle the modern warship would be to him! Man in his small way is constantly a creator, a miracle worker. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that *God* should raise the dead?" A blatant infidel was asked, "Do you believe in immortality?" He replied, "I do not know, it would be no more strange that man should live again than that he has lived at all."

But it may be said immortality is one thing and resurrection quite another. True, but our essential interest in resurrection is that it assures immortality. We need not be concerned about the manner of it, or the nature of the resurrection body. It is rational to accept the fact without understanding the mode, for on that theory in other things we act every day of our lives. We should be content if we are sure that death does not end all.

Because an event occurs but once, does not make it a break in nature's laws, or incredible. Had only one wireless message ever been sent it would have been no

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more a miracle than now, but it would probably have been so regarded. If resurrections were common they would not be thought more miraculous than birth. But Christ "died once for all" and likewise rose once for all. It is the great event of earth and perhaps of heaven. In significance it ranks above creation. But a universe is not made every hour, nor does a Christ rise from the dead every day.

It is noteworthy that this most astonishing doctrine of Christianity found instant acceptance with the first disciples. Myths, even according to Strauss, must have at least two generations for their development. Christ's resurrection was accepted and announced within forty-eight hours of his death by disciples who were not expecting it. This is their own story, the story of honest men, as acknowledged by all, who unless they had lost their reason must surely have been able to tell when they first began to give their testimony. No increase of the marvelous has since been connected with the name of Jesus.

But our faith in the resurrection of Christ rests not alone on "the testimony of twelve men," or even of the "five hundred who saw him at one time." The disciples were themselves instantly changed from timid men to brave men, from narrow Jewish peasants to men of worldwide views, from believers in a national to believers in a spiritual kingdom, and from faith in a kingly to faith in a suffering Messiah, from common men to heroes of whom the world was not worthy. What Christ's presence and teaching did not do in three years his resurrection wrought in them at a stroke.

Furthermore, Christ is the greatest fact in history. No common theory is adequate to explain his being. He is not simply the greatest man. He is the only one of his kind. No man condescends like him, nor rises so high. None is such a servant or claims such lordship. He is completely master of his circumstances and of himself. He is the humblest and yet makes the proud-

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est claims. He teaches all men to ask forgiveness of God but never asks for himself. He never shows consciousness of any discouragement, or fear of failure. Most marvelous of all, perhaps, he *never falls below his own ideal*, though he claims equality with God. The hardest fight Paul ever had was with his own ideal. At the height of his highest attainment he declares, "I count not myself to have apprehended, but I press toward the mark." Confucius said, "I suppose that in learning I am the equal of other men, but how to attain the character of the perfect man is what I have not yet learned."

All the great and good make the same confession; and we count it an added merit that they are conscious of their partial failure. Christ is the only one to claim that he always realizes his ideal. And men, instead of scoffing at him, revere him all the more and instinctively feel that his claim is justified. Napoleon with his brilliant intellect voices the sentiment of a host of the greatest minds when he exclaims, "I know men, and I know that Jesus Christ is not a man." A multitude of others looking up to him in bewildered amazement, not knowing how to account for him, have yet been so fascinated by him that their feeling has been well expressed by Richard Watson Gilder:

If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave away.

If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!—

while millions have rapturously cried out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Now to speak of the resurrection of a being like Christ does not strike the mind as so incongruous as it would in connection with the name of a Wesley, a Luther, a Paul, or any other man.

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Moreover, Christ's influence in the world's history is just as unique as his character. The only civilization worthy of the name is Christian. There are three words very popular with modern men; they are *progress, science, liberty*. How little there is of them outside the bounds of Christendom! And such phrases as "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," "the upward pressure of humanity," are very misleading. They beguile one into the idea that they represent causes, whereas they express results or processes. When the tide is rising do we explain it by "the upward pressure" of the ocean? Civilization is the triumph of the risen Christ. No other adequate explanation has been given. To claim resurrection for Christ is not like claiming it for any other person in history, for Jesus is entirely unique in his character, claims, way of teaching, and influence in the world.

All the appearances of the risen Jesus, both before and after his ascension, show his continued interest in and sympathy with men. The three heavenly manifestations are especially suggestive. When the dying Stephen saw the heavens open he saw also Christ, not seated but (as Chrysostom long ago suggested) standing with outstretched arms as if eagerly waiting to receive the proto-martyr of his church. Again, Christ's apprehension of Paul was because his heart yearned to send him with the gospel to the Gentiles. So also John saw him walking among the golden candlesticks, that is, among the churches. "He walks there still." And that is the hope of the churches. We talk as if they were organized to bring men to Christ. It is Christ that brings men to the churches.

The risen Christ holds our destiny in his hands, for he has "the keys of death and of Hades" (the unseen, the spirit world). He who has the keys is the master of the castle, and he it is who opens and shuts the door as he pleases. "Because he lives we shall live also." The eternal life he promises is more than the continua-

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tion of our present life. "This life of ours does well enough for a little time; but magnified into an eternity it is simply horrible." Eternal life is a new life of higher quality, and rises at last to glory and honor at God's right hand.

John Addington Symonds once wrote of "The Fall of a Soul" thus:

I sat unsphering Plato ere I slept:
Then thro' my dream the choir of gods was borne,
Swift as the wind and splendid as the morn,
Fronting the night of stars; behind them swept
Tempestuous darkness o'er a drear descent,
Wherein I saw a crowd of charioteers
Urging their giddy steeds with cries and cheers,
To join the choir that aye before them went:
But one there was who fell, with broken ear
And horses swooning down the gulf of gloom;
Heavenward his eyes, though prescient of their doom,
Reflected glory like a falling star,
While with wild hair blown back and listless hands
Ruining he sank toward undiscovered lands.

But whoever believes in Jesus Christ, as the resurrection and the life, in him shall rise, rise into life eternal, beautiful, blessed, and fruitful.

LESSON FOR JUNE 7

JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."—John 20. 28.

BY CYRUS W. McPHERSON, PH.D.,
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THE whole of this chapter is a record of the events immediately following the resurrection of Jesus, and is detailed throughout from the point of view of the disciples. By reason of their intimate relationship to him, they were the most competent to give a vivid and accurate portraiture of the scenes and incidents attending this supreme event in his earthly life.

They had been called and chosen to be his representatives, and their chief function, to the end of their lives, was to witness everywhere to the certainty of his resurrection from the dead. The sublime arch of the Christian system, with all the hopes of humanity, is held together by the certainty of this historic fact.

Only belief, founded upon the bed rock of assured facts and experiences, can win the heart and command the allegiance of men. With simple and delicate precision the disciples recount what the various witnesses saw, beginning with Mary Magdalene, and concluding with the recovery to faith of the incredulous Thomas.

In the separate historic accounts of the resurrection, as given in the Gospels, there may be seen a divine, overruling plan running through them all, giving unity and consistency amid varied details. Each witness recorded the scenes which came before his vision, without the knowledge of the other. This gave variety of view, and furnished cumulative evidence. These separate and distinct details, coming from various wit-

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nesses, fit together like a beautiful piece of mosaic, giving symmetry to the whole account. The accusation of collusion among the disciples in their record of the events is therefore devoid of foundation, and only finds place in irreverent and hostile rationalistic criticism.

The various witnesses of the resurrection present an object lesson of pretty much every type of natural belief which emerges in the experience of men, in the acceptance of the truths of the gospel. The sacred record brings first into the foreground a woman. The love that worships and adores is but faintly conscious of barriers. The sealed tomb, the Roman sentries pacing to and fro, the gloom and mystery of it all, were enough to appall the instinctive timidity of womanhood; but a Holy Being had come into her life, and she was transfigured by the richness and radiance of his own. Here is seen a most fertile soil for the manifestation of simple, unquestioning faith, which springs into fullness of exercise as the familiar voice calls her name, "Mary." Immediately she becomes a witness to the apostles, "that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

The disciples disclose quite a different attitude of mind and heart in relation to the sad event, which had wrought such havoc and dismay in their hopes and expectations. They had abandoned themselves to unbelief, and were returning to their homes. In the midst of their melancholy musings, while on their way to Emmaus, we hear two of them say to the mysterious stranger who had overtaken them, "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." Before leaving them he "opened their eyes, and they knew him," thus manifesting to their senses the certainty of his rising from the dead. The group of disciples, as a whole, were sluggish in their acceptance of the testimony given them, and remained in their unbelief until forced to faith by proof. An event so out of the order of nature, and deeply shrouded in mystery, as the resurrection of

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one from the dead is not easy of belief. The natural presumption from the standpoint of the senses, apart from revelation, is against it. The instinct of immortality, so universal and deeply enshrined in the nature of man, has large inferential value, but is insufficient in proof of its certainty. The analogies in nature are hints which may throw some light on the profound problem of "living again"; but these rays are oblique. Only in believing that "life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel" may there be found a sure ground of confidence by which to stay the soul against all assault, and be at peace.

Thomas occupies a unique place, singular and alone, among the twelve, in his attitude toward accepting the credibility of the resurrection of Jesus. The despairing and hopeless unbelief of all the rest had been overcome by the convincing testimony borne in upon them by those who had seen him, who were with him in the "breaking of bread," who recognized him by the wounds inflicted on the cross, which he now voluntarily retained in his resurrection state as proof that he was the same Jesus whom they saw hanging on the cross. The contrast which stands out so conspicuously in the mental attitude of this disciple from all the others naturally awakens the question, "Why was he so slow to believe?" To recall the occasions, preceding the one now in review, when he is mentioned in the Gospels, will shed some light in answer to this question.

In comparison with Peter, James, and John, Thomas occupies an obscure place among the company of the chosen disciples. Half of them are never heard of again as doing any work for Christ, though doubtless they were faithful in the dissemination of the Gospel. They pass into oblivion so far as we have any knowledge concerning them. The Bible is not a "Hall of Fame" where names may be preserved for the admiration and emulation of succeeding generations. It is rather the record of the benevolent intent and mind of God in

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redemption. Men are but instruments for its accomplishment. Thomas comes into view twice before the resurrection story, and passes out of view afterward. A brief survey of these appearances will acquaint us with certain outstanding traits which are clear indices of his temperament. The difficult process of believing, in this instance, which has been sometimes charged to obstinacy, was:

1. *Temperamental.* It may be safely assumed, from a study of his characteristics, that his mind required the strongest possible evidence, approaching the border line of demonstration, in order to win the fullest assent of his judgment. It was not easy for him to believe when sight and sense rose up in opposition. It was not that he *would* not believe, but *could* not. It was a bias of the *will*, not of the heart and affections. It was a type of nature which exacts of itself certainty, and can only be content in reality. It is slow in believing, but when convinced yields immeasurably of its long-restrained current, bearing upon its way a wealth of devotion enriching every dry and arid waste.

The first incident in the life of Thomas, after his call to the apostolate, appears when Jesus determined to face the dangers that awaited him in Judea on his journey to Bethany. Thomas feared the consequences. He sought to dissuade Jesus from such course, by reminding him of the feeling against him upon the part of the Jews. When he saw that he could not prevail he said unto his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." He looked out upon the undertaking as fraught only with certain disaster, and preferred to have his full share with his Master even unto death. The balancing of probabilities, other than he had feared, had no place in his thoughts. He saw things in shadow. They derived their subdued and somber colorings from the bent of his nature.

The other incident occurs during the Last Supper, when Jesus was endeavoring to comfort his disciples in

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view of his speedy departure, assuring them that he was going to prepare a place for them, and pointing the way thither, when "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" This is the language of a matter-of-fact, incredulous mind. The imaginative and poetic temperament is absent. His was not the type of mind which could take chances, or trust that by a fortuitous combination of circumstances the issue would be a happy one. He would clearly discern the significance of the directions Jesus gave as to the way to the "Father's house," and pursue that way with the zeal and steadfastness of a deathless attachment. These two incidents would seem to demonstrate that the cause of his slowness to believe was inherent in his nature.

2. *Thomas demanded the same proof as the other disciples.* Why Thomas was absent the first Sabbath of the resurrection is not known. It is safe to conjecture that it was characteristic, and harmonizes with our analysis of him. When the disciples told him of Christ's appearance in the midst of them it evoked from him at once the strongest possible affirmation of his doubt, as well as a vivid recollection of the appearance of Jesus when he last saw him lifeless on the cross—"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." The test thus proposed was of the most exacting rationalism, excluding every other line of evidence.

The man of sense was as yet under the dominion of sense. A little patience and forbearance must be introduced in the presence of this demand. Such overwhelming disaster and confusion had been wrought in the life of Thomas by this event—so utterly empty had his heart become—that it will require treatment suitable to its present mood and constitution. Such a test shades toward the picturesque, if not the revolting; but it is hardly probable that it was exacted when the oppor-

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tunity was presented. The disciples had been favored with such incontestable proof as the sight of the "nail print and spear thrust" of Jesus, and nothing less would meet the demand of his skepticism. Notice also—

3. *The consideration of Jesus to Thomas.* Eight days later the disciples are together again, perhaps anticipating another appearance of Jesus among them. It is the second Christian Sabbath. Suddenly, as if for no other purpose than to overcome the disbelief of Thomas, he appeared and addressed him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." The condescension of Jesus for the purpose of winning to faith, and of the continuation of his apostolate, now so imperiled, stands out in bold relief in this sublime proffer. It is a rare instance, in the history of God's dealings with a soul, when such exactions are complied with, and can form no precedent as a ground for persistent unbelief. The saving truths of the gospel are to be "received by faith, not by sight." They do not admit of demonstration, as a problem of mathematics. Their "demonstration" becomes apparent in the renewed and changed lives that gladly surrender to their authority. Notice—

4. *The final outcome of his unbelief.* The daring test proposed by this disciple as alone sufficient, and complied with on the part of Jesus, immediately brings forth the exclamation, "My Lord and my God!" Swiftly and completely the change is wrought. The "doubting" Thomas becomes the "believing" Thomas. The empty spaces of his life have been filled to overflowing. He pours out his soul in confession and faith surpassing all the other disciples. The sequel to his unbelief, as shown in his triumphant confession, is an evidence that his slowness to believe was not of the heart, but of the head. When the gloom and depression had lifted from his spirit, he got a view of his Master and Lord unsurpassed by any of his fellow disciples.

LESSON FOR JUNE 14

THE RISEN CHRIST BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—Matt. 28. 20.

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Of the many provisions God has made for humanity, and the innumerable promises given to us, none mean more than the gift of his Son and the promise of that divine Son to be ever present with us; as the original has it in the text, "all the days." This is an assurance primarily given to the commissioned disciples that his presence should be perpetual, in the prison as well as in the pulpit; but every believer, facing the difficulties of life and the foes of sin, can claim the same promise.

A great man's personality alone is an inspiration to all with whom it comes in contact. It was President Garfield who said that Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other constituted a college. It was a rich privilege to some of us a quarter of a century ago to sit at the feet of such men as Strong, Miley, Crooks, and Upham. They made a life impression upon us. It was not the school of Socrates, for he never founded one, but the power of his great personality that influenced Plato to throw all his verses into the fire and consecrate his great intellect to the study of philosophy. The one whose perpetual and eternal presence is here promised is the Wonderful, the Mighty God. He has no peer. We speak of Frederick the Great, of Alexander the Great, and of Peter the Great, but there is only one Christ whose companionship is valuable above all others.

The promise is only an assurance of the continuation

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of that presence which had been with men from the beginning of time. Christ, coeternal with the Father, the representative of the Trinity, had visited this world many times before he came as the Babe of Bethlehem or the incarnated Saviour of the world. In fact, he made this world and has never left it. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Life is not dependent upon any one form of existence. The material is only secondary and for the convenience of the spiritual. Birds have wings to support them in the air, the fish have fins to swim far beneath the surface of the water, as well as men have feet with which to walk on earth. We will get along without physical bodies in heaven better than we do with them here. Christ's existence did not consist in his incarnation. That simply brought him into new relations with men; hence John says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," but the same writer declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."

"The angel of God," or "the angel of Jehovah," in the Old Testament, was the manifestation of God himself in the person of his Son who is the Revealer of God, which manifestation was but the foreshadowing of the incarnation. He was no stranger to Abraham. He went all the way with that "friend of God" when he supposed the sacrifice of his only son was at the end of the journey, and at the supreme moment cried to the obedient father, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." He was with Jacob at Bethel when he lay down beneath the stars between a threatening enemy and a strange land. He held the lion's jaws tight when the life of Daniel was at stake. Even a pagan king is a witness to his presence. As he anxiously approached the fiery furnace after the three Hebrew children had been cast in, Nebuchadnezzar inquired, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" When answered in the affirmative he said, "Lo, I see four men

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loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." The three were loose and unhurt because the fourth was there, and that personage was One whose promise we have in the text.

Michah speaks to Bethlehem and says, "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of *old*, from everlasting." So Christ's promised presence is only a re-assurance of what has been from the beginning. That presence meant that the ministry of the disciples could not fail; that no difficulties were insurmountable. Christ was to be to them more than all that could be against them.

When Christ commissioned the twelve he gave them power and authority over the devil. They were to be masters in their work. When he sent forth the seventy he clothed them with the same power and placed in their hands the kingdom of God. Their report upon returning was, "Even the devils were subject unto us through thy name." He confirmed their report by declaring, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," indicating that his eyes had been upon them and that his personal presence had been their supernatural power. Now, in the interim between the resurrection and his ascension, he gives them a broader field in that they are to go to the uttermost parts of the earth teaching all nations; and that commission is again prefaced with the declaration that all power was given to him in heaven and earth. No man can finally fail who is commissioned by Christ and clothed with that power which his presence means. He has done the hardest things. That which puzzled the greatest men was no problem to him. With him all things were possible. He only had to speak the word and the sea was calmed or the dead came forth. He is exerting the same power in the world to-day. He has still the same credentials that he had when Nicodemus recognized him

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as a teacher from God because of the manifest power which he possessed. In dark Africa as well as in enlightened America we may everywhere see the touch of his hand. He is changing the face of this old world and making the desert blossom as a rose. His power is turning barbarism into civilization and converting cannibals into saints. He is revolutionizing thought, purifying literature and art, extending civilization, elevating womanhood, lifting man to God, and making the whole world more like it was before sin intruded. When Isaiah looked through the prophetic telescope and saw what his presence would do when he was more fully revealed he said, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." We are on winning ground, as Christianity has always been, when we appropriate this promise of Him at whose presence the devils tremble and are overthrown. Notwithstanding all the oppositions that faced the apostle he declared, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Power was never at a greater premium than to-day. The world is in constant search of it. The magnificent Niagara is no longer simply a wonder of admiration, but is converted into power to serve the industries of the world. The man is in demand who is ingenious enough to invent or discover power. Life in any form represents the highest degree of power. Even in the vegetable world its power is almost beyond estimate; in the spiritual world it means more. A short time ago, in an agricultural college in one of our Eastern states, a test of the power of life was made by harnessing an ordinary squash in such a way that the degree of pressure could be measured. At first the pressure was slight, then it increased to fifty, then to sixty, then to one hundred, finally to five thousand pounds to the square inch, when the harness broke. Spiritual power

THE RISEN CHRIST BY THE SEA

in the religious world is a far greater force because it is the life of the omnipotent God. Hence Christianity is the embodiment of the divine personal power of Christ which is destined to overcome the forces of darkness. In the darkest hour, when things seem the most adverse, we need only to trust in Christ and go forward. His promise is sure to hold good. His presence is promised to the individual. He is with every Christian as though there were no other person in the world. Christ deals with us not collectively, but individually. He reminded the disciples that even the hairs of their head were numbered.

Such a presence also means comfort to the sorrowing ones. The disciples were to have their troubles. He tells them they were to go forth as lambs among wolves, but promises them that he will not leave them comfortless. Christianity has moved beyond the day of martyrdom, but this world still has its trouble. We never know what contingencies overhang our heads, or when a thunderbolt is to drop out of a clear sky, but his presence is an antidote for all ills. Paul outlines the evils that confronted the disciples in his days, but adds, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." This he proved to the world in the Philippian jail when at the midnight hour, suffering an unjust punishment, he sang with Silas the praises of God. Christ said to his followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but I have overcome the world." "Your sorrows shall be turned into joy." Follow the disciples to that dark hour when the clouds hung low over them and all hope seemed to have vanished in the crucifixion of their Lord; two of them proceeded homeward with heavy hearts, but soon to forget their sorrows and disappointments, for their declaration at the end of the journey was, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?" Who was he who had fallen in with them? The One who says, "I am with you always." There is no

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day so dark but what the presence of Jesus can brighten, nor any night so long but what his presence can shorten.

His presence also means the richest fellowship to them whose hearts are in accord with that divine life. No man is lonely with whom Christ lives. A few years ago it was my pleasure to visit an old lady who lived in the pines of New Jersey, whose home was entirely surrounded by the dense wild forest, and often for days and nights she saw no human being. When I entered her door I inquired of her if she lived all alone. Her answer was, "Yes, alone, but not alone; I never wake in the still hours of the night but what I realize the presence and the delightful communion of my blessed Saviour." Such a presence makes a palace of a prison and a paradise of a wilderness. The presence of the Christ is greater than all our environments, for he said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full." Who can appreciate fully the companionship of such a Friend who is ever with us?—a companionship more to be desired than the favor of any earthly potentate and as rich as heaven itself.

LESSON FOR JUNE 21

REVIEW: THE BASIS AND RESULT OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

GOLDEN TEXT: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."—John 20. 31.

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IN the gospel of John we find a personal contribution to that body of sacred writings we call the Holy Scriptures which furnishes us with the basis and result of Christian belief. This is expressed in the text as belief in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, and eternal life through him as a result of faith.

The text also suggests what to look for in the study of this gospel, for, says John, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book." But what is written has a purpose, and that we find running throughout the entire work—the things that Jesus both did and spoke which would furnish the inquirer with a basis for faith in him as the Son of God, the Messiah promised and looked for, and also satisfy the soul's yearning for life eternal, which can be had only as the gift of God through faith in his Son, who is here declared to be both the source and the giver of life.

The record shows how this belief in him grew in importance; at first a few individuals believed on him—John the Baptist and one or two of his disciples, a Samaritan woman, and the crowd in the city who heard her story; later on a ruler of the Jews, a nobleman, and the common people, many rulers in secret for fear of the Jews, certain Greeks at the Passover, and the

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multitudes that accompany him on his triumphal entry, and hail him as King until the chief priests were led to declare, "The world is gone after him."

The record of miracle and deed is also progressive as a basis of faith in his divine power and sonship. It is prefaced by the statement that all things were made by him, and in him was life, and the life was the light of men. Water is turned into wine, and his disciples believed on him; as a champion of the common people he cleansed the temple, driving out the thieves and usurpers of the court of the Gentiles, declaring it had been decreed to be a house of prayer for all the nations; he heals the nobleman's son of a severe illness, and releases from infirmity the cripple at the pool of Bethesda; he feeds the multitudes with bread; he gives sight to the blind beggar, raises Lazarus from the dead, and comforts the mourner by teaching the lesson of life eternal; and, in the supreme hour of his earthly mission, breaks the bars of the tomb and comes forth to assure mortal men of a resurrection, and of a living Saviour and Lord. This is the record, told in such simple language, with such natural setting in the common life of the people, that one is forced to believe that this was surely the Son of God, and that he alone has solved the mystery of death, by teaching us the lesson of life eternal.

The words attributed to Jesus in this gospel strengthen still further the faith of the reader who has followed the record of those who believed on him and of the deeds he performed. To quote some of his words: "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." "I am the bread of life." "I give unto them eternal life." "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." "For God so loved the world, that

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he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Because I live ye shall live also." "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself." These and many like passages, given from John's testimony as the words of Jesus himself, strengthen the reader's faith in him as the source and giver of life.

This text suggests also the method for meeting the attacks of the agnosticism of the age and of promoting Christian belief. In the first place, it is the method of witness-bearing as opposed to the controversial method. Though agnosticism was aggressive in its attack upon the two great truths here championed—the Messiahship of Jesus and the life eternal—yet John does not seem to intimate the fact to his readers, so positive is his method of stating the facts he knows about Jesus and his work. Indeed, the real progress of Christianity has ever been achieved by the same method. The personal witness-bearer, the positive preaching and ministry through sermons, writings, and personal service, has produced more results in Christian belief than all the ages of controversy.

This method is effective also because it is based upon the fundamental law of all scientific progress—men tell what they know and other men achieve greater things through their testimony because of this law of advantage.

It also rests upon the great sociological law of imitation. Each new believer becomes a new center of imitation, and so a geometrical ratio of progress is the result; and while truth by this very law is often refracted or adumbrated by the media through which it passes, yet the written gospel furnishes a constant to which we may come for correction, so that this refraction is reduced to a minimum.

In the great evangelical waves of progress in Chris-

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tian history this method of personal witnessing to the truth has always been the one employed—sometimes as though rediscovered. The missionary fields furnish us the best examples of progress toward church unity and federation, because it is in the fields of service for man, and not in the fields of controversy, that a brotherly sympathy and helpfulness are developed.

The second method suggested by the text is that of the ministry of personality. John was telling about a Person who had lived and wrought, and had made an impression upon him and others, not by preaching a philosophy, or expounding a theory, but by living a life and doing the things that made his message a reality.

Agnosticism is speechless in the presence of the man who has been cured of disease, or raised from his life-long decrepitude, or given sight to his eyes blind from birth, or raised from the tomb after four days of burial. One visit to a rescue mission in the presence of redeemed sinners with a living testimony will do more to dispel doubt in the divinity of Jesus and the life eternal than a week of argument, or volumes on the virgin birth and the resurrection of the body of our Lord. It is the simplicity of this method, the human elements of the story of John, that win us to faith in the message and the man Christ Jesus. On every page of this gospel record one meets with living persons and the person of Jesus Christ in the natural conditions and relations in which men are found to-day and in every age, and the things that troubled them are met and cleared up by Jesus in such a simple way that one is not surprised at all when the writer states the fact that belief in him followed as a natural result in the minds of those who were in real search for truth and life.

Not only do we discover in the text the truth that belief is based upon testimony, but we also discover the truth that belief is the basis of life, or, in other words, that life is the resultant of Christian belief—

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“and believing ye might have life through his name.” Life is not peddled out in samples to the doubting and indifferent for trial. Nowhere in this gospel do we find that anybody had such a chance under Jesus’s teaching. In every case where life was quickened, restored, or promised, faith in him as the Son of God was conditioned and must be evident. John the Baptist and his disciples believed because they were in earnest search for Him who was to come. Nicodemus was given that great lesson of spiritual truth because he was an earnest seeker and believed. The nobleman’s son was healed because his father had faith and his need was real. The blind man received his sight because he had faith enough to go wash in the pool of Siloam in response to Jesus’s treatment and command. Lazarus was raised because Martha and Mary believed in Jesus’s power—“Hadst thou been here my brother had not died”—and in the resurrection of which he had no doubt taught them. The multitudes were fed with the loaves and fishes because they were in their search for truth like sheep without a shepherd. Their condition was a prayer, their eagerness to hear him until the day was far spent was the equivalent of belief. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life.” It is useless to try to prove to the doubter the fact of eternal life without first, by a ministry of personality, bearing testimony of Him who alone is able to give it.

So we learn here Jesus’s methods, and we must still teach men that belief is necessary to life or that life is the resultant of Christian belief.

Again, we observe that not only is eternal life to be had through his name as a resultant of faith, but also that Jesus is the source as well as the giver of life. John meets the agnostic in the introduction to his gospel with the statement that Jesus was in the beginning God, and all things were created by him, and in him was life and the life was the light of men; that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, so that we

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might behold his glory and our eyes might see and our hands handle the incarnate truth. This eternal source and giver of life is the same Jesus who in the presence of suffering and anxious men healed them and expelled their doubts by manifesting his power and giving them the lessons of eternal life. He is the same Person who, having brought the beloved dead back to life, gives the promise of eternal life to all who believe on him, and the deed makes credible the word, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."

So in the presence of human sorrow, when the mystery of death seems to mortals yet unsolved, we turn to this gospel record of Him who is both the source and giver of life, and, believing, we too may have life through his name. We are also comforted with the thought that our departed are not really dead but are living with him in the place prepared in the Father's house, and we are also assured that if we believe the inspired testimony we too may have life through his name.

In conclusion, then, we have here in the text a key to the study of the Gospel of John. The apostle leads us to infer that not all that Jesus did, and said, and was, could be written, or should be written, but the things that were written were recorded that all who read and hear may believe, and, believing, may have life through his name.

This is the lesson of the text and the essence of John's gospel: The preaching of a man, the belief of a soul, the life of God eternal given on the merit and for the sake of the Incarnate Son, who in heaven is our advocate as well as our earthly Saviour and Lord. We are to bear witness; those who hear are to believe; Jesus will give them life eternal.

LESSON FOR JUNE 28

TEMPERANCE LESSON: THE SPIRIT-FILLED
MAN

GOLDEN TEXT: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."—Eph. 5. 18.

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IF Paul delighted in startling antithesis, this is a master stroke, "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." Two clauses with apparently no relation, joined arbitrarily in the same sentence—so it would seem. Two extremes: drunk with wine—filled with the Spirit; animal—spiritual; the intoxication of liquor—the inspiration of the Spirit.

The psychology is Pauline. This is the same discerning hand that wrote the pregnant passage in Romans, seventh chapter, on the battle of the I's. The apostle is here appealing to man with his Jekyll-Hyde nature, appealing from the animal to the spiritual. He recognizes a principle in human nature—that it seeks stimulus; and this he would not subdue, but direct. That in mankind, he says, which attempts to be satisfied with wine can be satisfied only with the Spirit of God. Do not try to find gratification in what ministers to the animal life: it simply brutalizes. Only in God can you find true satisfaction.

What is this restlessness that characterizes man, this great hunger, this instinctive craving for excitement? The animal is content with food, warmth, sleep; it is never guilty of physical excess. But in man you find a new note. He uses and stimulates his senses to satisfy a restless spirit within seeking discharge along some channel of communication with pleasure. Maeterlinck tells us in *The Bee* about the "spirit of the hive."

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Such he calls that something which supplies the place of reason in the parliament of the bee community. And as you read you have suggestions of the supernatural, a power working among the bees. That spirit to me spells God. And so in man there is this spirit, this restlessness; it is a suggestion of man's kinship with Deity. The important question is, on which plane shall it discharge itself, on the lower or the higher, the animal or the spiritual?

The discharge is too frequently through the animal, and becomes a vain attempt to satisfy through the sensuous. For many life is an irksome monotony; feeling its oppressive weight they seek relief that they may for a time forget it. This explains the cruel hold of alcohol. It is a stimulus that lifts the spirit above the tasks and dreary hard conditions which make up the daily life of multitudes. Through this mighty magician, workman and drudge can leave fretted nerves and aching limbs and dull care behind, and taste, if only for a feverish moment, the joy of bounding life. All classes are susceptible. The idle drink to relieve the ennui of existence, the young from love of excitement, the aged and debilitated to get new tone to their system; men of coarse nature because incapable of higher pleasures, men of fine sensibility because it is a source of inspiration to the intellect, and men of social tendencies because it helps good fellowship.

But wine here is simply typical. It stands in general for appetite and desire gone wrong. Much of the evil of life is the abuse or perversion of the good, an instinct, an appetite discharging itself in the lower instead of the higher plane. Acquisitiveness is very essential to life and society. But abuse it, and it becomes greed, covetousness, envy, with all the evils incident to wealth and poverty. Lust or impurity is but the perversion of the holiest of instincts—appetite gone wrong.

Other kinds of intoxication readily suggest themselves. Social life, the pursuit of pleasure, political

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honors, business success, indiscriminate reading—these may all become phases of sensuous intoxication when appetite seeks satisfaction in that which corrupts. They frequently are only opiates. The pain is still there, a hungry, gnawing pain, a serpent that coils around the heart and feeds upon it, and from time to time the cruel fang is felt.

Such pleasure-seeking is simply an endless anticipation. The novel-reader hurries from page to page as though expecting when the plot is fully unraveled and the story told that some desirable end shall have been gained. But the end is vacuity, a sense of being flung back by the last sentence upon one's own empty self. You attend the play, watch the scenes, follow the development of the plot with sympathies all enlisted, waiting for the denouement that shall vindicate all, and you anticipate some satisfaction: the curtain falls, the lights are out—you come back into life's reality with hunger still unappeased. You build a house with generous care, fill it with statuary, manuscripts, tapestries, paintings—only to find a moment when it ceases to charm you, and you look at it with cold and indifferent eyes. Something is wanting. The secret of life escapes you; you seem to be feeding on ashes. In every instance you will find the mind not resting in the present moment, but pressing out of it toward something beyond. And the something beyond is never reached.

These false attempts have been the ruin of countless lives. "Drunk with wine, wherein is excess": debauched, blackened, charred, burned-out hulks of once finely appointed vessels are these, vainly spending their all and stoking the fires of their appetite with God-given equipment in the useless endeavor to reach an elusive and unreal harbor.

Now Paul teaches that man's satisfaction is in God only. He believed that man was not meant to be debauched by sin. He saw in him latent possibilities,

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songs unsung, gold undigged, forces simply waiting for seizure by proper influences to be turned in the right direction. Just as the farmer sees waving grain where now is an unproductive field, or the architect looking over a city smoking in ruins sees it again rising in beauty and strength, so Paul saw in man great possibilities when filled with the Spirit of God. There are things which men can do and depths they can descend to that make one ashamed of his kind. And there are other things, noble, inspired things, to their credit which make us proud to belong to the race. They are glimpses of man's large capacity—the divine in him needing direction or full control.

This capacity Paul attempts to hold up before the Ephesian Christians, and exhorts them not to throw away their lives, but to surrender themselves to the will of God. He advocates something to take the place of the wine—not abstinence, but substitution: not a house to let, swept and garnished, yet empty—a ready prey to old habits temporarily dispossessed; rather one filled with the Spirit, God-possessed—a Spirit-filled life.

The wise mother understands this principle in child training. Her boy is cruel to animals. She does not reiterate, "Now don't," but puts into his hand *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag*. In another household is a lad who enjoys manual work but cares not for reading. One mother would compel him to sit in a hard chair and not once for an hour raise his eyes from the chance book forced into his unwilling hand. The Pauline mother fills the swept and empty house by giving him *The American Boy's Handy Book*. Yet a third youth has a mania for collecting. His room is littered with "stuff," and his mother, being a tidy housewife to whom neatness is more than boys, in despair throws the accumulation out the window. If, however, she have the Pauline insight she will buy him a cabinet and turn his instinct in the direction of butterflies, stamps, autographs, coins, or crystals. It is overcoming evil with

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good. It is the principle of substitution—"not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit." Coffeehouses have competed successfully with the saloon, while the subway tavern, baptized with prayer and doxology, fails.

In the realm of the personal religious life we call this the new birth—we are born of the Spirit, we are a new creation, the old life is gone. This means hope for all, no matter how confirmed in habits or how old in sin, how drunk with wine and debauched—we may be filled with the Spirit. Luther in one of his despondent moments tells us that "You must take men as they are; you cannot change their natures." If that be true there is hope for none; but Jesus says it is not true. "You must be born again"—must because you can.

Did you ever reflect on Jesus's association with sinful men and women of his time, and what it signified? The worst men make the best. They are simply strong natures misdirected. Jesus healed Legion. Had he been a little nature he could not have accommodated a legion of devils; and by so much as a man is diabolized may he be deified. From Mary Magdalene Jesus cast out seven devils. What a noble spirit she became! When the woman anointed Jesus at the house of Simon, all the disdainful Pharisee saw was the sinner; beneath all Jesus saw the woman. So Augustine, Bunyan, John B. Gough, Francis Murphy, S. H. Hadley, were men whose strong natures, once debauched but later Spirit-filled, bore convincing witness to the transforming power of the grace of God.

It is a significant fact that on the day of Pentecost the disciples were charged with drunkenness, so similar in some respects is spiritual intoxication to spirit intoxication. I well remember the testimony of a member of the Bowery Mission at a meeting one night in the church of which I am pastor. Modestly but without reservation young Leary told the story of his life, all sins he had tried, all excesses he had been guilty of. And then in a voice vibrant with emotion, while the

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large audience thrilled to the heart was rapt in the transport of his spirit, he exclaimed, "O, I know what it is to be drunk with wine, and I know what it is to be drunk with the Spirit, and to the joy of this intoxication there is nothing to compare! I thought there was joy before, but I was trying to forget."

So it is. Spiritual intoxication brings joy, "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." It also brings gratitude, "giving thanks always for all things." It brings faith, hope, courage. Paul could do anything through Christ strengthening him. Nothing could withstand the charge of Cromwell's Ironsides.

The magic of liquor is that it brings forgetfulness; it makes men forget their troubles for a time. And this is the boon to the Spirit-filled man when the strong wine of God's consolations is poured into his soul; toil and care are forgotten, sickness and trouble are borne so that he can glory in tribulation and laugh in the face of death.

Deep calleth unto deep, patient, persistent: "Be not drunk with wine—be filled with the Spirit." It is a call to man to enter into his high heritage, to find the fullness of his life; for we are complete in Him.

God's greatness around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness his rest.

For all who are living small or sordid lives, with powers unused or abused, with instincts crying for the light, a larger life is possible. Weary, sinning, dissatisfied, groping, spending our labor for that which satisfieth not, there comes to everyone living on these lower levels this trumpet call of Paul, and with it the voice of the would-be Guest: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

LESSON FOR JULY 5

ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING

GOLDEN TEXT: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice."—Prov. 8. 15.

By ROBERT W. ROGERS, D.D., LL.D.,
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MANY and varied are the voices which speak with commanding tone in the Old Testament: the prophet on the streets of Bethel or of Jerusalem denouncing a people's sin, enforcing an ethical imperative, threatening a divine condemnation; the priest explaining the divine direction, performing the splendid and moving acts of the great cultus, urging upon unwilling minds the peril of sin and expounding the way of its atonement; the wise man reasoning and arguing and pleading with men, seeking to bring them out of sloth into industry, out of industry into frugality, out of frugality into generosity, out of generosity into love of the neighbor and love of God.

And varied as are the voices, so also varied are the forms of their several messages. The prophet is content to thunder out his "Thus saith the Lord." He will not argue the cause of righteousness, he will not demonstrate by any attempted rational process the being or the character of God. He assumes God, and God's abiding interest in men. He knows God, knows his will concerning man, and is concerned only to declare it, prefaced always with that insistent refrain, "Thus saith the Lord." Men must hear him. They refuse only at their peril. Let them turn from their sins and live. Why? The only answer is that mighty swelling chorus rising from the lips of every prophet, "Thus saith the Lord." The priest has no such slogan.

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His message is an act and not a word. He has his ceremonies, and men must crowd about him and look on as he sacrifices the victims, as he performs the ablutions and changes his garments. Let men take heed, he seems to say, let them see how serious a business sin is, that it should require lifeblood for its washing away. But the wise man, the third class of Israel's teachers, he has no slogan, and he has no ceremonial act. His is the still small voice of reason. His business is it to argue with men, to arouse their interest in the world and its works, to quicken and rivet attention by a skillful and aptly turned phrase:

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?
There is more hope of a fool than of him,—

and then to drive home into memory and conscience some message of plain living and high thinking. When he has achieved this much he must go on to lead his pupil upward toward that life which must find its full content and comfort only in God.

But if these three classes of God's messengers to Israel differ in voice and in the form of their messages, so also do they differ entirely in the company whom they would influence. The prophet has his hearers, a crowd of listeners eager to hear what he may have to say for God, in a tremor of excitement as his "Thus saith the Lord" is followed with a passionate appeal, "Seek good, and not evil." The priest has his throng, not of listeners, but of men intent to see, leaning forward, craning from side to side as his solemn ceremony leads them onward toward the great thoughts of God's abhorrence of sin, of God's holiness and purity. But the wise man, on the other hand, has only one hearer in much of his teaching. He may indeed hurl his stinging couplet amid the crowd on the street corner, or in the market place, but his true place is by the side of one hearer persuading and reasoning and arguing.

What a contrast there is between these three men,

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the prophet, the priest, and the wise man! and the whole of it is summed up in these words of Jeremiah: "The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet." It is all there in that one sentence—the prophet with his *word* of the Lord, the priest with his law and his ceremonies, and the wise man with his counsel, his advice, his argument.

In the words of this text it is the voice not of priest or of prophet that rings in our ear: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice." That is the voice of the wise man. He claims the right to show kings how to reign and princes how to decree justice. The whole realm of political philosophy is his province. He will leave to the prophet to discourse of righteousness, he will not invade the priest's court of ceremonial and of atonement. Nay, he is proud of his limitations in these respects, but he boldly advances to claim for his field all the rest. He begins with his practical teaching of everyday ethics, he advances into the higher social order, and here he is declaring in no uncertain sound that kings and princes would do well to heed his counsel. Not even the prophets rise to such heights of literary power as do these wise men. The Book of Job is still, when judged by any standard, the greatest piece of pure literature in the Old Testament. And this text, these fine clean-cut words, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice," they belong to a passage of wonderful beauty and charm. They are not a part of those sparkling and incisive couplets which belong to the sections of the book ascribed to Solomon and his many successors in the sphere of wisdom. They are a part of the great glowing, not to say passionate, introduction to the Book of Proverbs, in which Wisdom is personified, almost glorified and deified. It is this personified Wisdom that speaks to us, that makes this great claim to direct kings and princes.

And now let us come to a closer grip with the words

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and their content. What is it, indeed, that Wisdom, in making this claim, looks back upon in the history of men?

Kingship is an ancient institution indeed, but the discoveries of the last decade seem to have brought us appreciably nearer its beginnings among the Semitic people to whom Israel belongs. The word for "king," which ramifies through nearly all the Semitic languages, what does it mean?—what is its original meaning? I should not like to be dogmatic about it, but it seems to me fairly well made out that it originally meant "to advise." If this be true, then the king was the "adviser," the "man who gives good counsel." It looks as though the basis of kingship among the earliest Semites was not prowess, not strength to break down and overthrow, but that he who gave the wisest counsel in the hour of trial and doubt was made king. That gives kingship an intellectual and moral basis, far superior to the basis of prowess.

But if this be true in general, and in the beginning among the Semites, it must be admitted that the case was altered in Israel. It had become a matter very largely of prowess. The people whom Gideon had delivered were determined to make him king, not because of his force of mind, but primarily because he could lead men to victory in a bit of hard fighting. But to this statement there is this little deduction to make, that others of the judges or dictators like Gideon were not merely warriors, but men that gave decisions to people who were at odds on puzzling difficulties.

The kings of Israel, as kings, may be said to have their beginning in Saul. To that choice this word of the wise men of Israel really looks back. It is a fine story that has come down to us in the eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and it is finely told. What a stately figure Samuel himself is! Old indeed, burdened with the weight of years of service as a prophet, as a judge, nay, almost as a king. And on the other

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side the company of the elders, anxious to avoid the rule of the grand old man's sons, and eager to add to Israel a certain note of distinction and splendor which a king would bring. The picture is big and broad enough to awaken interest, but the words that accompany it make its impression all the greater. Samuel warns them solemnly of the dangers of the office of kingship. Listen to his words: "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties."

There is the picture, and there are the words of Samuel. And just as he had wisely foreseen, so did it fall out in the issue. The kings of Israel forsook the old tradition that had come down out of ancient days. They ceased to be advisers and men of counsel. They became men of war, and the conquests of men's minds were left to other peoples while they prostituted such powers as they possessed to the conquest of their bodies, to the shedding of blood, and to the plunder of their possessions. The little folk of Israel, well seated to spread abroad the things of the spirit, began to build up a kingdom of blood.

Upon that history this wise man, whose words are in our ears, is looking back. It is a sorry history, and his spirit craves a day in which a better king and a fairer prince shall dispense justice and judgment. He craves for them wisdom. Let them seek that, and they shall really reign and truly decree justice.

It was not to be. The little kingdoms divided their forces, and wearily beat their way down the centuries until at last Nebuchadrezzar broke their little power into pieces and set up the mighty Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian empire upon the ruins. Such a chaotic and ruinous end as that would have ended also the national life of any other people. But Israel survived it. Israel

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came out of the captivity which followed, and under Zerubbabel began to build a more spiritual kingdom, though centered too strongly in an elaborate legalistic system. Yet even that legalism could not destroy the abounding life of the Jewish people. Nay, it should continue to exist, until a wonderful day should dawn—a day such as no human eyes had ever looked upon before, a day toward which the prophets had strained their eyes through the centuries.

It came at last, and into Jerusalem there rode a King “seated upon an ass,” and the fickle multitude spread branches at his feet. Here at last was Israel’s true King. Here at last was a King who not only depended upon wisdom, nay, who was wisdom itself. The wise man of Israel who made a great claim had not indeed foreseen his day, as had the prophets. But when the day did come, lo! He was more glorious far than the prophets had dreamed, and wiser than all the sons of men. The kingdom of Israel had indeed passed away, but the kingdom of heaven is, in Him, to begin its beneficent and never ending sway.

Many a king has risen and flourished and fallen since that day. But His rule abides, and his dominion extends with every setting sun, and his wisdom and love and peace shall have the victory. Well indeed may he take upon his risen lips the wise man’s words and pronounce them again with a new and fuller meaning: “By me kings reign, and princes decree justice”—for without the acknowledgment of his true overlordship there is no king whose kingdom shall endure.

LESSON FOR JULY 12

SAUL CHOSEN KING

GOLDEN TEXT: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."—2 Sam. 23. 3.

BY HARRY SHELDON,
PASTOR METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
FISHKILL-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK

THERE is great attractiveness in power. Men have always been seeking it in some form, and are seeking it still. The scientific man is ever striving to discover latent sources of power and to harness it to the growing needs of men. He realizes that the world itself is girdled with power as yet undiscovered. The politician is always desiring influence over men. But among all these various expressions of power, that which is an essential of all life, is rulership. In some form it has always existed in the world and it always will. Pages of history tell us of its power for good or ill, according to the character and ideals of the ruler. Some rulers have been deified; others have been universally condemned. A beautiful suggestion as to the essential characteristics of all true rulers is found in the suggestion of Jethro to his famous son-in-law, Moses, as recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus. Here Moses, the matchless giver of the great moral law, is seen openly breaking physical laws, and innocently spreading discontent among the people. Jethro declares that this method of sole rulership will ruin himself and also the people. He said, "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." Here is one of the most faithful portrayals of the ideal ruler found in Old

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Testament Scriptures, and one noticeable thing about it is that the same qualifications are demanded for rulers of tens as are demanded for rulers of thousands.

There were good rulers and bad rulers in biblical days, as there are now. Pontius Pilate was a governor, so also was Felix. But the rulers were not all bad. Obadiah in the reign of Ahab when there was a famine in Samaria, was a man who "feared the Lord greatly." Nehemiah when he was made governor of Judah, found that his predecessors had grown fat on the spoils of office. They had taken from the people bread and wine and money. Even the servants of the royal household had oppressed the people. Nehemiah did away with these abuses, reformed the practices, and also amended the usury rates. Usury had been the universal custom. Nehemiah made it his business to relieve the oppressed of the kingdom. He was just, administering in the fear of Jehovah. The Book of Genesis, a masterpiece of historical composition, unequalled for its simplicity, its touching pathos, its dramatic power and its sustained interest, has the portrait of an ideal ruler, one Joseph by name. The preëminence of this man is that of a prophet. Israel had known many greater seers; nor is it that of a reformer, or scholar, or warrior. He came to the governorship when a young man of thirty. But what of that? At thirty Webster was the peer of any man in the Senate. Henry Clay was in that body at twenty-nine, contrary to the Constitution. Napoleon at thirty was not only an illustrious general but one of the great lawgivers of the world. Joseph was prime minister of Egypt at thirty, and for fifty years ruled in equity and righteousness. You speak of men of destiny, men who somehow come to their inheritance like Lincoln, you scarcely know how. At a bound almost Joseph stepped into the responsible position which he so long filled with such distinction. Saul was made king because the people desired it.

In various ways men rise to rulership over others.

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Some do this by the mere force of character. Many have qualities that command, and by a strange combination of vices and virtues hold almost undisputed power over men. Some by virtue of immense wealth are able to control the destinies of others and to determine almost at will the success or failure of gigantic enterprises. Others by accidents of birth are brought into high and responsible positions of power and influence. Russians and Spaniards alike are rejoicing in heirs apparent to their respective thrones. How much depends upon the character of these infant kings who in time will hold in their power the destinies of their respective peoples! Whether this power of rulership will be one of joy or of sorrow is dependent largely upon the ideals of those exercising it. If they believe the power is of their own making and that they can exercise it as they will, the outcome can easily be foretold. But the Golden Text in this lesson declares that one attribute must be that a man be just. That well-known expression of President Roosevelt, "a square deal," contains in familiar form what is the ideal before many true men in the exercise of power. It does not mean giving to every man alike, but to each man the fullest and best possible opportunities for a development and use of all his powers. Yet even justice when standing alone is not a complete expression of this exercise of power. In Shakespeare's inimitable play "The Merchant of Venice" pure justice as embodied in Shylock's awful demand seems almost as repulsive to us as certain refined forms of injustice. Yet it is fundamental in all the relations of men, and the exercise of power calls for the establishment of just relations.

But the second part of the text introduces another idea which turns men's thoughts to God. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Here we see that power must be looked upon from a divine point of view. Ruling in the fear of God carries with it an ethical consideration in the use of power

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which should never be absent from the minds of rulers in any sphere. Power belongeth unto God. This gift is to be exercised according to his purposes and in no other way. Paul would require servants to be obedient to their masters, but at the same time he would have masters consider their relations to God, and to rule over those under them as they would have God rule over them. If all persons invested with these sacred trusts were to consider the power vested in them from this source it would work many powerful revolutions in the world today. Men are frequently asking, Cannot I do as I will with my own? Cannot I exercise any power I possess without regard to the great ends of righteousness as manifested in individual life or in life collectively? Cannot an employer, if possessed of great wealth, grind the faces of his employees in the dust if he wills, for no other reason than his money is his own? So long as he keeps within the respectable bounds of the civil law, is he not privileged to carry out any rule or course of conduct that commends itself to him and to mankind generally? The answer to this is that no such course is in keeping with the very highest standards of life. The sacred rights of others become a quiet restriction upon the fullest exercise of our own. Cannot gigantic corporations compel, by their great power, men to do dishonest things for the purpose of securing great financial gains to themselves? No one questions that they possess the power. Alas, we know this too well by experience in the past, but quietly men have come to see that the exercise of such power for unjust ends is a willful perversion of it and practically destroys their right to the use of such power at all.

Men frequently unite in large bodies, as unions, to protect themselves from aggression on the part of capital, and to provide for each other better means of support, better homes, and better conditions for work. They have indeed in such union great power. That no one can deny. Today almost any wheel of industry can

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be seriously impeded if not actually stopped, as quickly as an engineer can apply the air brakes to the wheels of a moving train. The country itself has time and again felt the power of such combinations and is destined to experience similar restraints in the future. The one thing never to be lost sight of is for these and all kindred bodies to keep in mind the fact that it is for righteous ends and for justice that this great power intrusted to them is to be used. When violence, rank injustice, or needless suffering follows the exercise of power it can never be according to God's eternal purposes.

But there is another realm of power which frequently commands our attention. Paul hinted at it again and again when he referred to some as spiritually strong and others as spiritually weak. He seemed to have it in mind when he enjoined the strong not to forget the weak, but to help them, and when he exhorted those that were spiritually strong to restore the brother in fault. In many ways he kept before us the responsibility for spiritual strength. Most men command by ideas. They have strong faith, strong courage, strong hope. But frequently this strength instead of ministering to others becomes a source of menace to the peace of their minds. Today there are many forms of faith and teaching concerning religion that do great and lasting harm to immature or weak souls. Some men feel that it is an honor to be aimed at to accomplish the destruction of other men's faith; to sow seeds of unbelief in the great verities of God. Again, other men feel it often incumbent upon them to needlessly and violently attack the faith of others, offering nothing better in its stead, and many by word and deed are using great carelessness in the exercise of spiritual power. It would help us to remember that our spiritual strength is the supplement of another's spiritual weakness. Our bounding spiritual joy is to supplement another's sorrow. When the time shall come, as come

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it will, that this sacred trust of power over others shall be exercised as God would have us, it will surround the humblest of earth with the very tenderest consideration. It will make every man feel that he is indeed obligated by God's moral law to bear his brother's burden. It will remove all foolish fear concerning the vicious exercise of power and quietly usher in that era of good feeling and of happiness upon earth for which we have looked, sincerely desired, often prayed for and firmly believe will come. May each one of us in the exercise of that which has been intrusted to us rule over others justly, and in the fear of God, and to the honor of his great name.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this scepter'd sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

LESSON FOR JULY 19

SAMUEL WARNS SAUL AND THE PEOPLE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."—I Sam. 12. 24.

BY RICHARD IRVING WATKINS, D.D.,
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THERE are times in life when a deadly chill seems to fall upon the soul. Wonderingly we inquire how such a thing can be. Such an occasion presented itself to Samuel when Israel asked for a king. Israel has forgotten the past, freighted with all the memories of Jehovah's dealings. Surely there was no need for discontent with the divine rule, rather every cause for satisfaction. But human nature is never content. It hopes to better the best, and in Israel we hear the clamoring cry for a king. Remonstrances are in vain, for the people are recklessly rash in their requests. Other nations have a king, why not Israel? Obstinate and unwise, yet persistent withal, the demand is granted and a king is chosen. Men make the same mistake every day. They become wearied and dissatisfied with God's methods and will to become sovereigns, and in so doing must reap the consequences. If Israel could have foreseen as Jehovah foresaw there would have been no king.

Fighting God is a losing business. Kings may set themselves, and rulers may take counsel against the Lord and his chosen ones, but "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Had Israel been wise the cost would have been counted before arraying herself, even in secret, against Jehovah. The deed is done. A new kingdom is to be

established. Samuel publicly anoints Saul king, vindicates himself, reviews their history, and comes into close quarters with them, uttering a warning to Saul and the people, and with prophetic retrospect refers to the "great things he hath done for you" as a condition requiring steadfastness in obedience. Thus Samuel abdicates and Saul reigns. Mark the transition, for

Israel faces a crisis. This crisis is one of government. It was the dawn of a new day. The theocracy becomes a monarchy. Change always produces more or less anxiety. The rash enthusiasts need caution. The times were ripe for the reformation, and the unanimity of the people augurs well for the future at this crucial hour in Israel's history. Innovation and conservatism will wage a perpetual conflict in the struggles of the new idea for the mastery. The theocracy has failed, not because Jehovah had been unfaithful nor his servant Samuel untrue, but because the people were unfaithful and disobedient. The monarchy now becomes a possibility, since Jehovah yields to the plea for a king by a divine concession to the necessities of the case. God deals with men as he finds them, accommodating himself to their degree of light and knowledge. Israel has yet to learn that principles are eternal, even though plans of work may vary. Standards of right cannot be changed by violent hands. Having a king lessens not their responsibilities in either moral or spiritual obligations. As Ruskin has truly said, "God will put up with many things in the human heart; but there is one thing he will not put up with in it—a second place."

It is interesting to note how from amid the wreckage and dust of the decaying theocracy the new powers of the monarchy will fashion themselves in adaptation to the new times and its destiny. Little by little men must be educated, line added to line, precept followed by precept, here and there, little by little, until the giant task is accomplished. The change of rulers and forms of government will be of small avail unless there

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be improvement in the character of the people. Israel is on trial and needs to be steadfast in the first shocks of her national life. Strong hands are needed to guide the ship of state, for she will plow her way through troublous seas. Israel will succeed "only by the genius and courage of some, who will serve as the eyes and brain; by the perseverance of others, who will represent the arms; by the faith and devotion of others again, who will be the heart." Israel needs leaders, men for the hour. Who are they? Saul the king, who is described by Milman as "a youth of singularly tall and striking person." Chosen of the Lord, yet not freed from responsibility; anointed, thus set apart for special work; prepared by training until thoroughly changed, Saul is fitted for royal honors. He leads Israel to successful victory against the Ammonites, and thereby establishes more fully his right to leadership. His life has been fittingly summed up as one of "early promise—a gradual deterioration—ruinous fall."

Associated with him is Samuel, the grand old prophet—

Great! for he spoke and the people heard,
And his eloquence caught like a flame
From zone to zone of the world, till his word
Had won him a nobler name.

Samuel, surrounded by wicked sons, never for a moment loses sight of, nor faith in, the ultimate mission of Israel. When called upon to do what to many would have been most distasteful he displays a noble self-forgetfulness, yields to demands after hearing God's will, and, contrary to his own feelings, gives up office and rank, and appoints a king. With an ear delicately attuned to "the still sad music of humanity," the prophet devotes the remainder of his life to the good of the people, and, in the supreme moment of change in form of government, carries out policies distasteful but desired. From childhood to old age he had lived among the people, and in the presence of the king lays

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down an office, seeks and urges an investigation of his official life, concealing nothing, and calls upon the people to witness in his behalf, which is cheerfully done without dissent. No hidden deeds mar that life. Noble example to those in authority over us!

He never sold the right to serve the hour,
Nor faltered with eternal God for power.

O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood foursquare to all the winds that blew!

When such a man speaks, not only Saul and Israel hear, the world listens. He speaks and God witnesses by a thunderstorm. Israel must learn that her future welfare depends upon the *use* or *misuse* of the new order under the monarchy.

Twice in moments of danger the people beseech Samuel to cry to Jehovah for them, and he seems to regard intercession as a part of his official duty, the neglect of which is a sin. He now raises his voice to warn all of their duty and responsibility, as well as justify his own acts. The prophet knows how to comfort even as he warns. He does not hesitate to let it be known that

Israel's prosperity is conditional. No mere form of government answers. The hope of the nation is based upon righteousness, for "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Righteousness is religion. Righteousness in actual working is right living, and this makes splendid the history of any life.

Samuel's two great weapons of moral defense are teaching and prayer—teaching to men, prayer to God. These are mightier than the sovereign's scepter or the soldier's sword. In his teaching "he would," as Moulton has said, "justify the true theocracy to the new age that sought an earthlier ideal." In his prayer he

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will show that "there is a closer bond between patriotism and prayer than at first sight appears." "Consider how great things he hath done for you." The memory of Jehovah's past dealings becomes the spur to obedience, and this gives assurance of success. "The eternal landscape of the past" keeps in mind not only God's mercies, but calls to remembrance faithfulness under all circumstances. We are told that when the Declaration of Independence was laid before that memorable Congress for adoption and signature, everyone felt that a crisis was at hand. Some wavered until Dr. John Witherspoon arose and spoke with no uncertainty as to the duty of the hour. Among other things he said: "Although these gray hairs must descend into the sepulcher, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country." A most profound impression was made, strengthening the firm and giving courage to the wavering. When a timid member ventured to remark that the time was not yet ripe for such a bold declaration, Witherspoon replied in a voice which rang clearly through the hall, "In my judgment, sir, we are not only ripe, but rotten." Such fidelity to Jehovah would the prophet inspire in Saul and the people.

"Fear God." In great misfortunes somehow man involuntarily hears this. "Only fear God." Whatever else you do, be sure to do this, for it is at the root of righteousness. Fear plus love, in the mingling, by processes of spiritual affinity, produces a mental attitude toward God which we may well regard and call reverence. "Serve him in truth with all your heart" is the natural outcome of this internal attitude, and is the flower of fear. Life passes. Deeds remain. These are the results—the harvest succeeding the sowing. The vine well pruned gives better fruit. The king and people warned are thus forearmed.

Samuel aimed to make Israel see the wrong done in

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seeking a king, but shows the unselfish devotion of a saint in his interest in both king and people. His is the most noted example in the Old Testament of one who reconciles himself to a changing order. Obedience and steadfastness give assurance of future prosperity, the lack means direful disaster. The prophet's task is not done, for he himself promises by intercessory prayer to be ever mindful of Israel's interest. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

In God's great universe there are no favorites who may transgress without injury—none who may play with poison without risk to themselves. In the spiritual realm there are no favorites who may attain to spiritual wisdom without fearing the Lord, and rendering service with the whole heart.

You ask, as Pilate did, "What is truth?" I answer, obedience, service; be merciful, be just, be gentle, force yourself to heed the warnings, try to do good, do your duty as you see it. That must be right, whatever be uncertain. The lessons of the context carry their own application. They tell us whether we are doing our duty. The first thing a child should learn is obedience. The first thing for men to learn is to get away from rigid rules, and seek to make alliance with the eternal verities—principles. They are then free from the form, the rule, and the law, because they have been begotten of the Spirit who writes upon the heart, and whatever is done is done with all the heart. To all such there comes in the familiar lines of Harriet Auber much to comfort and cheer:

And thou, O ever gracious Lord,
Wilt keep thy promise still,
If, meekly hearkening to thy word,
We seek to do thy will.

So shall thy choicest gifts, O Lord,
Thy faithful people bless;
For them shall earth its stores afford,
And heaven its happiness.

LESSON FOR JULY 26

SAUL REJECTED BY THE LORD

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."—Josh. 24. 24.

BY JOSEPH W. NARAMORE,
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How brave these words are, how noble, and really how natural! This generous expression of loyalty was given by the Israelites in response to an appeal by Joshua. The appeal is thrice made and thrice answered. It is a great affirmation: We will! We will!

These words have been added to the story of Saul's disobedience as a sort of antidote. Saul's whole life had felt the influence of God's directing hand. He had been called out of obscurity. He had been made a king. Just now he has won a great victory with God's help. Yet he disobeys God's plain instructions. He had promised as cheerfully as the Israelites in the text, and then had miserably failed.

From one point of view Saul's sin does not seem so grievous. He had merely kept the best of the spoil, meaning to make a splendid sacrifice to Jehovah. This sounds very well, but it is too evident that other influences had been at work—Saul's vanity and his love of popularity. We recall that later he was envious of David when he returned from battle at the head of a great procession. It is very likely that a big parade was Saul's weak spot. A triumphal entry into the city with King Agag in chains, a sight in later times so precious to the eyes of the Roman populace; the long cavalcade of beasts laden with rich booty; the mighty herds of cattle and sheep; the great feast accompanying the sacrifice; the king's name on every lip—all this

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was as much in the mind of Saul as the glory of God.

Instead of literally obeying God's orders, Saul stops to consider. The command was to destroy the Amalekites. He made no pretense that he had misunderstood. Nor does he show the least indication of unbelief. But when the stress of battle is over and the people clamor for the spoil, then he considers, he philosophizes, he weighs the matter. From his point of view it was a complicated question. The people, as always in primitive times, were eager for the spoil. It would be hard to resist them, it would even be unpopular. Saul seemed to realize the situation and sense its danger to himself.

But, after all, was it such a hard place? The word was plain—"Utterly destroy the Amalekites!" It was only hard when he began to consider, to falter. And it is usually true that life is not as complex as some people imagine. The problems of life are fairly simple. Usually we know what we ought to do. Occasionally one is placed in a really hard position, where it seems impossible to tell just what is the right course. But even then if one decides carefully and prayerfully, God's hand guides and somehow things all come out right. What a joy, what a triumph, what a blessedness such an experience is!

When the men were pressing upon Saul to save the flocks, when he saw their dark looks and feared to deny them, had he drawn his sword and with kingly authority forbidden them to spare even one little lamb, they would have fallen back in confusion. Saul would have been king indeed. He would still have been God's chosen leader.

There are two essential points in Saul's failure. He reveals his own unreliability. We must avoid the too common error of quibbling over God's apparent harshness. It is easy to say that Saul's punishment was too severe for a single act of disobedience, and only partial disobedience at that. When a train dispatcher sends

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out his orders they must be obeyed to the letter. There is no place for independent judgment. Saul was not trustworthy.

Saul's other fatal error is in this: he altered the whole character of the campaign. It was a holy war, planned by Jehovah, who seeth not as man seeth, ordered by his prophet, to be executed by his appointed agent, Saul. Every detail should have been arranged to heighten this religious significance. That city should have been destroyed with all its contents and burned with fire. Here was Saul's opportunity to magnify the God of Israel. The selfish desires of the soldiers should have been sternly repressed and the whole campaign carried out in the spirit of a crusade. God wills it. Even at this early time Israel had a literature of battle and of victory. They possessed the song of Moses after the deliverance and the chant of Miriam and her chorus of women. Imagine a return with solemn, tragic air, and such a burst of song as this:

The Lord is a man of war:
The Lord is his name.
The Lord hath triumphed gloriously.

Jehovah should have triumphed, but Saul was the victor. And Saul is rejected.

What a chance this was for Saul! On the day when he was anointed we read that he prophesied. That is, he spoke with the spiritual exaltation of a prophet. He had the soul for it. On this day he might have been a prophet. Had he grasped the deep meaning of this war of extinction, had he felt deeply in his soul the sublimity of Israel's part in the great purpose of God, had he given himself absolutely to his task, his sole thought and purpose to do God's will and obey his voice, how different the end would have been! What a chance, but how irrevocably lost!

Every king, or president, has at times the chance to be a prophet, a man of God. And not only has he the chance, but he has this alternative, to be a prophet or

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to be rejected. There are situations that can only be met by a contempt for values, for precedents, and even for reputation.

It is hard for any man to realize that the failure of his life is in lack of loyalty to God and his own best self. Men regret a lack of shrewdness, or of foresight, or of industry, when God knows that they have failed for the very reason that Saul was a failure, because they have not done their plain duty.

A pathetic touch is added to the story in the good old prophet's grief at Saul's rejection. We are told that "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul." Men have needed, they still need, and they always will need, the prophet. There is no phase of religious life that has altered as little as this. Humanity needs the voice of a man to interpret the voice of God. Strange that men will seek advice on every other subject, but on religious matters each man will be his own specialist. A fine, discriminating judgment in worldly affairs often needs a "Thus saith the Lord." Who is the prophet nowadays? The man or woman, Christian worker of whatever grade, who somehow makes me understand what God wants me to know.

We turn gladly to Israel's declaration of loyalty, given to their great leader, Joshua. "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." We observe again how bravely and enthusiastically they say it. It really seems easier for them to make the promise than for Joshua to accept it. It is the easiest thing in the world to make a promise and to mean it.

Suppose some man has been guilty of wrongdoing. He and perhaps others, have suffered from his acts of folly, and it is not the first time. But now he makes a new start. He will never do this again. And as he makes the promise, his soul glows brightly in its light. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." It is well that it does. It seems to be God's breath that

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pulsates in a penitent soul. It is the divine life seeking to give this stunted plant a new start. Springtime is the triumph of nature, and hope in a wrecked soul is the triumph of human nature. Not only is it real, it may be the beginning of an absolutely new life. What is it but a miniature conversion?

There is one very significant word in the text—"we." There are power and permanency in numbers. Not crowds—crowds are notoriously fickle. But companies are mutually helpful. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" is not a rule, but a recipe. Many a time a majority is against advance, but an earnest minority carries the day.

There must be some meaning for us in the fact that Saul was sent to destroy utterly a certain people. There was a reason. It must not be supposed for one moment that this was merely a bloodthirsty campaign. We read that the Amalekites were perpetual enemies of the people of God. They were especially bitter in their enmity during the journey through the wilderness. It was in fighting them that Moses held up the rod while Joshua fought. Politically it was either Israelite or Amalekite. Is not this situation repeated again and again both in national and personal life? Was it not such a situation when Lincoln said, "No nation can long exist half slave and half free"?

There are holy wars. There are some institutions that call for extermination. It is not a valid argument for the toleration of the liquor traffic that there are many families involved, many boys and girls of liquor sellers to be educated. In our personal lives there are things to be blotted out, or, better yet, left out. Kipling says, "There are some things no fellow can afford to know." If a man's memory is always jogging up against the same thing, and that to his shame, let him utterly destroy that thing. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out."

Perhaps, when all is said and done, Saul failed where

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men most often fail, at the point of self-sacrifice. He could win a battle, but he could not forego the glory. It is just about forty years ago that a young girl was approaching graduation from a state normal school. From a child it had been her ambition to become a teacher. She was suddenly called to the bedside of a dying mother. She took her place as housekeeper for her father and brother. She was never known to murmur at not being a teacher. In all these years she has never been known to murmur at anything, but she has been as sunshine in many lives. She never liked housework and was not especially adapted to it, but she has always done it. Her brother brought home a wife, who soon became an invalid, and she cared for her as an own sister till her death. Her father died, and she and her brother lived on together. Not long since her brother died, and she is left alone. Whence this waste? She might have had a home of her own. Her life might have opened out in many ways, but, but—the path of duty has seemed to lead her on in the way indicated. Has it been waste? Has she not served the Lord and obeyed his voice?

Can we not learn, or must we also fail and be rejected? Despise not those stirrings of the soul that warm your heart toward God and man. From time to time some man or woman will be a messenger of God to your soul. It may be a humble messenger, the message may be unpleasant, it may even seem unnecessary, but heed it. When God takes you into his confidence and shows you things the world knows not of, fill your mind and heart with God's thoughts and be an interpreter of God to men.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 2

DAVID ANOINTED AT BETHLEHEM

GOLDEN TEXT: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."—1 Sam. 16. 7.

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It is well that He does—well for the man, well for the cause of righteousness and strict justice, and well for God himself.

Surely it was so centuries ago when Samuel sought a successor for Saul in the home of Jesse in Bethlehem. Otherwise, David would not have been chosen; indeed, he would not have been considered. He was merely a youth with no mark of dignity nor deep experience, a boy of no especial importance in his own home, overlooked apparently by his father. Jesse had summoned seven of his sons, and had made them pass one by one before Samuel. "Are here all thy children?" said Samuel. "There remaineth yet the youngest," was the reply, "and, behold,"—and in this word is his amazement and possible disappointment—"and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." Yet it was he, the youthful shepherd of Bethlehem, whom God selected as king—for "the Lord looketh on the heart."

It is character that God is seeking—that combination of ability and sincerity that is oftentimes independent of age and practical experience—that which is found in the motive and is measured by the prayer, not the profession; the aim, not the attainment—that which does not readily show upon the surface and is the result of the many denials, the unheralded victories, the uncomplaining, unadvertising burden-bearing, as well as the deed done out in the open where so largely convention controls and individuality is lost.

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I. It is well, I say, that God looketh on the heart, for in the heart of a man there is much that even the man himself knows nothing about. There is much in David that David never saw—much in Eliab that he never saw, in Shammah, in Abinadab; and if the man himself sees not his own soul, surely his neighbor cannot. If David cannot know David, it is safe to say that no other man can.

Listen to the song that David is singing out under the stars as he tends his sheep: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." That is what he says, but he is sadly mistaken. "In the house of the Lord forever"! Far from it. His steps were not always toward God and his house. Hear his sadder song sung a few years later: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." The boy in his innocency, and, what is more to the point, his ignorance sings of a saintly life to be spent in the "house of the Lord"; the man, of the "horrible pit" and the "miry clay." David, sheltered in the house of Jesse, knows little of the strength of tendencies in his nature that lie latent, of passions inherited from a long line of ancestors now gathered to their fathers awaiting the judgment day, of the unguarded approaches to the soul, of the forces of hell quietly gathering to take him by storm, if he for a moment let go the hand of God. He cannot be expected to know. The ruddy glow of his face—"the beautiful countenance goodly to look to"—shows his simplicity. Samuel can see at a glance that his dreams are sweet, his imagination untainted, his associations with simple folk who play heartily, work honestly, love loyally, pray humbly, who serve God and

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fear no ill. David knows not David; Jesse does not know him—God alone does.

It is so always. Here is a group of saints—to go back once more through the centuries for an illustration—in glad communion with the Master. It is the night of most glorious privilege. Revelation has been given by their Lord and leader, grander, more far-reaching and definite than the world had ever before received. Yet 'tis the night of betrayal as well. The prayer soon to follow out under the olive trees in Gethsemane is to be interrupted by the rude approach of Roman soldiers. The sad but loving salutation of the Master is to be met by the traitor's kiss. All this our Lord foresees, and, turning to the astonished group at the table in the anguish of his soul, cries out, "Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me." And the record is that they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one, "Is it I?" Peter was not sure of Peter, John was not sure of John, James not sure of James. Each one of them looked for a moment down into the depths of his own soul and saw dark chambers closed upon mysteries that God alone could reveal. A man may be sure of his present attitude, of his prayer for the future and his penitence for his past—but there is much that he is not sure of. Thank God, then, that there is One who is—that "the Lord looketh on the heart."

II. It is also true that in the heart of each one of us there is much that we are careful not to disclose. If we know nothing of our tendencies, we are careful that the world know nothing of our temptations. Paul speaks in only one of his letters of the thorn in the flesh. Peter writes two epistles to the church universal, but omits to tell of a certain chilly morn when, standing by the fire in the courtyard of the palace of the high priest, in answer to the taunting ridicule of a laughing girl, he denied his Master thrice with bitter oaths. He has something in his heart that he would

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keep concealed from all save the One who can abundantly pardon.

Few men are overcome at the first attack of the evil one. No, at the first they win; then they weaken, then from weariness they drop their weapons, and then are overcome. Ninety-nine times they withstand the attack, then they fall; and then, and not till then, does the world see them and pass its judgment. For men do not hasten to the house of God to tell a more or less sympathetic circle of the victories they have won. They do not hasten to tell anyone. They shut up the story in the soul where God can read it when he will. They do not climb to some lofty pillar, there to beat their body under. No, the days of Saint Simon Stylites are passed—and the days of inconsiderate open confession as well. Men are more or less strangers to their loved ones. The sealed letter found after one's death between the leaves of the Bible; the strange story of folly told by a father to his son, dearer to him than his very life, at the moment of the lad's first fierce encounter with the foe of us all; the troubled dream as one tosses in delirium—all tell that the soul of a man is not open to the gaze of the world.

All this is not to say that men are worse than they seem to be, for it is not so. Indeed, it might be taken to show that they are better than they seem to be: for there is no sin in temptation, there is nothing dishonorable in a manly struggle in solitude where no whine nor cry for help is heard. All this is not to say that they are worse, or that they are better, than they seem to be, but rather that they are unlike in multitudes of cases what the appearances would indicate.

Paul, for example, looks like a saint, and he is one, but not the type of saint that the sisters in the nunnery or the saints on the seats of ecstasy say that he is; for he means something other than an affected note of humility or an impersonal generality when he says, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is

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this grace given"—the grace to preach the gospel of a Redeemer who could save even to the uttermost. John Wesley looks like a saint, and he is one. We are sure of it as we see him portrayed on the pages of his Journal, or watch him looking down upon us from the wall of our study with searching rebuke and a staggering invitation to a life of tireless activity. Yet he is not the type of saint that the monotonous pietists of a loyal church think him to have been. There were secrets in his soul that the Holy Club did not know—that his brother Charles did not know, that no man knew; for he heartily sang with a humble people,

I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.

No matter how frank a man may be there is much that he is unwilling to disclose. He feels safe with God, and safe with him only. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; the Lord looketh on the heart."

III. There is much in the heart of a man that he is unable to express. He knows all about it. He is willing, yes, he is eager to show it to anyone who will stop to look, but he cannot do so. He can summon the heart to send its message to the lip, but the heart knows not how to do so. Here is the song, for example, that I sang yesterday away down deep in a thankful soul. I would sing it to you—if I could—but it must be a song without words, and without melody as well. It is just as well not to make the attempt, for the song that would struggle away from me for a hearing would be no more like the song I sang to myself than the song of the servant who runs to hush my little one is like the song of its mother.

Here is a poem I want to write—I who deal with prose and know so little of the laws of rhyme and rhythm. I know 'tis a poem, for it has to do with the prayer of a little child and the devotion of a mother, God's greatest gift to the race next to that of his Son.

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Yes, I have a poem somewhere in the recesses of my soul, but just now I can't find it. I may as well give over trying to find it. It would not look the same if shown to you. Even I feel it to be most clumsy prose.

So is it with my prayer. The thought and intent of the soul I know to be honest, and fondly hope they are worthy a sinner saved by grace. As I see it before it takes to itself the words whereby man may see it, it has beauty and dignity and the promise of power. But as I hear it—it is quite another thing. Indeed, if God did not look into the heart of a man he would never see any manifestation of his best gratitude or most genuine petition for help. "I want a prayer book," said a humble convert to me years ago. "I'll give you one," said I quickly, and, as I believe now, most wisely; and I did. I gave him the Psalms of David—this same David whom Jesse saw to be merely a shepherd boy, but whom God saw to be a saint and sweet singer for all time; I gave him the Psalms of David, and told him that he would always find there just what he wanted—a cry when wounded, a sob when broken-hearted, a shout when victorious. I understood the man perfectly. He could not pray as he wanted to pray—his only language was a cry, his only word the name of God. Firmly did I believe, and ever will believe, that that cry would reach Him; still I had respect for the desire to come before God with words that more fully and fittingly expressed the sincere prayer of the soul. Most surely there is much in each of us, no matter what may be the culture or the care, that we are unable to put into words. God knows all about it. "The Lord looketh on the heart."

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

LESSON FOR AUGUST 9

DAVID AND GOLIATH

GOLDEN TEXT: "In the Lord put I my trust."—Psa. 11. 1.

By CHARLES A. GILBERT,

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THE army of Israel under Saul was called to defend the land against a new attack by the Philistines, led by the giant of Gath, Goliath. Saul was head and shoulders above others in stature, but Goliath was nearly ten feet in height—a giant. Doubtless the Philistines as well as the army of the host of Israel were mindful of the wonderful feats of Samson. The Philistines were now ready to meet any Israelite who dared come against Goliath, but there was no Samson among the army of Israel, and Saul's forces were completely dismayed.

After some weeks of humiliation and fearfulness David came down to visit his brothers in the camp of Israel. David had faith in the God of Israel, and was completely surprised and abashed at the cowardice of his countrymen. After overcoming the opposition of Saul and his own kinsfolk he volunteered to meet the boastful giant who had defied the hosts of the living God.

The leaders of Israel placed the armor of Saul upon David, thinking that this would protect him, but David had never worn a coat of mail. David discarded the armor of Saul and went armed in his own simple implements of the shepherd. Goliath met David with utter contempt, but David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

In the struggle against the giants which confront us of these later days I believe that we are too much as

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the army of Saul. The giants are too great, and our trust in Jehovah is of no real value because of the wavering quality of this trust. When the giant is to be slain we make special effort and, as Israel did, magnify the stature of the giant. We advertise the conflict against the enemy, and when the weeks of waiting and preparation are past the Davids are few, and we are wont to stalk about clad in coats of mail with a sword at our side, weapons and armor never tried. O that we might trust in Jehovah, the God of Israel!

Let us consider some of the giants which appear against the hosts of Israel.

Human nature, a giant great and untamed, is blamed or blessed, as the case may be, for many of our actions. If you have no control over your appetite, you say that you have inherited this. If you drink rum, you blame your father, yet keep on drinking. If you have naturally good control over your appetite, it is your nature. Your temper is one of a common variety. When things go wrong you become angry and abuse your best friends; this is again poor human nature. How convenient for the army of the fearful and dismayed to blame human nature, and not meet the foe squarely in the name and in the strength of the Lord of Israel!

Prejudice is another giant which confronts men. Race prejudice, negro riots, Italian lynchings are common headlines in our sensational papers. Why? Because men delight in carrying out their own mean likes and dislikes, their own preconceived ideas of law and justice. The voice of God, who says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," and the voice of society, which depends upon law and order, both alike fall upon deaf ears. The same is true of the individual who is so narrow that his way or none is right. He will follow no guide but his own inclination. There is a saying which is very true and applies to this case very aptly, "When prejudice puts its hand before the eyes, that hand, small as it may be, will hide the mighty sun."

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To such it is a difficult matter to prove that the sun does shine, or even exists.

Influence of others is another giant. It is wonderful, indeed, what influence one man may have. In politics thousands adopt the idea of the one. Mr. Bryan made a platform on 16 to 1 and the whole West stood upon that platform. In New York city a Tweed or a Croker dictates the policy of enough men to control the city's political situation. Or a McKinley gives us a system of protective tariff which holds us for years. Thus a few lead. In spiritual affairs it is just the same. The children of Israel, who had as much of human nature as any people of history, preferred to be ruled by a king, rather than to be under the direct leadership of God, "as the other nations," they say. In the doctrines of the church we are Roman, Arminian, Calvinists, Methodists, or Presbyterians. We believe what the Pope, what Arminius, what Calvin, or what Wesley teaches us of the oracles of God. In politics we follow strong men, whether good or bad. The giant defies the host of Israel, and we, as did the army of Saul, say, "Who can stand against the giant?" We fear to face the foe in our own strength and forget that the God of Israel is our refuge.

Another giant of immense stature is worldliness. We consult the authorities on the styles and customs, regardless of the real value of the contemplated procedure. "When in Rome do as the Romans do" is the accepted guide of life. In society any fashion, even if utterly foolish or immodest, must be followed, or the social giants will think we are behind the times. In business any practice, however unbusinesslike, must be followed, or you are not progressive. Coupons must be given and you must reward your custom for honest barter. You must advertise that your goods are the only genuine article in the city, or be a fossil of the nineteenth century. In daily life and conduct you may and generally do ask the question, "Will it pay?" Why

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not be a David and be led by the true Guide instead of being governed by the world's principle, What reward?

This spirit of the day has even found its way into church advertisements, and we read that most of the churches have the finest choir and the best preacher in the city, or that the music and preaching of our summer camp meetings have never been equaled. Why not be true to fact instead of living the life of the indifferent worldling?

There are many giants which confront the army of God. There are many Goliaths which would "feed our flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the field." Yet there has always been a David to place his trust in the Lord of hosts. This trust has been tried and found sufficient throughout the ages.

The history of the faithful is a continuous record of such contests—the weak, as judged by man, arrayed against the strong. Jesus Christ, the Son of David, himself slew the giant and conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil, as well as death and the grave. The honesty and simplicity of David and his utter reliance upon Jehovah, which gave him the freedom necessary to conquer the foe, were exemplified by a more complete victory in the moral conquest of the Son of David.

I fear that many church members may not have this necessary freedom and armor in these days of prosperity. Perhaps we are wearing the armor of Saul and are making the mistake of the man who meets the foe clad in strange coat of mail. We may be depending upon our own strength and ability. Our church may give a million dollars to redeem China and send food to suffering India, but unless we do this in the spirit of Him who has conquered pride and self our gifts avail nothing. We cannot meet the giants clad in Saul's armor, but must go in the name of the Lord God.

The contrast in the scornfulness of Goliath and in the humility of David is worthy of our careful attention. "The Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou

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comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." The contrast in character here given is of vast importance to us in these days of ease and luxury when men say that they cannot distinguish between the faithful and the man of the world. It seems plain that we are too many of us wearing the armor of Saul, and that we depend upon the organization of affairs rather than upon the God of Israel. We forget that it is not by might, but by the spirit of the humble Nazarene, that the world is to be conquered and won. Are we free from boasting? Do we always take refuge in Jehovah, or do we rely upon ourselves and our attainments? Do we meet our obligations in giving to redeem the unchristian nations as to a brother, or are we merely doing alms, expecting a reward, as do the heathen? Do we meet the foe armed with the simple weapons of Christ—brotherly kindness and love—or do we go to battle protected with our own armor? The God of Israel who delivered the giant Goliath into the hands of David, the untrained shepherd boy, is worthy of all trust, and will help you meet all the foes of truth.

Luther knew what this refuge meant when he faced the giants who fought against the interests of true religion.

A sure stronghold our God is he,
A trusty shield and weapon;
Our help he'll be, and set us free,
Whatever ill may happen.
That old malicious foe
Intends us deadly woe:
Armed with the strength of hell
And deepest craft as well,
On earth is not his fellow.

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Through our own force we nothing can,
Straight were we lost forever;
But for us fights the proper Man,
By God sent to deliver.
Ask ye who this may be?
Christ Jesus named is he.
Of Sabaoth the Lord,
Sole God to be adored,
'Tis he must win the battle.

And were the world with devils filled,
All eager to devour us,
Our souls to fear should little yield,
They cannot overpower us.
Their dreaded Prince no more
Can harm us as of yore;
Look grim as e'er he may,
Doomed is his ancient sway;
A word can overthrow him.

The joy of the hosts of Israel and Judah at the victory of David foreshadowed the joy of the church of Christ when he shall conquer all enemies of his kingdom and shall declare that "Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night."

We get many lessons from the suggestions of this battle of Goliath of the Philistines and David of the army of the living God, but the important and profitable one for us is to remember that God fights with the righteous. We should never fear the giants, for if God be for us who can be against us? Let us remember that the God who delivered David from the jaws of the lion and the bear and from the giant will surely give us strength to meet the personal foes of our life, and will make us "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Let us take refuge in Jehovah.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 16

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord God is a sun and shield."—Psa. 84. 11.

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It will do us good if we can feel something of the power of these old words of the psalmist and understand how clear and strong is the conception of life which they include. These two figures, sun and shield, carried to the psalmist's mind the totality of helpfulness and protection. The sun was the center of all blessing and power, and the shield represented all manner of protection.

I. "The Lord God is a sun." How deep and far-reaching are these simple words! They send us out into the open and set us on the hilltop watching for the sunrise as it fills the east with glory. They show us the plains and valleys flooded and quivering with the noonday sun. There could be no image so varied and abundant in meaning; no symbol from the world of nature could have such a profound and various truth to tell. No symbol could set forth so profoundly the vital relation between God and man as this figure of the sun. How vitally the physical world stands related, in all its variant life, to the sun! Without the sun, the physical world must wither and die. It's the world's source and life, its vitalizing energy, its high summoner into being and power. It is this great central truth of the vital connection of the life of God with the life of man that is pictured in this old figure of the psalmist, "The Lord God is a sun."

It sets God in the center as the source and power of all life, thereby giving voice to the most vital and far-

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reaching truth ever uttered—the great central truth of Revelation. And it is not to be wondered at that the most splendid achievement of modern science has been the throwing into the foreground this central truth of Revelation. The last word of science is Evolution. When that word was first used as a theory of life, and before it was clearly understood, it seemed to threaten the very destruction of man's faith in God and the Bible. But as the smoke of battle cleared away men began to see that this latest word of science was one of the most profoundly religious and reverent messages ever uttered, for it enthroned God as the source and center of all life and power. Up to that time life had been looked upon as a lot of fragments disconnected, isolated, and heterogeneous. We had been taught to divide the world into three kingdoms: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the animal kingdom. But science has abandoned these as imperfect discriminations; and to-day we know that these three kingdoms are in reality one, or, at least, that there is a unity which binds them closely together. It is impossible to draw a sharp line of distinction between them. "The vegetable world slides into the animal world, and you cannot tell where the one ends and the other begins." The last word of science is that there are not many kingdoms, but one kingdom; that there are not many birthplaces, but one birthplace; that there are not many processes of life, but one process; that there are not many goals, but one goal. "God is the birth, God is the process, God is the goal." Thus science and the Bible have the same message to proclaim, for each puts God in the center of his universe, and traces all life and power back to him, fulfilling literally this old word of the psalmist, "The Lord God is a sun."

Out of this truth of the unity of all things with God at the center comes naturally another, namely, that from God cometh all real power. The sun, in the psalmist's day, was looked upon as the center of all things

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in the physical universe. While we know differently to-day, still it remains true that the sun is the ultimate source of every form of physical energy and power in the world. The winds that wafted the commerce of a world across the seas were set in motion by the sun; the tumbling, turbulent stream from the uplands that grinds our grain, turns our spindles, and works our looms is born of the vapors from the ocean, lifted by the sun and let fall upon the hills to find their way back again to the sea. The steam that drives our engines across the continent is the servant of the power that is locked up in the coal beds or in the forests, both of which draw their subsistence from the sun, and have laid up its heat as a source of power.

As we have seen that there is one, not many sources of life, so we have learned that there is one, not many sources of power—that all forces are in reality but one force. We used to be taught that heat and light and electricity, for example, were each separate and independent forces. But now we know that they are but different expressions of one great force. So we trace all forces back to one great common force. It is now one of the familiar truths of the physical world that there is never any creation of force; that it is simply transmitted and transmuted. It passes into new conditions and shows itself in new forms, but it is always the same essential force still. Religion, rejoicing in the discovery of this great truth, calls this one central force that lives in various forms the energizing will of God, or, more simply, God himself. And this is the truth that the psalmist uttered when he declared, "The Lord God is a sun."

But there is a deeper truth yet in this declaration of the psalmist's that "the Lord God is a sun," for it sets forth not merely the power of God, but the highest expression of God's power, the power to reclaim and redeem. How high above all expressions of power in the world is *redeeming* power! The Jews were ever

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asking Christ for a manifestation of divine power. They never ceased to clamor for a sign. They wanted him to remove a mountain and cast it into the sea, or to bid the sun stand still, or Jordan to retire to its source. Even at the last it would have satisfied them, they declared, had he bid the nails drop out and stepped down from the cross. They sought a demonstration that God in all his power was in Christ, and they were pointed to the cross. But to them the cross seemed not an expression of power, but a confession of weakness. Yet in the cross was the whole power of God for the salvation of the world. The highest power that dwells in God to draw men out of sin to holiness and himself was in that cross of shame and suffering. "For the power of God that is required to draw men to himself is not the power to alter the course of rivers, or change the sites of mountains, but power to sympathize, to make men's sorrows his own, to sacrifice self, to give all for the needs of his creatures." You may go with all your hydraulic pumps and fire hose to the morass with its dead and poisoned waters, and try in vain to purify it by spraying it into the heavens. But the sun rises in its power over every foul pool and poisoned stream and says, "Come up! Come up!" And the fetid waters hear and obey, and in dissolved vapor are carried up into the cold currents of air and aerated and condensed into water-laden clouds that fall back to the earth in water crystal and pure. But the sun is the only power that can accomplish that wondrous transformation. So Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness," comes to the life that is foul and poisoned with sin, and purifies it. And so in his figure of God as the sun, the old psalmist has set forth the very heart of the gospel and the supremest power of God.

II. "The Lord God is a shield." Turning for a moment to the other symbolic word used by the psalmist, we find this old word "shield," a beautiful figure of God's protecting care. It suggests in

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a word the all-sufficient protection of the omnipotent God. "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me." A shield against the foe without; a shield against the foe within. What an inspiring thought is this, that our life is in the keeping of the all-powerful God! "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," said Jesus, speaking of the children of God. In the midst of life's struggles and conflicts, as children of the Almighty, our lives are serene and safe.

We of to-day, in our reaction from the formal, rigid doctrinal insistence of our fathers, are in danger of losing the helpfulness and inspiration of the truth of the sovereignty of God. Much of the flabbiness and vacillation of our modern faith is due to an inadequate conception of the omnipotent power of God. When a man believes with all the conviction of his soul that at the center of the universe God reigns, Almighty, All-righteous, All-wise, and All-loving, and holds his life as in the hollow of his hand, that man can go forth into the midst of an evil world, conquering and to conquer. In the stress and strain of life he knows that he has in God a refuge and a hiding place. And the greatest reinforcement that could come to a faltering faith would be a return to the ancient belief in the sovereignty of God. The "everlasting arms" are round about the man of faith, assuring absolute protection.

A friend of mine told me the following incident. A tourist in Switzerland was very desirous to obtain a certain view of the valley of Chamouni which, he was informed, surpassed in grandeur and beauty any to be had in the Alps. Going to the place directed, he was told that there was only one point in the mountains from which he could secure the view he wanted, and that there was but one guide in all the region who could take him there. Going to the guide, and asking him if he would take him to the spot, he agreed, on one condition only, namely, that at a certain point he would do as he was told without asking any questions. The

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tourist accepted the condition and they started. He followed the guide up the mountain till they reached a place where the path abruptly ended at the foot of a steep cliff. In the face of the cliff niches were cut for the feet and hands. The guide slipped over the edge and told the man to follow, cautiously making his way across the front of the cliff. They crept slowly along, till suddenly, without a word, the guide vanished. He disappeared so suddenly that the tourist could not tell where he had gone, and with a mingled feeling of awe and fear he hung suspended between earth and heaven on the face of the cliff. But immediately he saw the guide's hand appear around the edge of the precipice, and heard him say, "Put your foot in my hand." He hesitated a moment. "Do as I tell you," said the guide; "put your foot in my hand." He did as he was ordered. "Now give me your right hand," said the guide as he put his other hand round the edge of the cliff. He grasped the guide's hand. "Now let go the other hand," said the guide. He hesitated in fear. "Do as I say," said the guide, "let go the other hand." Still he hesitated, not daring to let go. "Don't be afraid," said the guide; "I've never lost my man, I've never lost my man!" The man did as he was ordered, and the guide swung him swiftly around the edge of the cliff onto a little shelf in the mountain on which he was standing. And there lay before his gaze the grandest view of the valley of Chamouni that human eye ever saw. "No man shall be able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," said Jesus, and he hardly ever spoke words more wonderful than those. "I know him whom I have believed," said the battle-scarred hero at the close of his tumultuous life, "and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him." Yes, the old psalmist was right, "The Lord God is a shield"; and we may trust our lives to him, knowing that he has never lost his man.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 23

FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN

GOLDEN TEXT: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."—Prov. 17. 17.

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AT last the play of the master passions in the heart and life of Saul has ended; the tragedy of the clamorous, overwhelming appetite of the "garrulous giant of Gath" is played out, and, amid the turbulent passion for dominion and the clashing of human interests, comes this plaintive story, which reveals at once the glory and the pathos of human nature. In the brief compass of this bit of human history we have the secret of our deepest woe and the spring of our highest endeavor.

After the thundering cataract of Niagara come the placid waters of Ontario, one of the most beautiful sheets of water on the earth. The roaring, grinding rapids at last die away in melodies of fathomless peace and joy. The jarring notes of thunderous discord unite in glorious harmony. The cavernous depths become calm and serene as a sea of glass. The still waters reflect all the splendor of the heavens. So, out of all the chaos of the time and the disorder of their lives, David and Jonathan meet. By that subtle elective affinity there arose, for these kindred souls, a new and beautiful world, wherein reigned peace and love and sweet content.

I. *That friendship was the miracle of the death of self.* Jonathan lost a throne, but envy and jealousy and pride were dispelled by the smile of God; he was saved from the temptations of a squalid court; he with-

stood a father's anger to shield a friend. David forgot his ambition; he was saved from the sourness of an exile's life; he was patient with Saul for his son's sake.

The classic story of David and Jonathan represents the typical friendship. Old Testament history would be impoverished if Jonathan's friendship for David were eliminated from its pages. Literature abounds in graphic delineation of beautiful and beneficent friendships. Plato's *Phaedo* is the story of Socrates and his devoted friends in the last hour of the philosopher's life. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the friendship of Dante, Virgil, and Beatrice enameled in fire. Homer's *Iliad* finds its eloquent peroration in the grief of Achilles for the tragic decease of his friend Patroclus. A messenger runs into the tent of Achilles and says, "O, Achilles, thy friend Patroclus lies dead upon the field of battle." To that one influence the hero responded, after all else had failed, and went forth to victory and to glory. The misanthropy of Shakespeare's Hamlet is dissipated in some measure by the bond of friendship between Hamlet and Horatio. What more felicitous tribute in all literature is to be found than that of Hamlet to his friend: "Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man as e'er my conversation coped withal"?

Church history abounds in such friendships as united Farel and Viret and Beza to Calvin; the high-spirited Knight of Chlum and John Huss; Florentius and Thomas à Kempis; Ridley and Latimer; George Wishart and John Knox: friends all that loved at all times—brothers indeed, born for adversity. "What is a friend but one whom I can trust; one who, in sorrow's hour, will mingle his tears with mine; one on whose support I can reckon when my back is at the wall."

Hugh Black is enthusiastic, and rightly so, in affirming friendship to be the appointed means of saving our life from worldliness and selfishness. It is an ethical imperative that every man contribute of himself toward the rescue of friendship. And surely the need is all the

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more urgent to-day, because, on all hands, in business, in society, in politics, there is a lowering of the moral standard. An English gentleman lamented, in the presence of Horace Walpole, that he had recently lost by death a very dear friend. "Why mourn about it?" asked Walpole: "you can easily find another by going to the coffeehouse." His "libelous wail" was grossly deficient, though his notion was shared by Goldsmith in his "Angelina":

And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep?

Contrast this with what Trumbull says: "Friendship is to be valued for what there is in it, not for what can be gotten out of it. When two people appreciate each other because each has found the other convenient to have around, they are not friends, they are simply acquaintances with a business understanding. To seek friendship for its utility is as futile as to seek the end of the rainbow for its bag of gold. A true friend is always useful in the highest sense; but we should beware of thinking of our friends as brother members of a mutual benefit association, with its periodical demands and threats of suspension for nonpayment of dues." We cannot live a self-centered life without feeling we are missing the true glory of life. We need sympathy. We crave friendships. Even the most perfect of the sons of men felt this need of the heart. Friendship gives strength to character. When men face the world together and are ready to stand shoulder to shoulder, the sense of comradeship makes each strong. "Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul, sweetener of life and solder of society, I owe thee much; thou hast deserved of me far, far beyond what I can ever pay." Ah! my soul's unpaid debt of gratitude and love! Here, in the words of Robert Burns in his "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn," I place my tribute to the

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dear friends whose loving interest has nerved me for the battle of life:

The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestereen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!

Friendship calls out our utmost strength and endeavor; therefore have noble friendships and keep them in repair.

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot buy with gold
The old associations.

I shall never forget a song which I heard as a boy, the memory of which has tided me over many a crucial hour:

Keep the old friends with the new,
Never turn from them away;
For the old are tried and true,
And their friendship can't decay.

New friends may be sweet and kind,
And perhaps their friendship true;
Still, 'tis better, you will find,
To keep the old friends with the new.

II. *See the power of a surrendered life.* Recall the old fable. The sun and wind entered into a contest to compel the traveler to take off his coat. What the wind could not do through compulsion the sun accomplished by the warmth of its rays. Love is the secret of conquest over human hearts. As the flower of the morn opens, not to the frost or the night, but to the genial sun, so human love flings forth all eagerly, tumultuously, and even recklessly. In a crisis it will not calculate either its words or possessions. A son can take large liberties sometimes. In the intensity and extravagance of his devotion he will run the risk of being misunderstood. There are hours when only love

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dares to say nothing. There are hours when only love dares to say everything. Jonathan loved David as his own soul. He made provision for his present safety. He promoted his future prosperity. He was willing to be misunderstood. Therein lies his glory and power. There are deeds so fine that only Christ can understand them. There is a wasteful spending that is supremely selfish. There is a lavish giving that is disowned in heaven. Mary's way, like Jonathan's, was love's way. Christ's love had broken her alienated heart, now it breaks her alabaster box.

Ah! Jonathan, yours is a fine illustration of human friendship, the exhibition of a truly magnanimous spirit of genuine and disinterested friendship, but, tell me, why did you not claim the throne for yourself? Why should the king's son give way to a shepherd boy? Verily, love gives and lavishes and dies, for it is love. Love never asks, How little can I give? It always asks, How much? It is the paradox of love that, to live, it must give, and that to the utmost. Love identifies itself with its object, and with it must give all and endure all, even to the farthest extremity.

III. *Learn, too, the law of vicarious suffering.* Jonathan sacrificed his own prospects for the advancement of his friend. He could forego a crown rather than prejudice the future of a friend. "The Philistines have slain Jonathan and knew not the moral beauty of which they deprived a house." Just there, at the flaming point of self-sacrifice, Jonathan's highest self is revealed. Through his sacrifice of love he discovers that God himself is love. At the very point where Jonathan apparently lost all he found all. When he seemed to be putting all in a grave he was passing to a throne. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The law of the seed is the law of human life. Use your life for present gratification, and you lose it forever. Renounce self, yield yourself to God, spend your life for

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good, and you find its best and highest enjoyment. Your life is a seed now—not a developed plant. It can only become a plant by casting it into the soil of other men's needs. This, then, being the law of human life, Christ himself must not only enounce but observe it. His disciples thought they had never seen such promise in his life as now, but Jesus told them that, like the corn of wheat, he must die if his life were to be abundantly fruitful. He had more to do than wear the crown and accept the scepter. The world's throne was the cross.

One of the most popular legends of Brittany is that relating to an imaginary town which is supposed to have been swallowed up by the sea at some unknown time. Among the many strange tales related of it the fishermen tell us that the tips of the spires of the churches may be seen in the hollow of the waves when the sea is rough. During a calm the music of the bells, ringing out the hymn appropriate to the day, rises above the waters. So, as Meyer suggests, amid the submerged masses, among the shepherd lads, and the street arabs, deep down also at the bottom of the ocean of human life, there are yearnings and desires for a better life, that ring out sadly and perpetually. As David's frank nature rose to meet the magnanimity of his friend Jonathan, so under the rough crust of men of all classes there are noble and generous qualities, crushed by long years of lovelessness, passion, and self-will, waiting for the touch of human kindness to bring them to the sight.

Those who knew him best tell us that "What can I do for you?" was the question with which Maltbie Babcock searched every human face, and the greeting with which he put himself at the service of all sorts and conditions of people, maintaining toward the world the superb attitude of philanthropist, benefactor, Christlike lover, helper, servant of mankind.

What can I do for you, my Mephibosheth, for my old friend Jonathan's sake? I will be a friend that loveth at all times, and a brother born for your hour of adversity.

LESSON FOR AUGUST 30

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."—Luke 6. 27.

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IN the golden days of ancient Rome the prevalent ethical conception concerning the treatment of one's enemies was seen when the conqueror dragged his subjugated foe in chains at his chariot wheel all the way from the Campus Martius to the Capitoline Hill, heaping humiliating insults upon his devoted head; and this was named, by one of the foremost nations of the globe, a "triumph." But a triumph of another kind was exhibited when the exiled but intrepid warrior David with drawn sword stood in the cave of Engedi, over the sleeping form of King Saul, his most relentless foe, who with undying hatred was seeking his life—and, were the situation reversed, he well knew what Saul would do to him; but, sheathing his blade, he refuses to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and is filled with remorse for having cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. The contrast between these two scenes is as wide as that between the heavens and the earth. The one represents the quintessence of paganism, the other reflects the spirit of the true child of God.

The second table of the great fundamental law given by Christ commanded, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and declared this to be the fulfilling of the law. Christ makes no distinction between good neighbors and bad, friend or foe; sufficient that he belongs to the broad human brotherhood. The Jew narrowed down this obligation of the law till he made "neighbor" to mean only those of his own country or religion, and

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unwarrantably assumed, because we are commanded to love our neighbor, we are therefore to hate our enemy, thus making void the law of God through his traditions.

I. *The Objects of This Love.* Our enemies: this is comprehensive and evidently includes them all, whether personal enemies or foes of the cause of Christ—those who hate us and strive to undermine us, who miss no opportunity to malign or backbite us, or who greet us with a hypocritical smile only to plunge the dirk into our backs, or Judas-like betray us with a kiss. One can entertain some respect for an enemy who fights in the open, but for the guerrilla who fights from ambush it is hard to maintain any respect, much less love. Yet we are to love *him*. And that other one also who says unkind and untrue things about us, and puts the worst possible construction upon our words and deeds, and with *malice prepense* tries to inflict harm upon us. It matters little whether he thinks he has sufficient cause or not, the hurt comes to us just the same; nevertheless the Great Master says, "Love your enemies."

II. *The Amplitude of This Love.* How shall we measure this love? How characterize it? It certainly cannot mean high personal regard or approval, nor the affection born of gratitude, for this would contradict our enlightened judgment. We interpret this love rather as a compassionate or benevolent disposition of heart toward those who wrong and injure us. It is the forgiving spirit of Saint Paul, who when arraigned, deserted by his professed friends, prays, "May it not be laid to their account." It is the spirit exhibited by the martyr William McKinley, at the very moment of his dastardly assassination, when, forgetting his own pain, he said, referring to the murderer, "Do not let them hurt him."

This spirit excludes revenge and retaliation. An old adage avers that "Revenge is sweet," and while this may be true of wicked men and of demons, to the child of God mercy is sweet. We are not only to love our

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enemies, but we are to prove that love by doing them good. Love may be a subjective sentiment, but it cannot remain locked up in the human heart, for, like the imprisoned floods in the mountain reservoir, a time will come when they must burst the barriers and sweep down the valley; so this sentinel of love in the Christian heart must flow forth in deeds of kindness; it can never remain pent up and continue to exist. We are not only to love our enemies and do them good, but we are to pray for them; and it must be conceded that he who can gain the self-mastery so that he can truly pray for his enemies can compass all the rest of this commandment. Love is a more potent weapon than the sword or the cannon. No engine of human warfare can convert a foe into a friend. A bullet may mortally wound a man, but it cannot compel his love; but the power brought into the limelight by Saint Paul, when he exhorts us to "overcome evil with good," is an all-conquering force, for it subdues our enemies by destroying their enmity. This subordinating power can spring from only one source, and that is the love of God in a man's soul.

It is evident that Christ's physical miracles are not his highest credentials. His demonstrations of authority within the realm of man's moral nature, and over the powerful laws which govern these, are far greater. Christ was mighty when he calmed the tempest on stormy Tiberias; he was mighty when he stood and rebuked the malignant diseases of men; but when he speaks through the lips of a suffering and dying martyr, who intercedes for his murderers while the deadly missiles are yet flying around him and prays, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," he exhibits one of the supreme credentials of divinity and power. It is this Jesus who speaks in the words of the text, "But I say unto you"—I who loved you when you were yet enemies to me—"I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you"; and Christ well knew the

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depths of human hatred. Such prerogatives inhere in Deity alone, and Christ unequivocally exercises just this power. However bad men may be, and however outrageous and reprehensible their treatment of us, yet we rest under the great law of God to discharge this mighty debt of love to the entire human race, and to forgive as we hope to be forgiven.

III. *The Incentives to This Love.* Why did Christ give such a command? Somehow it seems most difficult to realize. It is easy to love our friends, those who are lovable and kind, those who are gracious and sympathetic, but people who are disagreeable and conniving and mean—how shall we love them? Why did Christ give such a command?

1. It accords both with reason and with the moral administration of God, who “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.” “His sun and his rain”—he owns them all, for they are his creatures. His providence in nature is gloriously beneficent, and his Word opens to us the secrets of this government. Rain and sunshine are eloquent preachers of the love of God. His government is most impartial in its kindness, and well for us is it—for if we only secured bare justice, instead of mercy, sad would be our lot. A godly man’s obligations are of a very high order; he must not imitate the pagan, or the worldly man, who appeals to the *lex talionis* and demands “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” This enactment of the Mosaic law seems harsh and cruel, when placed beside Christ’s “golden rule,” but contrasted with the prevalent custom of earlier days, when the unwritten law was, Slay the man who injures you, or against whom you have a grievance, it seems mild and humane. The law of retaliation represents a low stage of moral development—suitable, perhaps, for the unregenerate Kaffir or Hottentot, but not for a redeemed worshiper of Jehovah. The most enlightened nations of antiquity fell far short in human

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pity; even the Justinian code legalized the infliction of torture in Roman jurisprudence.

It is the aim of the children of God to be like their Great Master, that men may take knowledge of them that they have been with Christ and learned of him. Nothing that we may do is more Christlike, nor more convincing to a gainsaying world, than to love one's enemies; to love those whom we should not love, if we were not the followers of Christ. Henry Clay, the great Kentucky statesman, while regretting that he did not know by a personal experience God's saving grace, yet declared that any power that could end a Kentucky feud must be of God, for nothing short of that could accomplish it. When God comes into the soul of a man his daily life attests the fact; and he is changed more and more into the divine likeness the longer he, like Enoch, walks with God.

But the final answer to this question why Christ commands us to love our enemies is:

2. In order that we may be admitted into the family of God's children. This is the master key which opens the door into the sacred circle. Farther on in this same chapter the Saviour reiterates this command and says, "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing [some ancient authorities read "despairing of no man"] and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High." And this command involves the truth of its converse, namely, Fail to do this and you are thereby excluded from the family of God, and from the glorious company of saints and martyrs in heaven.

"Sons of God": members of the divine family; heirs of the promises; coinheritors with Jesus Christ—what a marvelous distinction! This is the highest conceivable type of manhood, to become children of "Our Father who is in heaven." Our text depicts a moral crisis in the life of a man; it is indeed the turning point in many a man's career. Christ asks of the applicant for eternal

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honors, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" Man has by inheritance much of the tiger in his nature; he is relentless, vengeful, unforgiving, and if he would indeed enter the family of God's children he must be divested of all this; and while "the Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots," yet the blood of Calvary can wash away the stains of sin, and so transform the guilty soul that it outrivals the snows of Lebanon for whiteness, and empowers a man to carry the atmosphere of heaven wherever he may go.

Christ sets forth the true conception and obligation of Christian love, and tells us we are to aim at nothing short of perfection: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." God's idea of a perfect man is revealed to us in the man Christ Jesus. He fulfills God's ideal of a perfect human being. We learn the meaning of being like God when we behold Jesus Christ and are changed into his likeness.

"And your reward shall be great," says the Master. It is not needful to seek to know the What? or How? Enough for us to hear this assurance from the lips of Him "who spake as never man spoke": "And your reward shall be great"—great in blessing in this world, and unspeakably great in the world to come.

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 6

SAUL AND JONATHAN SLAIN IN BATTLE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Prepare to meet thy God."—Amos 4. 12.

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THE man who was of the herdsmen of Tekoa had a stern message to deliver, and he had to speak it into ears that were heavy with the luxury and indulgence that are the accompaniments of an age of prosperity. Not only was his message stern, he himself was fitted to deliver it, for he had been trained out in the great open where men grow both tall and broad, wresting a somewhat precarious livelihood from a hazardous calling. It is written that he was a gatherer, or puncturer, of sycamore fruit, that is, he had to climb the tree some weeks before the fruit ripened and with a sharp instrument open the fruit and let the juices exude. It was only in this way that this fruit, which was used only by the poorer people, could be rendered at all palatable. This rough frontiersman God selected to speak his truth to the leaders of the nation's life in trade and politics. He was to show them the certainty of judgment, the frightful wickedness of sin, and the moral corruption that reached from the judge on the bench through the whole fabric of national life. Amos was to go to the capital city, where everything but his message was strange to him, and raise his strident voice to declare Jehovah's truth. It was as if the eccentric leather-man who wandered so many years through the countryside of New England had suddenly appeared in the political center of the land and uttered a diatribe in the very teeth of our rulers.

It was Israel's proud boast that now her national bounds were pushed to the farthest limit and her king

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ruled over more territory than ever, but Amos assures them that God has been pushed away from their heart by every increase of power, and that, cavil at it as they may, their imperious duty is immediate return to him and sure preparations to meet him. And they must hasten to do it, for God is moving toward them with judgment for their transgressions. "I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

I. To prepare to meet God reckoning must be made with sin. Without sin anyone is ready to meet God, but since all have sinned it is one of the universal requirements that we reckon with sin. Israel's sins are shown in clear light by the prophet. They have "sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes"; they have stopped at no impurity or profanation; they have carried their excesses into the temple of their god crying, "Come to Beth-el, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression"; they have stored up robbery and violence in their palaces. Associate of sheep-tenders though he was, Amos knew the sins of the nation, and with plain and unvarnished words he told them of their wickedness and to include it in their account with the Lord.

And we must reckon with sin. To omit it would be like Hamlet with Hamlet left out. There is no more pointed and pertinent question to ask of the nonchalant unbeliever who assures you with a smile of his readiness to meet God than to ask him, "What have you done with sin—your sin?" Mr. Cable tells in one of his stories of a man who had been trained from childhood in the principle of defiance to God and man. He became a pirate and the master of his vessel. "But a strange thing followed. Being in charge of men that required

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to be kept at the austere distance, he now found himself thrown into solemn companionship with the deep, with the air, the storm, the calm, the heavens by day, the heavens by night. That man, looking out night after night upon the grand and holy spectacle of the starry deep above and the watery deep below, was sure to find himself mastered by the conviction that the great Author of this majestic creation keeps account of it; and one night there came to him, like a spirit walking on the sea, the awful, silent question, 'My account with God, how does it stand?' That is a question that the book of nature does not answer. And so one day this man gave a ship full of merchandise for one little book which answered these questions." He was right, for individual sin presses to a personal accountability to God.

Now, saying one must reckon with sin is only another form of saying one must reckon with self; for the two are alike in more than alliteration, and the majority find that sin proceeds from self as surely as the evening star is the precursor of the star-lighted night. Every man's sin has his own peculiar imprint, the mark—trade-mark, if you like the term—of his spirit. As the rabbit fleeing through the snow leaves something of himself in every track by which the hound follows him without hesitation through a maze of similar marks, so there is something in each person's sin that brands it as his own. Sin is never impersonal, always personal, belonging to some one. It is part of a man's currency in the world of action.

Preparation to meet God means that something must be done with sin and self, and it is right at the point of man's complete discomfiture because of his sin that the gospel of Christ lays hold of him and assures him of the full pardon of all his offenses through the blood of the crucified Redeemer.

II. Our preparation must reckon with life's changes. Here was one of Saul's difficulties. The change from

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his father's farm to the throne was too much for him. The air of the palace killed qualities that would have made him ever glorious. One must count on changes. A serviceable temperature gauge runs from below zero to above boiling, and one must have a philosophy and a faith that compasses all human conditions. And, as it is the test of seamanship to meet changes of weather, so it is an evidence of the preparations one has made to see how his faith and life adapt themselves to varying conditions. One of our present-day essayists has noted the fact that there are two great climacteric periods in life: the one in youth where one decides what he will be and what he will do; it is, he asserts, the decision for life. The other, the decision for destiny, comes in those mature after-years when the initial movements may have lost their force. Frequently the country is shocked by the terrible news of the defalcation of some trusted and highly esteemed man who by years of fidelity has gained the confidence of the community, or by the frightful lapse from rectitude into gross animal passion of some one whose life has been irreproachable, and men say, "Who, then, can be trusted?" These men have failed at the second period of test. They have gone to pieces at the second climacteric. This it is that explains many moral bankrupts in the period marked by the fortieth and sixtieth milestones. They have failed to reckon with the changes of the years.

There is but one way to escape from this disaster. It lies in the comradeship of him who alone can say,

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

III. There must be a reckoning with destiny. And destiny implies judgment. How this thought is thrown by Amos before the people to whom he spoke! God

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was coming with the scourge of his wrath. "Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves," says the Lord. "Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." How solemn are the prophet's warnings as he pictures the on-coming of judgment that will "break out like fire in the house of Joseph and devour it." None but an intrepid soul could utter these sentences in the ears of his fellows, and stern Amos might have failed could he not have broken his predictions with gracious sentences of exhortation. "Seek him," he cries, "that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name." In the midst of peril Amos saw deliverance if Israel would only take the way out.

There is an emphasis given to the fact, which is in accord with the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, that judgment is even now begun on earth, and that in one aspect it is a present act; an emphasis that is most pronounced at the present time in preaching and teaching. For judgment Christ is come into the world. Christ is as a present light in the world, discerning between the souls of men, attracting and gladdening some, those who do truth, and repelling others who do evil. Everlasting life is the portion even now of the first, while the last know not life but abide in death. In our thought we elide the fact that this present judgment is to be completed in what is well termed the general judgment. Of this pictures have been drawn by poet and preacher that are grave or grotesque according to the temperament of the author. The biblical facts of the judgment are as follows: In the last assize Christ will be the judge. Mankind will all appear before him. The righteous will have in his presence a perfect vision and knowledge of the goodness they have chosen in him, and the wicked will see into

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what an abyss of sin and woe they have fallen. The two classes of people will be parted because they have acquired distinct natures like the sheep and the goats. The books will be opened, and men will be judged from the things that are written therein, and the decision will be just, being based on what people did in the body. The people of the Lord will themselves receive different awards at the last according to what their life has been. A firelike test will try every man's work.

With such facts before us we see how utterly impossible it is for anyone to escape the great court of the eternities. It behooves us rather to set to ourselves the task of preparing to meet its tests and pass its requirements. And again it must be said that Christ is our Mediator, and that it is his words that are our pledge of efficient representation when we read, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Our text, then, is a call to action; something must be done to equip our souls for judgment. Are you ready? What have you done with sin—your sin? Will you remain steadfast in the midst of life's vicissitudes? Does the thought of God's judgment mold your life? "To-day," wrote a godly man on his last birthday, "let us rise and go to our work. To-morrow we shall rise and go to our reward."

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 13

DAVID MADE KING OVER JUDAH AND ISRAEL

GOLDEN TEXT: "David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."—2 Sam. 5. 10.

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BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

THERE is a greatness which expresses the ultimate triumph of personal limitations, but the greatness of David mentioned in the text indicates undeveloped and available resources. He "went on, and grew great." He "waxed greater and greater." His diligence and wisdom were rewarded, and according to the measure of his unselfishness and devotion he was honored of God. He was fittingly rebuked and punished for his misdemeanor and sin; and despite the checkered life of singular contradictions, sorrow, joy, pleasure, pain, disappointment, success, David's career was a magnificent triumph.

There was evidently some special reason for this emphatic statement. A very little reflection will explain. David's bitter experience with Saul and his friendly and sympathetic relations with Jonathan had tended to quicken the finer sensibilities and graces of the soul; hence forbearance, forgiveness, and affection were manifest. So that the news of the death of both these men while in battle on Mount Gilboa produced inexpressible grief, which, however, was tempered with reason and a more complete surrender unto God. Thus David's accession to the throne, his devout obedience to God, and combined victories after the capture of Jerusalem, and its occupancy, with added fortifications, are sufficient reason for this testimony.

1. David's prosperity reminds us of the *perils of*

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aggressiveness. He "went on, and grew great," but it was in defiance of taunts and unexpected suggestions of insufficiency. When Israel's king proposed to capture Jerusalem the Jebusite ridiculed the purpose and mockingly said, "You are not strong enough to conquer even the blind and the lame; what folly to attempt to capture our defenses." Such is satanic audacity; it scoffs at the assumptions of spiritual aggressiveness and contemptuously ridicules its weapons of warfare. The black angel reminds us that man must submit to inhospitable climes, "contrary winds," the scourge of pestilence, the blight of famine, the vices of society, pernicious rivalries, and a thousandfold unreasonable and unnecessary fatalities of our race. He taunts us with the cruel subtleties of sin, the entrenched evils of the liquor traffic and the invulnerable religious indifference of our times. He is the Jebusite who says the church is unable to control or remove even the lesser evils in the world; therefore what conspicuous folly to attempt to evangelize the world. In other words, "If the blind and the lame guards cannot be captured, how is it possible to take the citadel?"

The king of Israel is not alone in his experience of peril associated with persistent advance. It was perilous for him to open trade with Hiram, king of Tyre; just as our modern merchants, statesmen, and speculators know that with the glow of daring in all speculative enterprise is the peril of disastrous contingency and more. But with the life of the soul the perils of progress are overcome by those who use the available and all-sufficient grace in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is always *separation* from God that brings defeat to the struggling soul; the Scriptures explain: "And David went on, and grew great, and *the Lord of hosts was with him.*" No blade of the enemy has point sufficient to pierce the armor of God. It is always the naked soul that is a prey to the perils of the highway. The boastful striding of the self-conscious, independent,

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arrogant spirit is really like "the blind and the lame"; and the Jebusite wins the day in the absence of "the Lord of hosts." The warning is clear; better say in truth,

I would rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light.

What a divine Leader we have!

2. *There is always available inspiration for the aggressive soul.* Whatever ambition King David cherished, he was not unmindful of the sheepfold and the early years of discipline and training. Minding sheep and playing harps was very different to the obligations of a royal scepter and a scarlet robe; and David soon realized the difference between ruling in a sheepfold and governing a nation. Therefore he surely counseled with God and relied more upon his guidance and help than the numbers of Israel, and he was inspired with the guidance of God and the loyalty of his people. The jeers of the Jebusites were a stimulus to courage, and in the conflict the haughty defenders broke and fell as readily before Israel as the green withes yielded on the body of an aroused Samson.

Under pressure of circumstances obscure men can develop genius as markedly as did Lord Clive and Warren Hastings, who from lowly service in the East India Company became epoch-makers in the history of the British empire. Inspiration to cultivate ambitions may vary, but inspirations to observe all moral obligations and rewards have a common origin. In the battle at Jerusalem Jehovah was the only and all-sufficient inspiration, leading to the strengthening of the conquered city, and the building of an appropriate palace for the king, for "*the Lord of hosts was with him.*"

The inspiration of the divine presence is our hope and plea, and all necessary illumination given is in keeping with the divine assurance, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Such was the experience of

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David, *progress and illumination*. He "went on, and grew great, and the Lord of hosts was with him."

3. *The king's aggressiveness meant triumph*. This in the highest sense would have been impossible to sordid ambition. David assumed dominion by divine authority, and his loyalty and conscious responsibility regulated his advances. He confronted the seductiveness of prejudice and the taunts of defiant self-conceit for the loftiest considerations. Some men glory if they take another's crown and make it their footstool, but not so this king of Israel. His successes were untarnished with low desires, and every victory was an added gem to his worthy crown. In these triumphs love of fame was not even suggested. Michael Angelo once said to a young sculptor, "Do not trouble yourself too much about the light on your statue; the light of the public square will test its value." King David was not laboring for present applause, but the permanent good of the nation and the approval of God; and the consequent compensation illumines sacred history.

This fact of David's triumph is encouragement. We perceive the difference between the nominalist and the realist. With him it was not "power *behind* the throne, but *on* the throne; once anointed king he ruled, and never abdicated until he transferred his scepter to his son. Through grace God makes us members of the household of faith, children of the King, kings and priests to God and the Father, with no right to transfer these relations for any cause whatsoever. The real follower of God "grows in grace and in the knowledge and love of God"; the nominal disciple is "tossed to and fro with every wind and tide of doctrine."

David's aggressive triumphs were inspired with a nobler idea than spoil, he was a subject of the "King of Kings," and knew his limitations and the source of power. The progress that profitably affects time and eternity must be in keeping with the divine laws regulated by a love that delights to serve, and gives grace

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to rule. It is a loyalty which accepts the sovereignty of God and sees his goodness in every flower that blooms and every star that shines, without any disposition to bemoan a flat fen or miry marsh, but is rather anxious to say,

All that grows has grace—bog, marsh, and fen
Are only poor to undiscerning men.

1. From David's career we learn the profits of *patient* persistence in duty. He did not wait for months only, but years, before he could safely assure himself that he was established as king of Israel with every essential security. Obstacles inspired him with courage; personal misgivings and public criticisms may have pained, but they did not weaken his hands or hinder his steps. His mission was clear; he was anointed of God, and it was for him to press on to the victory awaiting. Thus his persistence was honored; "he grew great."

This reward of persistence is manifest everywhere, in school and factory, busy mart and legislative hall, proclaiming a rebuke to indolence and jealous despair. The envious eye sees nothing good in the plodder who triumphs, perceiving only the blemish of innocent infirmity. But the open clear vision sees the crown *worthily* worn by the "overcomer." The philosopher is correct when he says that "in nature nothing is given, all things are sold," by which he emphasizes the advantage of assiduous application. Yes! it is true that *nature sells*, but it is also blessedly true that in *grace* all things are *given*, necessarily, because nature has no equivalent compensations for the blessings of grace. However, it is always true that in the things of this life a man must invariably pay the price of success, though the prize may be deferred, and the goal reached only after long journeying. Robert Browning waited fully fifty years before there was due recognition of his gracious gifts. David waited long for a sense of royal security, but *he went on*, adding strength to strength until "the Lord established him king over Israel."

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2. Righteous endeavor insures fellowship with God.

Let us not forget, the Lord does not fellowship with those whom he does not approve. Observe how Israel faltered and failed when Jehovah withdrew his presence. It was not alone David's genius and efforts that made him great, as a man or as a ruler; but all these were sanctified to the best results because "the Lord of hosts was with him." Men build fortunes and otherwise acquire fame by untiring application, but gold dissolves and fame perishes; but baptize money and talents with divinity and they become imperishable factors in the kingdom of nature and grace. It is the difference between Strauss and Moody, Byron and Browning; so we prefer the steady shining of the sun to the flash of the meteor.

The conscious fellowship of God made David willing to endure "hope deferred"; he could afford to "labor and to wait." So can anyone who walks with God; there is more inspiration in the assured presence of God than in the praise of men. Not only does the divine presence cheer, but it energizes every faculty for resistance of evil and spiritual advance, and assures patience, confidence, resignation, triumph. It means everything essential to the refining and ennobling of the soul. It advises modern Davids that Saul's javelin always misses aim, and that a throne awaits those who follow the counsels of God. Therefore let no one feel discouraged because of seeming delayed recognition, for men are not always quick to discern, or willing to reward the faithful, but the Lord of hosts never slumbers and his memory never fails; he reads motives, accurately estimates, is never deceived by false colors, and cannot be lured from a just decision. Let us be like David, loyal to God, persistent in duty, devout in life, "patient in tribulation," for he "went on, and grew great, and the Lord of hosts was with him."

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 20

REVIEW: DAVID'S CONCEPTION OF ELECTION

GOLDEN TEXT: "And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."—2 Sam. 5. 12.

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THE career of David is luminous with varied lessons. That which shines out most prominently in our text is David's wholesome conception of divine election. Napoleon crowned himself with his own hands to forestall any illusion as to the origin of his authority; David spontaneously attributed his elevation directly to God: he "perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel."

David regarded his life as divinely planned. Such a conception of life does not always work for righteousness. Napoleon had a similar view, but his God was destiny, war his lucky star. Properly coördinated with his exalted idea of God, David's conception of divine election worked out in his life the virtues of patience and scrupulousness.

Intimations of coming kingship such as David had received worked moral ruin for Hazael (2 Kings 8) and Macbeth. Intoxicated by the prospect, they could not await God's time and God's means. They got the devil to discount God's note, and paid him his usual exorbitant rates for the accommodation. Each murdered the occupant of his promised seat, though every instinct of honor barred the way. How David's conduct shines by contrast! They betrayed the trust of a personal friend. David refused to seize two opportunities, which a less scrupulous man might well have considered providen-

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tial, to destroy his would-be murderer, Saul, and thus with one stroke clear his path of an enemy and his way to a throne. It was the Lord's plan; he felt he could wait the Lord's own time and the Lord's own means. He would not take vengeance into his own hands, and he would not mar the Lord's work with base methods. He would not even condone the misdirected zeal of less scrupulous men on his behalf. He executed instead of rewarding the regicides who thought to win his favor by their bloody deeds.

Some of our trust barons, who profess to regard themselves as divinely commissioned captains of industry, might well make David their model in this respect.

Who wins his place by treachery and blood
Cannot accept it as the gift of God.

This conception of life as a divine plan worked out in David's life *a sincere desire for divine guidance*. He was a subordinate officer; he always went to the Commander-in-Chief for orders. God's plans call for human coöperation. His commands can be disobeyed. Saul disobeyed them. That was why he was discharged and David appointed in his place. You cannot tell God's plan for any man simply by looking at what he is. A man's life indicates the divine plan only in proportion to the care taken to study the plan, and the fidelity with which it is followed. The condition of knowing God's will is the purpose to do it. "He that willeth to do his will shall know." David showed this sincere purpose; he obtained the divine guidance, he carried out his orders. After Saul had proved himself incapable of following instructions the Lord ceased answering his petitions for further knowledge of his will.

George Bowen, who became one of the missionary heroes of the faith, prayed out of the darkness of honest agnosticism, "If there is One above who notices the desires of men, if it please him to make known his will

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concerning me I should think it my highest privilege to do that will." He got his answer. It made him a saint. It is those who present their bodies a living sacrifice who prove his perfect will.

An inferior general should be glad to have a Grant plan his campaigns. If God has a plan for us it is better than any we could make for ourselves. It is better to find out his plan than to try to carry out a plan of our own even if we are devout enough to seek his aid. Lincoln showed his elemental religious faith when he answered those who besought him to pray fervently that God should be on our side in the great conflict, "I'm not concerned so much about getting God on our side as I am to see if I can't get on God's side."

This naturally leads to another product of David's view of life—*humility*. If one is carrying out the design of another he cannot appropriate the glory of the product. The marble cutter may be skillful, but it is the sculptor who made his clay model who is glorified in the statue's beauty. The private deserves credit for his fidelity, but the glory of the campaign belongs to the general. David is notable even among the saints of the Bible for his uniform deference to God. His first recorded utterances manifest it. He recounts his boyish victories over the lion and the bear as a reason why Saul should allow him to risk an encounter with the giant Goliath. But it is the *Lord* who delivered him out of their paws, and it is in the *Lord* he is trusting for success in this more formidable encounter. It is the dominant chord in all the psalms, which reveal his heart life even down to old age. It is the Lord who has made him swift-footed and strong-armed. It is the Lord whose name he exalts, and exhorts his people to exalt forever and forever. He alone has done all the wonderful things over which he feels reason to exult. This is one secret of David's popularity with God and man. We like a hero to be modest. Moses with good reason warned the Israelites in advance, that in the

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days of their coming prosperity they would indulge in self-gratulations, saying, "*My* power and the might of *mine hand* hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8. 17, 18). The people lived up to that forecast. David was the conspicuous exception.

No nation and no age needed that warning more than America, to-day. America abounds in "self-made men," and it is the tendency of self-made men to worship their maker. Millionaires of America, "remember the Lord thy God, that giveth thee the power to get wealth." Our patriotic pride, too, needs seasoning with the old hymn,

O Lord, our fathers oft have told,
In our attentive ears,
The wonders in their days performed,
And in more ancient years.
'Twas not their courage, nor their sword,
To them salvation gave;
'Twas not their number, nor their strength,
That did their country save;
But thy right hand, thy powerful arm,
Whose succor they implored,
Thy providence protected them
Who thy great name adored.

Kipling has well called us back from

Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the law:
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.

Genius is saved from being unduly "puffed up" by this same Davidic sense of the source of high callings and high equipment. We feel an added conviction of Riley's greatness when we hear his earnest disclaimer to an enthusiastic admirer of his poetic skill, "It ain't *me*; I'm only the willer through which the whistle comes."

But this conception of our life as a plan of God needs supplementing as David supplemented it. David not only saw his life as a plan of God, but he saw the purpose of it; note that "David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that

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he had exalted his kingdom *for his people Israel's sake.*" That is, David perceived what the Bourbon and Stuart type of king has been so slow to realize, that kings exist for the welfare of the people, and not the people for the welfare of kings. David realized that in the divine plan he was not an end but a means; that God's elections are not to glory but to service.

Such a conception not only saves one from a detestable pious vanity, the complacency of a manifest favorite of heaven, but it begets a grave sense of great responsibility. The London correspondents noted a sudden access of gravity and gentle consideration for others in the manner of the gay, easy-going Prince of Wales when he found himself King Edward VII, with a great empire at his feet. Sharing David's viewpoint, his motto is "*Ich Dien*"—"I serve." This is the conception of kingship which Christ tried to give his disciples in place of their selfish dreams of honor and lordship, the divine kingliness of service. Saint Paul is the preëminent example of election in the New Testament. Luke tells us the Lord said, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles." Chosen for service, not for honors. And Saint Paul, like David, took this same view of it himself: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Richly endowed for a great work. Shakespeare puts the lesson with great force and beauty in the Duke's mouth in "Measure for Measure":

Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.

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A great publishing house seized the figure as applicable to the heritage of culture and adopted it as a trademark motto. "Those having light should give it to others," declare their many publications in sententious Greek, while a blazing torch, extended toward a reaching hand, helps make the meaning clear. Christ's quiet words are, "Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel."

Noblesse oblige. Great gifts, great opportunities, great blessings are all to be received as David received his kingship. God has compassion on *all* his people. Those who seem disproportionately endowed are his almoners. The captain with a cargo of grain for starving India is as excusable for appropriating it to his own use as the steward of the bountiful mercies of God who gorges himself with God's gifts and does not pass them on to the needy multitudes. The parable of the talents reiterates the lesson—what you have is yours to use, not to keep. But it enforces this added lesson, that it is the man with the one talent as well as the man with ten who is responsible for the proper use of his endowment. It isn't only the geniuses and the millionaires, the prophets, the kings, and the saints; every man's life is a plan of God. God has a work for the shepherd boy with his sling as well as for the king with his armies. He has a work for *you*.

Just where you stand in the conflict,
There is your place;
Just where you think you are useless,
Hide not your face.
God placed you there for a purpose,
Whate'er it be;
Think he hath chosen you for it,
Fight faithfully.

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 27

TEMPERANCE LESSON: THE ETERNAL MOCKER

GOLDEN TEXT: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging."
—Prov. 20. 1.

BY F. B. STOCKDALE, D.D.,
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THE Revised Version reads, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler," and the subject to be considered is the relation of stimulants to society. As a subject it is in all probability older than history. Toward it society's duty is not yet spoken, much less practiced. The relation of "drink" to life places it among the problems of history and at its solution the ages toil. About it some things are settled; the text mentions two. Wine is false and strong drink a nuisance. Thus the personal and public relation are in the very nature of the subject.

What intoxication does was known long before science took up the question of "How." The Book of Life lifts many danger signals on this subject, from the time that waking from his drunken stupor Noah cursed Ham, to the vision of the Apocalypse in which are coupled wine, fornication, and the fall of a great city.

"*Wine is a mocker.*" The increasing knowledge of the centuries has but confirmed in scientific form the statement of the ancient book of wisdom. It comes to us as the decision of the ages, confirmed by the experience of all peoples, civilized and barbarous, that "wine is a mocker." Solomon caught a glimpse of the features of "the invisible spirit of wine" and, garbing him in cap and bells, named him for the years—"a mocker." The sneer is still on his lips; his eyes still sparkle with an imitation of mirth; his whole features

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are false to himself and to those on whom he smiles. He was, and is, and forever will be false—"a mocker."

His history shows him false in every domain he is allowed to enter. The body he stimulates without strengthening. The mind he excites without exalting. Under the promise of uplifting he undermines. In morals, under the banner inscribed "No harm in it," he turns the mirth of life into the tragedy of hell and works the wreck of countless human souls. None have ever yielded to his authority and maintained their own supremacy. A nation of wine drinkers and national permanency is an utter impossibility. Poets he spoils; kings and statesmen he degrades; maternity he molds and mother love he murders. As from the school of moderation he yearly graduates his class—a hundred thousand strong—and musters them in for King Bibber's army and marches them to pauperdom, thus making producers parasites; to prison, making the builders of society a burden thereto; to asylums or an early grave—he sits surrounded by the squalor he creates, the pain and grief he causes, the wreck of body, mind, and souls of men and empires he has tumbled, and still with the sneer of the "mocker" he screams in fiendish glee, "There's no harm in it."

What should be my relation to stimulants? To ask the question is to answer it. It should be the attitude of the true to the false; of the serious to the mocker. Shun stimulants, and especially those that climb to intoxication, as you would shun the false. Wine is a liquid lie—the false in solution. You cannot be friends with the "mocker" and be true to yourself, or life.

Shun the "mocker" because he is your foe. There is no foe to material prosperity, mental stability, and spiritual greatness that equals the "mocker" called "drink." One hundred thousand a year he destroys, and many of them from the "best homes." In one of the prisons in the city of New York, at the same time, were seventeen men all of whom had been members, at

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different times, of the same Sabbath school in this same city. Every one of them had started prisonward by the way of the "mockers'" gate. Do you feel equal to his companionship without his curse? Then be manly, magnanimous, Christly, and for the sake of the one affected by your example shun the "mockers" as you would shun the moral murderer of your friend. If you are strong you are strong to help, and not to tempt. If you are safe in danger's company, that is the strongest reason that can be given why you should shun it. It is yours to lead your brother. See that you lead him right. The personal relation should be that of uncompromising enmity to the "mockers" called wine.

"Strong drink a brawler." If drink did nothing but mock, the question would remain in the personal realm. As long as men drink wine and are mocked thereby they may rightly ask the question, "What has society to do with it?" For be it noted that God gives to life the right to go along. It is that right that makes us moral beings. But when the "mockers" becomes "a brawler"—and yearly a hundred thousand moderate drinkers become drunkards—the question passes from the personal to the public. When the "mockers" becomes "a brawler," and he who "made faces" begins "to make a loud sound, a great commotion, or tumult; to rage, war, moan, clamor"—a disturber of the peace—it is no longer a question as to whether society has a right to interfere. Society has all the rights of the ancient world plus those of civilized life. The right of self-protection is the base on which all social life rests. The "brawler" is a public nuisance, the "raging" a public burden, and society's right to deal with him is far above any sentimental idea of personal liberty. No liberty has or can have any right to be a public disturbance—"a brawler."

The drink question, in its personal relation, never changes. Its public aspects are never the same. A generation ago it was a common thing in English life for the keeper of the "public house" to leave "divine

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service" during the singing of the last hymn in order that he might be "open" in time to serve a long line of Sunday school scholars with beer for the family's Sunday dinner. The growing conscience of the church has made some changes since then. The question will change until rightly it is settled. This is one of God's perpetual encouragements. The battle is never lost while we are driving the enemy to new positions. A generation ago he sheltered behind "personal liberty." From those ditches, dug in society's fields, a growing public enlightenment has driven him, and to-day he shelters—but still shoots our sons and daughters—behind "the amount of money invested in the business." A money-craze generation supposes he has found his impregnable fort. The drink traffic has no impregnable fort. In the nature of things no right for it exists. Read the proverb preceding the text: "Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools." God's whips have swished for ages, as the smarting backs of fools declare. His judgments are finished, and the sheriff of time is in the act of their execution. His judgment is against the "scorner," "mocker," much more the "brawler." Against the latter all the rights and interests of society, selfish and otherwise, material and moral, join with the judgment of God, and in the very nature of the case the drink traffic is doomed. While men drink God's whip shall sting. So long as a mother's breaking heart or the tears of a neglected child shall cry to God his judgment shall not sleep.

How shall the public deal with this public question? As the bird drops her unruly young from the nest for the protection of her family, society has the right, at any price, to rid herself of this monstrous curse. She must enforce her best sentiment without compromise with the worst. She must be guided by her best knowledge and not allow the ignorant to rule. While no case in Bible history settles this question, we think the principles on which it must be settled have been

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given. Take an illustration. It is said, "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God; for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves. . . . He took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him." Here we have the king dealing with a public question. All public questions are and must forever be subject to the public-law. The drink traffic is among those questions; it is in our social, political, and business life. It is no longer a question of personal equation. It is a question of public safety. We are tainted with it as thoroughly as Israel was cursed with idolatry. That we have given it national shelter is one of the disgraces that in history will cling to our Christian civilization. We must deal with it as a national foe, and not as a friend.

Here you have the removing of the effect by the removing of the cause. To legalize the sale of liquor and then punish the diseased buyer is foolish, not to say sinful. In this age of "advanced thought" we have concerned ourselves with the worshiper and forgotten our duty to the altar. Elijah remembered both. He not only told the people that they must worship the true God, but he pulled down the altars and ordered that not one of the priests escape. The best way to rid the land of idolatry was to destroy the idol. We shall be a sober nation when the sense and sentiment of society is enforced in the destruction of the traffic of making strong drink. There is no other way to make a sober nation. All other public foes, such as disease, we fight as near the source as we possibly can. On the drink question we have spent our time dealing with the product and forgot to deal with the producer. We must pull the altars of alcohol down.

Asa recognized that it was the duty of the strong to remove temptation from the path of the weak. We are not temperance people because we do not drink. Tem-

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perance is active. It saves its brother. The "priest" and the "Levite" were as guilty as the "thieves." The "thieves" by blows "half killed" the traveler. The "priest" and "Levite," by neglect, would murder him outright. Asa was king to protect and not to spoil his people. We are sober men not to collect a tax on the fault or the falling of our brother, but to save him. We should save him by the most rational method—remove the cause of his falling. This duty is as imperative as personal abstinence. To abstain is a duty to ourselves; to destroy the liquor traffic our duty to our weaker brothers.

Asa recognized that national evil is removed only by national law. Was it ever otherwise? Will you answer in the affirmative? Idolatry was never stopped but by law. The king, whose word was law, said, "Stop this," and it ceased. The prophet, whose word was warning and admonition, said, "Stop this," but it grew and he suffered. In this modern evil, in whose groves are slain and on whose altars are offered a hundred thousand victims a year, do you say remove it by "moral suasion"? Is our way so much better than the old one? The sequel does not show it to be so. We have tried it for near a century, and have persuaded the saloon keeper to come from a back to a front street. We have persuaded him to become bold; to attend political conventions; to set aside large sums of money to corrupt the ballot, or to thwart the laws that are not in his favor. Moral suasion will never reach the question. To talk of regulating it is foolish. Is law to protect or prohibit wrong? Would you license a mad dog because he was valuable? We are Christianized for the destruction of wrong, and for a national evil there is no remedy but in a national law. Pull down the temples, break down the groves, and once and forever end the habit of intemperance.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 4

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."—Psa. 100. 4.

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THIS celebrated one hundredth psalm closes that group of praise psalms founded on the Second Isaiah, with the echoes of whom they are filled. "There is common to them all that mild sublimity, sunny cheerfulness, unsorrowful spiritual character, and New Testament expandedness which we wonder at in the second part of Isaiah. . . . They show how the Maccabean piety fed itself on Deutero-Isaiah no less than did the writers of the New Testament."¹ They were intended to be sung as thanksgiving songs in the forecourts of the temple. We cannot tell certainly when these psalms were composed, or for what occasion. We are sure that it was in some time of great national rejoicing, perhaps after the return from the exile, perhaps on the dedication of the second temple, perhaps after some victory in war by the valiant Maccabees. Baethgen thinks that Psalm 95 may have been composed for use at the dedication of the second temple, and as Psalm 100 is connected with Psalm 95, that may have been used on the same occasion.²

The marvelous thing about these psalms is that they express such exultation, such calls to thanksgiving, such boundless faith in God and in the triumph of right, such hopefulness and wholeness of spirit when in the midst of distress and war, of disappointment and pain.

¹ Cobb, *The Book of Psalms* (London, 1905), p. 280.

² Baethgen, *Die Psalmen* (2 Aufl., 1897), pp. 298, 299.

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If some great national blessing has been given to the people, it is not for this alone that thanks are returned, but for the grace and favor of God shown in the blessing, and which is theirs even if the outward blessing is lacking. Because the people are God's people, therefore they must shout and cry aloud for joy. This triumphant note of confidence runs like golden thread through the whole Psalter, and has made that book the support of suffering saints in all ages since. When Melancthon was mourning the death of his son in Dresden, July 12, 1559, not long before his own, he comforted himself with the words of the third verse of this psalm, "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves"—the same verse which Edward Fitzgerald, the famous translator of Omar Khayyám, ordered to be carved on his tombstone.

Even in the rude versions of the old Scottish Presbyterian Church these inspired songs have had persistent life and wide vogue. Old Hundred, "All people that on earth do dwell," composed by John Knox's friend, William Kethe, and set to music by Louis Bourgeois, survives all the changes of thought and fashion, as Prothero well says, that the progress of four centuries has witnessed. These psalms of faith and thanksgiving, wrung from hearts in anguish or lifted aloft in time of victory or of peace and prosperity, have "cheered the prisoners in the dungeons of Blackness, sailed with them in their ships to France, consoled their exile, and sent its notes from Duns Law across the Merse to challenge the song of the Cavaliers. As Baillie delights to tell, 'Had ye lent your ear in the morning, or especially at even, and heard in the tents the sound of some singing psalms, some praying, some reading Scripture, ye would have been refreshed.'"¹

We can never understand what steeled the hearts of those brave old Scotch Presbyterians against popery on

¹ Ker, *The Psalms in History and Biography* (Edinburgh, 1888), p. 205; Prothero, *The Psalms in Human Life* (London & New York, 1903), pp. 149, 324.

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the one hand and prelacy on the other, which made them suffer and grow strong under the persecutions of Catholicism—especially of that pseudo-Catholicism of the Episcopalian Stuarts, under whose iron heel Scotland groaned so long; we can never understand the secret of that long heroic resistance until we remember that their life and faith were rooted in the Psalms. They mounted the scaffold of Episcopalian tyrants with the words of the Psalms on their lips, down their glens could be heard the sacred words ringing and echoing a mighty appeal to God, and their women martyrs consoled themselves with some text from the Psalms as they were tied in the waters to drown by Episcopalian butchers. Ah, it was a long, weary struggle—those sad, awful years when the Episcopal kings of England were trying to root out the national faith of Scotland—think of it! from James I to James II (1603-1688)—but it was a failure; the Presbyterianism of Knox survived its baptism of fire, survived it largely because they fed their blood on the Psalms. It might be the victory psalms of Israel's golden day, the thanksgiving psalms such as that from which the Golden Text is taken, or the De Profundis psalms, those undying aspirations from the depths of sorrow and defeat and pain which have been the consolation of innumerable saints. Among the forces which made Scotland Protestant and which kept her Protestant, dear reader, do not forget the Psalms. I do not mean that the New Testament was not valued as a treasure of infinite worth, for it was; but as the Psalms were the hymn-book of the Bible, and as they preferred to sing the inspired words, it happened that the Psalms became inwoven into Scotland's life and faith in a way unparalleled in history.

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,¹ and into his courts with praise.”

¹ Margin of the Revised Version, “Or, a thank offering.”

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The gates referred to are the doors leading to the forecourts of the second temple. I take it from that that the Jews went to church. They were not visiting at the time of the temple service, nor out on their pleasure-chariots, nor off in the country for a Sabbath day's recreation. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." We moderns might well take a leaf from that old immortal Book. If we do not wish materialism to blind us, earthly pleasures to enervate us, or secular affairs to work our despiritualization, we must keep an open ear to that noble call, "Enter into his doors." Dear friend, have you never felt an enrichment of life within the doors of God, have you never felt your spirit refreshed and lifted up after the week's toil, were you not ennobled and illuminated by the divine light? "But the sermon is dry." Then the hymns may carry your soul to God, and the prayer may give you a glimpse of the divine compassion. Somehow, somewhere, there is a blessing for you within the gates of his house. Enter, enter! At the close of his life James Parton, a man of letters whom America should not forget, confessed with sadness the irreparable loss he had sustained in not going to church. He began in the closing years, but that could not atone for what he had missed of stimulus and uplift, and of nourishment to the higher life. We may not "forget the assembling of ourselves together" without spiritual loss.

The most striking thing about this text is the spirit in which the Jews entered the temple. "Enter into his gates *with thanksgiving*, and into his courts *with praise*." In spite of her long exile, of all her sufferings and tragedies, Israel never lost heart nor hope. So she sang praises with quivering lips, and through her tears saw the vision of the Eternal God. Her hope in him and in his kingdom of truth and righteousness kept her young and strong. Therefore while other nations waxed old and infirm, and finally passed out, she seemed to have the gift of perennial youth. The nation with

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such a hope, with such a faith, with such a God, could not lose the elasticity and courage of youth.

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacle.
Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy:
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,
The health of my countenance, and my God. (Psa. 43. 2-5.)

A nation that could sing in such strains is indestructible.

And it is this spirit of joy and gratitude which is the mark of a great soul, of a great people. The oft-told story of the first American Thanksgiving is a good commentary on this Golden Text. The gates through which the Pilgrim Fathers entered seemed to give them inhospitable welcome, and the courts they trod might well have seemed to them memorials of their recent dead! But with the heroic faith of the psalmist they kept a joyful heart, and consecrated their new possessions for us by entering the gates of the West with thanksgiving.

This is the mark of a great soul, of a great nation—hope, joy, gratitude. The French Protestants hid away in their far-off valleys from the persecutor, but they sang with light heart the psalms of Marot. O, America, you have all things richly to enjoy. Don't forget your God, nor to enter into *his* courts with praise. Don't turn Thanksgiving Day into Football Day, but remember the inner treasures of the heart, where abide the sanctions for the immortality of the national life. And, friend, when thou goest into the sanctuary, think not most what thou canst get—stimulus for thy intellect by a strong sermon, satisfaction to thy taste by fine music, comfort for thy sorrows and healing for thy broken heart by the vision of Eternal Love, light upon thy per-

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plexities by the revelation of Divine Wisdom, moral tone and vigor by the unfolding of the Divine Law, strength for the daily duty by prayer to thy God—think not most what thou canst get (doubtless thou wilt receive these things, for thy heavenly Father knowest that thou hast need of them), but with glad and light heart and cheerful face for the infinite blessings poured into thy life, enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

NOTE.—The tune known as Old Hundredth first appeared in the Huguenot Psalter, Geneva, 1551, a book which contained versions of forty-nine psalms by Marot and thirty-four by Beza. The tune, however, was set to Psalm 134, and was brought over to Great Britain by Puritan refugees when they felt it safe to return in the reign of Elizabeth, its first appearance there being in 1563. Why was it called Old? To distinguish it from the newer tunes set to the psalms in Tate and Brady's Psalter, 1696. This and other psalm tunes were the first ever set to the English metrical psalms, namely, in the book edited by Sternhold and Hopkins and published by Day (thus generally known as Day's Psalter), 1562. After 1700 they began to call the tunes to the psalms in this book old as over against the newer tunes in Tate and Brady. I might add that the usual quarter-note version of Old Hundredth in our hymn-books was introduced about the middle of the eighteenth century, the original tune being set to whole and half-notes. In the edition of 1563 the tune to Psalm 134 of Geneva Psalter of 1551 was set to the 100th psalm. See the excellent book by Lightwood, *Hymn-tunes and Their Story*, London, 1906, 370, 33, 305.

The revival of the use of the psalter in our churches is a good thing. In the admirable edition of my learned colleague, Professor Rogers, it is now used every Sunday in thousands of our congregations, in which custom we are but walking in the footsteps of our founder under Christ, John Wesley. The ancient and even many in the mediæval church put us to shame in use and knowledge of the psalter.

It is a pity we have not more versions of the psalms in our Hymnal. The old Covenanter might say to us, "Too much of man, not enough of God, in your hymn-books." I would reply, "Does not God speak to us in our Christian hymns?" But after all, there is a lack here. In dark moments of Reformation history Luther would cheer up his despondent friend Melancthon: "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm," and they would lift up their voices together in Luther's own version of it, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." If in this easy-going age we want the strength of the God of the everlasting hills, we must turn more and more to the words of psalmist and of prophet.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 11

GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

GOLDEN TEXT: "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise."—1 Kings 8. 56.

By GEORGE H. BICKLEY, JR., PH.D.,

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It would be impossible to set forth the faith of the writers of Scripture in the immutability of the divine word more forcibly than their own words have already declared. Repeatedly they have given utterance to the truth that His word abideth forever; that the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of God abideth forever; yea, that heaven and earth shall pass, but his word remaineth.

The promises to Moses and to David as to the temple of Jehovah were now fulfilled. At the dedication thereof Solomon declared, "There hath not failed one word of all his good promises." The plans and labors of years of preparation had now reached fruition. All things conspired to show forth the goodness and faithfulness of God.

Before the manifest evidences of literal fulfillment it is easy to rejoice. Standing at the height of achievement, with work complete, we rejoice in the good things that have come unto us. Under such conditions our glad acknowledgment is not the result of faith, since the promised land is now ours by actual possession.

A working philosophy of life must account for all its facts and experiences. Faith is a vital factor for us, to whom so much of life seems incomplete. We often stand where David did when his purpose to build the temple was halted. Fulfillment is postponed beyond the reach of our lives. The temple of our longings does not

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receive its capstone and dedication. Plans fail and promises seem abortive.

We can build a philosophy for life better from the eleventh chapter of Hebrews than from the Book of Daniel. There is the record of one who was delivered from the lions, but others "were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, tormented, afflicted." Three Hebrew children were delivered from the burning, fiery furnace, but many others in the age of martyrs gave their lives at the stake for their faith. Yet to both those who escaped and those who perished was the promise given, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

It is reason for rejoicing that there are the records of God's interposition for his children and of times of special deliverance. Our confidence is that he is with us, not only when we walk in green pastures and beside still waters, but also in the valley of shadows. At times our lives are wonderfully blessed by evidences of divine grace and goodness, yet again there comes the trying of faith as by fires of difficulty and disappointment. For those who suffer and appear to fail of attaining the promise, more than for those who rejoice over success achieved, is it desirable to learn the full meaning and measure of the unfailing promises of God? His word standeth fast. Distrust yourself if need be, your own understanding, the appearance of things, but hold fast to the everlasting word. If our confidence here be shaken there is nothing to which we can hold.

Humboldt in describing his travels in South America tells of an earthquake in the Andes. The earth trembled, rocks were loosened from their places and came tumbling down the mountains, trees were torn up by the roots by the accompanying tempest. He looked to the everlasting hills, but they swayed like drunken men. He turned toward the ocean, but it had retreated for

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several miles, to return in an awful tidal wave. When all things of earth seemed to fall away he looked toward the heavens, and through the gathering darkness saw the stars shining bright and serene, undisturbed by the crash of earth. Yet even those heavens shall grow old as a worn-out garment and be wrapped up as a scroll, but God's word shall endure forever.

The character of God gives assurance that his promises shall not fail. When he would assure Abraham, he swore by himself that his word would prove faithful. Abraham wondered as a stranger in the very land he was to receive for an inheritance. Yet he did not charge God foolishly. Faith gave unto him the assurance that the promise of deferred fulfillment was the prelude to a better message, and he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God.

We must learn what God's promises are, so that we may intelligently expect and believe. Study the Word not as separated proof-texts, but as a continuous revelation of God's purpose for the individual and the race. God's promises are like an unfolding scroll, and can be fully learned only as life develops the largeness of the plan for our lives.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Word of God is the ground of our hope and trust, revealing the promises and purposes of the Almighty. It is also the interpreter of life's mysteries by the key of faith. We thus learn that God's promises are conditional. They are intended to call forth in us certain traits of character. The development of this character is more important than the immediate reward held forth, just as an education is more important to the child than the reward which has called forth his more earnest efforts.

The purpose for life is the attainment of the full stature of manhood in Christ Jesus. To reach this we must struggle, sacrifice, endure hardness, and, passing by wayside flowers and pleasures, press forward to the

mark. The promise of the less is often absorbed in the greater, that the good be not the enemy of the best. Often we find a denial in form becomes a fulfillment in fact.

Take the promises to prayer. They seem so positive and final, yet the expected answer has not come. Has God's promise failed? Look again, study the promises of God, trust in the unfailing Father, and new light will break from his word. Then we will see the conditions that are laid down, with which we have not complied. How can we claim results when we do not meet the terms. Omnipotence is not placed at the command of ignorance and selfishness.

Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." But could you "in his name" ask for that which would be inimical to the coming of his kingdom in you, and through you to the world? Again the Master said, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Faith that trusts unquestioningly is necessary as the interpreter of the answer sent; not a faith that will be satisfied only if the answer is exactly to our liking, but which accepts the answer, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Or, again, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"; and, "We receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." So that if we are disobedient, or the life of the vine abides not in us, we are thereby cutting ourselves off from the rich fruits the branch should be bearing. Neither is there real prayer apart from submission, not only for the fact of the answer, but also for the kind. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask according to his will he heareth us."

The conditional connection shown between promise and fulfillment is true not only of prayer but of every word concerning either reward or punishment. God's

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word as his laws in nature has no variableness or shadow of turning. It behooves us to adjust ourselves to them. There must be an accompanying development of character by which we arrive at an accurate estimate of the relative worth of things spiritual and temporal; a strengthening of vision so that we aspire to the unseen things, and, like Moses, "endure as seeing him who is invisible."

For all life's disappointments and ills there is a complete reward. Godliness is profitable, but its greatest profit is in having heart and treasure moth-proof and rust-proof. The excellency of the best things makes us gladly count all else but loss. God's promises include the ministry of suffering and the beatitudes for those who are persecuted and tempted. As the joy set before our Lord led him to endure the cross, so the promised triumph should sustain us through shame and defeat to the final victory.

Have patience to wait on God. The ancient worthies "received not the promise, that they without us should not be made perfect." Neither does the complete fulfillment of the promise come to us, as we without those who are to be blessed by our faith and works cannot know the fullness of God's purpose for our lives here and hereafter. Without David's plans and preparations Solomon had not been able to build as he did. Without Solomon's effort the stores accumulated by his father had been used as he hoped. God's plans are beyond the embrace of any man or age.

Probably every one as a child has gone out three or four days after he planted the seeds, and, unwilling to wait longer for tardy nature to do her work, has scratched the seeds out to see why they were not already putting forth leaves.

God's promises unfold like the scenery in climbing the great mountain peak. From the plains we saw its distant beckoning summit. Yet as we draw nearer, the foothills hide it from view, the trees about us shut out

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everything. We journey out into the open and to the top of the hills and there catch a still distant view of the peak, with many mountains intervening that must be scaled before we can begin the direct ascent to the summit. It is only after weary hours and many miles' journey that we reach the summit and amid the eternal snows breathe that higher air and take in the inspiring view of range and plains. So God's promises are not comprehended by a sudden spurt, nor the eminences of his grace and power realized in a few speedy moments. Eternity will be needed to learn the height and depth of the love that passeth knowledge.

Faith in the promises of God and the resolute purpose to attain thereto give a self-control and triumph over present conditions by which the longing vision and thought are averted from the present to the loving purpose of God. Knowing he is able to do for us far above what we ask or think, we are serenely trustful.

No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore;
I know not where his islands lift
Their prouder palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 18

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON

GOLDEN TEXT: "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another."—Eph. 4. 32.

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THE spirit that actuated David is a beautiful interpretation of the text. David might easily have found reason to have acted in a more moderate way. Why should he have been to so much pains in carrying out to the letter the covenant made between himself and Jonathan. It will be remembered that Jonathan's family had all died and that it was with some difficulty that David found this unlikely and ungraceful child of misfortune. He could have bestowed upon him favor becoming his royal dignity without having gone so far as to make him a companion at the royal table. It is quite another thing to exhibit such kindness and consideration as are here shown, when something less would undoubtedly have answered every requirement.

David never did anything by halves. If he repents it is with the greatest of humiliation and with full acknowledgment of his sin; if he is fighting the battles of the Lord, it is with all the vigor of his being. He was a strong and unique character, who was ever doing things on a grand scale. To anticipate any other action than is here indicated would be to expect him to be false to all the previous revelations of his character. It is here in the story of David's magnanimity that we find a conspicuous characteristic of Christian character and one of the impelling motives of his life in relation to the needy world about him.

It is to be observed that the primary motive in David's treatment of Mephibosheth is his sense of the overwhelming kindness of God (2 Sam. 9. 3). David

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was never forgetful of his indebtedness to God. As in the evening of his life he looks back on the checkered career through which he had been divinely brought, on a life so wondrously ordered and so graciously preserved, on a life so eminently useful in the progress of God's kingdom in the world, he is heard to say, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." What he was and what he was able to accomplish was due to Jehovah. And here it is, in God, that the Christian finds his noblest aspirations. The fountain of our best impulses and our strongest motives is the cross on which the Prince of Glory died.

The Christian only begins to unfold those higher qualities of character when he has taken time to reflect upon the demonstration of redeeming grace, what it involved of sacrifice, what it cost the Lord of heaven and earth, to make reconciliation. Not until men are brought to an appreciable knowledge of the Saviour's dying love do they sense the value and the significance of those impulses that actuated him in his dealings with sinful men.

The text strongly hints that these desirable qualities are attainable through a process of evolution; that kindness of act, tender-heartedness of feeling, can only be practiced when there is an imitation of Infinite Goodness. One of the first evidences of the new life is the putting off of the malevolent spirit and the putting on of the benevolent spirit. "When injury used to be met with reviling, and insult retorted in worse insult, the men of the new life will be found 'forgiving one another even as God in Christ forgave' them." The first impulse of a soul newly born into the kingdom of Love is a fellow-feeling for those unmoved by the un-failing kindness of God. "Love evokes love, and begets loving-kindness."

The power of kindness cannot be computed except in terms of love. There is no greater power in the world, and it has been well said that "Power itself hath

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not one half the might of gentleness." The gospel of Christ not only provides a means of salvation, but supplies the standard and incentive of moral attainment. "It makes life an imitation of God."

There is no higher honor given to men than to be known as the chosen of God; to represent him in likeness of character, and to imitate him in similarity of achievement. If this world is to be won for Christ it will be necessary for men's hearts to be touched by the kindness of God. This is God's method of winning man for himself. God is the great-hearted God, and before men can be effectual in winning others their own hearts must feel the thrill of God's marvelous goodness and perceive his amazing gentleness.

There is nothing that counts for more in work for mankind than kindness. "Kindness does not consist in gifts, but in gentleness and generosity of spirit. Men may give their money, which comes from the purse, and withhold their kindness, which comes from the heart." "One cannot give money or anything else with the same passion with which he gives himself. All forms of consecration are secondary—valuable, but secondary. No generation, therefore, can show its full faith in Christianity which does not offer its best gifts." Kindness, then, which we must feel is one of God's agents for the winning of men, finds expression through personality. There is no gift like the gift of one's self.

The text contributes still another important truth, which is the outgrowth of a consecrated personality, namely, that in giving one's self we are contributing a saving factor in the redemptive plan of God. Loving-kindness has a redemptive power that God meant should be used for the salvation of mankind. He meant that man should have a part in redeeming this old world from the ills which come upon men. Our gospel is a gospel of gracious ministries; it is a song of gladness to the weary, of hope to the discouraged, of loving care for the orphaned, of courage to the homesick and

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lonely, and of succor for the tempted. No man lives unto himself. We are debtors to the poor, to the sick, to the faint-hearted, and to the suffering. The noblest impulses are those that lead us to give ourselves for the good of others. "The parts and signs of goodness are many. If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them; if he be compassionate toward the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree that is wounded itself when it gives balm; if he easily pardons and remits offenses, it shows that his mind is planted above injuries, so that he cannot be shot; but above all, if he have Saint Paul's perfection, that he would wish to be an anathema from Christ for the salvation of his brethren, it shows much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ himself" (Bacon).

It is easy to delegate to others such work as seeking out and finding those who, if the gospel is to be believed, are brothers, with as much right to the royal blessings of the kingdom as we have, but who by some mischance of life have been isolated, and therefore do not share with us the benefits and blessings of our common inheritance. Is the fault theirs, that the dignity of their highborn souls has fallen into disrepute and become a vessel of dishonor? What of it? They are our kinsfolk. Suppose we are occupied with other tasks worthy in themselves our best attention and consideration, and suppose we do make now and then a faint effort toward helping to redeem the lives of others less favored than ourselves; suppose we offer an occasional prayer, or speak a kind word, what then? O, we might be content, finding satisfaction in our own God-blessed condition, having joy in what perhaps seems to be a providential environment, and dwelling in an atmosphere of self-complacency and self-satisfaction. But is this all that is demanded of us, or all that our soul, con-

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scious of its bitter need, and when it was dwelling in misfortune and forgetfulness, felt was required of it? Religion is more than enjoyment. It is service.

"For Christ's sake"—there can be no greater incentive to action than is expressed in these words. Forgiving "even as God also in Christ forgave you"—this is the grand motive of life. When men are moved by Christ's love, or by his example, devotion finds expression in similarity of attitude, and in likeness of action. When we have a revelation of the infinite love of God as revealed by the sacrifice of his Son, then and not until then do we realize that a life selfishly lived is without value or, as the Scriptures put it, "lost." "The love of Christ," writes the apostle, "constraineth us." "Love is mercy, considerateness, sympathy, self-forgetfulness, service. . . . It is not a vague, generalized, diffusive affection, but specific, personal, individualized, the direction of desire in the way of Jesus." Our love for our fellows is a result of the constraining love of Christ. By the illumination of his Spirit we see in every life the possibility of a child of God. Discerning beneath the surface of every man traces of a kingly nature, when for Christ's sake we put forth effort to restore the soul to the privileges of the kingdom itself, it is as though we did it unto him. The Scriptures are clear and specific on this point: "For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

And Sir Launfal said, "I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to thee!"

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Some one has said that it is through Jonathan's relation to David that he is chiefly known to us. Is not this the very ground for our activity in the matter of the salvation of men? There may be no natural reason for our devotion to men disassociated from us by social or other distinctions; but because of the relation that Christ sustained to them, the love and devotion which he has manifested and is manifesting in their interest—here is the motive that should influence us in their behalf. "An active interest in the promotion of Christ's kingdom is a mark of true discipleship. A man's Christian life is not what it should be if the outstretch of his sympathy is limited to anything less than all mankind."

As Jesus took upon himself the sorrows of mankind; as in a very real way he related himself to the neglected interests of humanity; as he was merciful and kind and forgiving, so his disciples should seek to further those interests so vitally and sacredly related to Christ's life, should help to bear the burdens of the sick and sorrowing world, and in all the associations of life should be generous, gentle, and gracious. No follower of Christ can sever his activity in behalf of mankind from his love for Christ without seriously compromising his own soul-interests and vitally impairing the whole scheme of Christian discipleship. If a man truly love God he can best show it by loving his fellow men. Work done for man is work done for God. "Christian charity is not reckless almsgiving or mechanical schemes, but the patient and painstaking gift of a life to a life; not alms, but a friend; not schemes, but a saviour; the 'constraining' consequence of the love of Christ."

Not what we give, but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 25

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

GOLDEN TEXT: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."—Psa. 32. 1.

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THIS is one of the most joyful strains from the Hebrew Psalter. It is the music of silver bells ringing merrily into the noise of clapping hands and the pattering feet of holy dance. The psalm, however, is not simply the outburst of David's joy, as though it belonged to him alone; it was sung for all who, like him, had suffered the ache of tormenting guilt. Notice the title, *Maschil*. It means *instruction*. David put his experience into immortal verse expressly to teach them that they need not despair. By the grace of pardon joy will come again to the sin-burdened soul.

And that is the service that this psalm has rendered in history. Luther pronounced it one of the four most precious in the entire book, "because," said he, "it teaches that the pardon of sin comes without the law to the man who believes." The dying Saint Augustine had it written on the wall of the room where he lay, that it might be constantly before his eyes. Paul in writing to the Jewish Christians in Rome enforces the doctrine of justification by faith by quoting these verses. The Jew seeking pardon on the great day of atonement chanted this psalm. If there is anyone who knows the bitterness of a great sin, and fears that he can never be happy again, let him be instructed. There is a great joy possible for him. The silver bells may make melody in his heart. "O the happinesses!"

I. The blessedness of pardon is threefold, as suggested by the triple expression of the text and the following

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verse—transgression forgiven; sin covered; iniquity not imputed. Here are three different terms to express three different aspects or consequences of our wrong—*transgression* or antagonism to God, by which we are alienated from him; *sin* or a reflection from the true line of our life, and so a spoiling of our history; and *iniquity* or guilt, the effect of our wrong on our own spirits, affecting memory, conscience, and all our sensibilities. Pardon recovers us on all these sides. It restores us to God's favor. It rights the course of our broken lives. It lifts from the spirit the burden of its intolerable load.

1. *It restores us to God's favor.* That sin alienates the soul and God is so often stated from the pulpit as to invite the charge of a platitude. But it also thunders with ominous emphasis in the sinner's own breast. One cannot at the same time live in sin and be at peace with God. The sinner dislikes God; he purposely turns his thoughts away from him, and he tries to forget him. Or he is afraid of him, and, like the sinner of Eden, tries to hide from his. Nor is this enmity all on the side of the sinner. The language of the Scriptures will permit no question but that man's sin has in some way made God our enemy. In a dread and awful sense God is the sinner's enemy. Out of Christ, "our God is a consuming fire."

In speaking of the enmity of God we must dissociate it from all those defilements which usually attach to this sentiment in human beings; such as burning passion, unreasoning irritation, and personal resentment. But when these defects are eliminated there remains an element divine, which is as sublime as it is awful. It is the revolt of infinite holiness from everything that is unholy, the eternal antipathy of good for evil. It is inflexible justice which cannot suffer wrong. And this makes pardon no easy thing. For God to forgive out of his great love, without exacting any conditions, would be for him to be unjust. It would be for him to

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destroy the order of the universe which he has arranged in infinite wisdom for all his creatures. Right is defined to be "the order among all things which results from their very nature. Divine justice is the guardian of this order, and consequently the guarantee of the existence of right in the universe."

In our national government the pardoning power is vested in the executive. This is said to be done because of the impossibility of shaping a law which will in every case express exact justice. Yet, wise as this arrangement is, it is a perilous thing to exercise the pardoning power too freely. Suppose that our governor, impelled by mighty love, should pardon all the criminals in our state. It would shake the very foundations of society and threaten the machinery of government.

But, as God's government has no defects, it is impossible for us to conceive how pardon can be granted and justice maintained. The hardest question ever put is, "How can man be just with God?" But God's love has found an answer. It is *the cross*. Paul states it with concentrated wisdom in that passage which is the very marrow of theology and which Calvin calls the most profound statement in all the Bible: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 24-26).

In this passage three things are to be noted: 1. The term "righteousness" is used not to describe God's character, but his administrative act: his remission of the penalty by judicial decision. So far as the condemnation of the law goes, the pardoned sinner is as free though he had never committed the sin. 2. Pardon by the method of the cross is not only a judicial but a righteous act. God is just while he justifies. That

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means not only that a holy God *may* take believing penitents into his favor, but that he *must* do so. He cannot be righteous and do otherwise. The tragedy of Calvary gives the sinner the *right* of pardon. 3. God's pardon includes forgiveness. The two terms are commonly used interchangeably; but there is a difference. Pardon is the act of the officer, and is administrative; forgiveness is the act of the individual, and is personal. The one adjusts the offender to the government; the other adjusts him to the person. Sin is not only a violation of heaven's law, but is also an offense to God. Reconciliation is not complete when the penalty is remitted: loving relations must be restored. We have known those who were once close friends hopelessly estranged even when the law had adjusted their contentions. But God's pardon restores us to the most loving relations to him. Notice how the language of the Bible struggles to state how completely obliterated from God's mind is the sin which is pardoned: "forgotten," "cast into the sea," "blotted out as a thick cloud," "removed as far as the east is from the west."

2. *A second feature of our sin is, it enters into and mars our history.* As the word in the text indicates, the sinner *misses the mark*. His life is spoiled. A second happiness of pardon is that *God by his mighty power so transmutes it, as out of great wrong to bring good.*

In making this point we must guard against a misapprehension. No repentance and pardon can recall an act that is once done, nor put the actor in the place he would have had, had he never sinned. Every sin becomes a curse that goes into history. Nothing can recover it; for nature is merciless and never forgives. Pardon will not restore a murdered man to life, nor recover the innocence of a spoiled home. It is best never to have sinned. Innocence alone is strength. That is a false doctrine and very hurtful which teaches that sin is a necessary stage through which a finite being must

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pass in his progress toward perfection. But, while that is true, the sinner need not despair; for it is also true that our God can convert even wrong into good. There are passages of Scripture that plainly tell of a complete eradication of sin from the heart: "White as snow," "washed robes," "without spot or blemish," "unblamable." The fall of Adam seemed to defeat the divine plan. But while centuries of sorrow have followed the great catastrophe, yet note the good that has come out of it: the revelation of redeeming love, the reconciliation of angels. The bad lives of such men as Francis Xavier, John Bunyan, John Newton, and Jerry McAuley have been made exceptionally effective for good by the very fact of their previous history.

3. *A third happiness of the pardoned sinner is the lifting from off his spirit the oppressive sense of guilt.* A forgiven man is not a wretched man. Into the deeps of his grief and shame God comes with such compassion and revelation of himself as to make the sinner feel that he is almost willing to have gone into the deeps where he was enabled to make such a discovery of God's love and to come into such fellowship with him. Said a recovered penitent, "By the measure of the pit from which he has lifted me do I measure the love which has redeemed me."

II. To whom comes the joy of forgiveness. David himself replies out of his happy experience. It comes to him who confesses: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." That is the essential rule of the gospel before the gospel times. Long after David, John wrote, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1. 9).

1. *The true penitent does not hide his sin from himself.* There is a reckless way which many have of acknowledging their transgressions which indicates the utter shallowness of the feeling that prompted it. It is

the smart of pride, or the dread of exposure, rather than the awful sense of sin. It cries like the big unkingly Saul, "I have played the fool exceedingly." That is a shallow form of regret which calls its sin only a folly. It bears no more resemblance to penitence than profanity bears to prayer. Its shallowness is seen in the fact we turn again to the sin we regret.

But when the deep sense of sin comes upon us it haunts the soul like a specter; it turns the joys of life into bitterness, and fills the future with dread apprehension. Then there is no attempt at self-deception, for silence is torture. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. In this pain of conscious guilt, the genuine penitent takes no comfort in veiling his wrong behind sweet names. He no longer makes excuses or tries to forget his sin in other things. "My sin is ever before me."

2. *He takes his sin to God.* "I acknowledge my sin unto thee." This is needful for relief; for even the instinct of nature cries, "Make a clean breast of it." The man who continues in an unconfessed wrong is ever apprehensive, as though the universe were against him. And it certainly is, for nature is God's instrument. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

All sin is against God; and a good indication of true penitence is that it feels the God-bearings of wrongdoing. Men commonly measure the enormity of their sins by their effects on themselves or their fellows. Not so does the Word of God. It is a transgression of the law of God. It is a personal affront; and its penalty is not only natural, but judicial as well. To God, then, it must be confessed; and from him alone can come acquittal. And so the joy of forgiveness is the joy of God's personal act by which he reinstates the offender in his favor, and restores the loving relations which had been broken.

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 1

ABSALOM REBELS AGAINST DAVID

GOLDEN TEXT: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—Exod. 20. 12.

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THIS is a divine commandment, and as such it is a necessary law, not to God, but to man. Like all other laws of a primary and fundamental nature, it carries with it a promise of much ultimate good as a reward for its faithful observance. The immediate benefits for keeping it, however, are so inconspicuous to us that the promised reward is not sufficient to hold in restraint our self-willed disposition from indulging in those gratifications and temporary advantages which its violation promises. In addition to the statement of its gracious recompense, therefore, it is necessary to expose the hostile consequences and the fatal result that inevitably attend the willful breaking of it. This the Scriptures do, both by precept and example, in order that every child may know the whole truth and the affectionate care of God.

In the lesson under consideration, over which this commandment stands as the Golden Text, we probably have the most striking example in the Bible to this end, setting vividly before us, in historic reality, the inevitable consequences and the ultimate disaster that necessarily follow any deliberate disregard of this sacred injunction, in the swift and sweeping judgment that fell upon Absalom because of his rebellion against his royal father. From this historic instance we gather

three essential consequences that follow the dishonoring of one's father or mother:

First. One sets God against him. In this commandment God espouses the cause of the parents and promises his temporary blessing to the child, young or old, who holds his parents in affectionate esteem. The opposite of this is necessarily true, namely, that God is against the one who refuses obedience to this command. When Absalom put to defiance this word of God, that he had been taught from his youth up, and set himself to steal the hearts of the people from his father, as preliminary to stealing his kingdom, God opposed him and his defeat was foredoomed. When his base and unfilial conspiracy was perfected and the hour to consummate his rebellious object had struck, we are told that "the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel," the chief adviser of Absalom, "to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom."

David's security was in God's opposition to Absalom, and God's opposition to Absalom was in his violation of God's specific commandment. No one can dishonor his father or his mother and retain the favor of God. Jehovah's attitude toward Absalom is his attitude toward everyone who dishonors his parents. If any set themselves "against the Lord, and against his anointed [their parents], saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," then "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." If God be against us, who can be for us?

Second. In breaking this commandment one sets organized society against him. Society, apart from any religious creed, recognizes in this commandment a principle vitally essential to her very existence and orderly continuance. The benevolent institution of the family, from which society gathers her members, and

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in which they are early impressed with those essential truths that make for noble character and social usefulness, is possible only in parental supremacy and filial submission. On this principle, however, the home, with the parents as head masters, becomes the ideal training school where the growing members of the state learn the meaning of authority and the necessity of law. It is here that the great principles of truthfulness, honesty, justice, virtue, charity, loyalty, and the like are early and indelibly fixed in their mind, as personal and social requirements, under the jealous care of the parents. Instinct with the sense of responsibility toward their children in their minor years, conscious of their moral right to govern and guide them, which the state concedes and confirms, they undertake their care, their education, and their moral training at their own charges. In this task they count no expense too great, no duty too difficult, no vigil too long, no self-denial too severe, no sacrifice too extreme, for the welfare and efficiency of their children, asking no return save the filial obedience and affectionate regard which this commandment enjoins. Society, realizing the vital nature of the home service to herself, under the guardianship of this sacred precept, regards its violators as her enemies and arrays herself against them.

When Absalom's rebellion against his father broke out, society was outraged, and rallied her forces at once not simply to protect David, but to protect herself against an unworthy son and a corrupter of the state. The indulgent solicitude and royal prerogative of David were not sufficient to save his wicked son from the indignation of violated society.

Let no student of this incident think that the twentieth century has outgrown or repealed this ancient statute, and that the state no longer concerns herself with the family life of her citizens. Society may be careless about many things, and even godless in many ways, yet in her demand for filial reverence she is

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divine. The child that offends against his parents, from the truant to the rebel, is under the ban of society. The attitude of organized society against Absalom is yet the attitude of society against the willfully disloyal child. Her action may vary, but her attitude never.

Third. In the breaking of this commandment one sets himself against himself. Having its origin not in an arbitrary disposition of God, but in a human necessity, this commandment finds a response in the individual conscience, regardless of any alien disposition or hostile temper. The filial sense, second only to the parental instinct, makes every child to feel a binding obligation toward his parents. Any temptation to disobey their authority, or to disregard their position, finds a combined protest from heart and mind and conscience. In breaking away from conscious duty toward his father or his mother one does violence to an inbred affection, to the conclusion of his reason, and to his sense of right. He is conscious of a wrong for which he can find no apology. He stands self-condemned, in a shameful sense of guilt. The one who consents to desecrate his own heart, who defies his own judgment and violates his own conscience, is hopelessly divided against himself. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He has incapacitated himself to ultimately succeed in his offending object, or to enjoy the temporary progress of his sin. The strongest element in personal success is self-confidence; this is impossible where one's better self is arrayed against his own doings. There is but one voice for such a state as that: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

When Absalom arrayed himself against his father, the better Absalom was on the side of David against his baser self and his wicked plot. Here we have it—a holy triple alliance against the one who dishonors his father: God against Absalom, organized society against Absalom, the better Absalom against the baser

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Absalom. Only one result is possible to him—defeat, flight, death.

Listen! Learn the lesson of Absalom. Dishonor thy father or thy mother—God against you, society against you, self against you—defeat, flight, punishment. Listen again! Honor thy father and thy mother—God with you, society with you, self with you—success, approbation, benediction. “Choose ye this day” which!

And there is yet another lesson, the lesson of a father's terrible grief. No child can break this commandment of God without bringing a great sorrow to loving parental hearts. Look at this picture. It is night, the night of a day of battle. The stars have come out, and, as so often before and since, their pale light falls upon the white faces of the dead and dying. How solemnly impressive a battlefield at night! Blood and the deadly marks of carnage everywhere. Shields and broken spears and the dead, and across them all the weird shadows of the sighing trees. How desolate must have been the scene this night in the “forest of Ephraim,” where the bodies of the rebels of Israel lay scattered in the interlacing thickets or upon the open fields to the east of the Jordan, while underneath a heap of stones, his body pierced by a score of sword points, lay Absalom, the beloved son of David the king, who had broken this commandment of God and his father's heart at the same time. In the distance, in the chamber over the wall, bowed in agony and weak with weeping, sits the king moaning continually, “O Absalom, my son, my son.” It is David the father of Absalom, not David the king, who thus cries out. The danger to his throne, the rebellion of his son, these are forgotten. Everything is forgotten, except that the one dead on the field is his child. When Pericles, whose heart had been unmoved by the calamity of war and pestilence and the discontent of the people, placed a wreath on the head of his dead boy, he turned away to hide his tears, his strong heart broken at last. David's

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grief was a father's grief. What if Absalom had shown himself unworthy; what if he had incited men to revolution and himself had taken up arms against his own father; as Frederick Barbarossa cried out bitterly at his son's death, saying, "I am not the first who has suffered from disobedient sons and yet has wept over their graves," so with every pulsation of David's bleeding heart came that wail of despair, "O my son, my son." And that chamber over the gate at Mahanaim was not the only chamber of despair in the world.

Is it so far from thee
Thou canst no longer see
In the Chamber over the Gate
That old man desolate,
Weeping and wailing sore
For his son who is no more?
O Absalom, my son!

Is it so long ago
That cry of human woe
From the walled city came,
Calling on his dear name,
That it has died away
In the distance of to-day?
O Absalom, my son!

There is no far nor near,
There is neither there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late,
In that Chamber over the Gate,
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human woe,
O Absalom, my son!

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He goes forth from the door,
Who shall return no more,
With him our joy departs;
The light goes out in our hearts;
In the Chamber over the Gate
We sit disconsolate.
O Absalom, my son!

That 'tis a common grief
Bringeth but slight relief;
Ours is the bitterest loss,
Ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be,
Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son!

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 8

DAVID GRIEVES FOR ABSALOM

GOLDEN TEXT: "A foolish son is a grief to his father."—Prov. 17. 25.

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BORN of a great experience, coming to us, doubtless, out of a heart broken by the ingratitude of some wayward son, these words go straight to the heart, at least, of the father who has suffered. For him this is not a mere statement of fact, the result of observation. Beneath the lines he feels the heart-beat of a sorrow like unto his own. Especially is this so when associated with the lesson for which it stands as the Golden Text. This at once focuses our thought. It is of David's grief for Absalom that we think, than which in all history there is nothing more pathetic. That David should have loved his children is no more than natural. In David's heart there was a great capacity for love. He was a great lover. But Absalom! Why should he have been the one upon whom this great heart lavished such wealth of affection? It was not because Absalom was an only son—David had other sons. Much less was it because of all his sons Absalom was the most worthy—quite the contrary was the truth. Of all his sons he was, perhaps, the least worthy. Vain of his beauty, arrogant, ungrateful, deceitful, rebellious—such was Absalom; and had David cast him off it would have seemed not unnatural. He was bad, thoroughly so, yet David loved him. He loved him not because he was worthy; rather because he was unworthy. Like the boy in the parable he had broken away. In so doing he had broken his father's heart. He was his "prodigal child." On that account and for that reason the father's heart

yearned for the boy. To have redeemed him there is no price he would not have paid. Thus it is that when to David news comes that the boy is dead the pent-up anguish of his soul breaks out in the cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

To understand a grief like that one must fathom the meaning of fatherhood. It means joy—joy unique, indescribable. It means hope, a hope unlike any other that the world brings us. Said a father to me concerning his only son, "I am living my life over again in that of my boy. I am more ambitious for him than I ever was for myself." It means labor, it means sacrifice; the sacrifice of time, energy, and money. To a friend who had a large family of boys to each of whom had been given a college education I said, "It must have meant great sacrifice." "Yes," said he, "and yet I concluded it was the best investment I could make." So fatherhood means not only joy and hope, labor and sacrifice; it means venture—a venture into which not infrequently one's whole life enters. O the wealth of labor, of sacrifice, of affection, invested by a father in a boy! Who shall measure it? When, in the light of this, the meaning of fatherhood, we contemplate the grief of David, we understand the better the bitterness of it all. It was joy blighted. It was hope blasted. It was pain, the pain of a great disappointment. It was defeat, the defeat of a will accustomed to conquest. It was loneliness. Said James G. Blaine, in conversation with a friend concerning the disappointments of his life, "I could have stood it all if my boys had not died." Hard enough to bear—this the disappointment that comes when death robs us of our children. Add to it the burden of ingratitude, of unrequited affection, of rebellion, and the sorrow turns to anguish.

The contemplation of a grief so deep, a sympathy so far-reaching, leads not unnaturally to the thought of God. Nor is the transition abrupt and unwarranted.

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The divine Fatherhood is the reality of which the human relationship is but the reflection. The best we know of fatherhood, that purified, intensified, and multiplied by infinity, is God. As so interpreted the Father-heart of God makes easy of belief what otherwise would seem too good to be true; makes plain what otherwise would be incomprehensible; nay, makes unreasonable, unthinkable, anything other than the simple truth that God is love. Shall David so love his son, and shall not God love his children? Shall the love of David live on in spite of ingratitude and rebellion, and shall that of God be less constant? Shall David be ready to lay down his life for the son who has rebelled, and shall God do less? If so, then love in man is more than love in God, and the creature is more than the Creator.

But it is not so. David's greater Son, when rounding that self same hill of olive orchards ten centuries later, poured forth the cry of the riven father-heart over a nation of prodigal sons. For God was in Christ and we who have seen the Son have seen the Father also. And these were the sublimely tragic utterances which burst forth as he beheld the devoted city and wept over it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . . If thou hadst known even thou at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace. . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Ah, that is the bitterness of it all. "Ye would not!" The integrity of the human will, its entire freedom of choice untrammelled by any possible coercion, must be maintained. For we must remember that the prodigal was a son, not a hired servant, and as a son he could limit the activity of his own father and could say of divine right: "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Ah, the measureless depths of possible self-abasement and sacrifice involved in the fact of fatherhood!

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In essence one and the same, this fatherhood, whether human or divine, there is yet between that of God and that of man a great difference. We do not always know what is best for our children. Our heavenly Father always does. We, out of weakness, not infrequently indulge our children in what is not for their good. Absalom's character was in part the outcome of David's alternating severity and leniency. God's discipline is ever constant. He can be as severe as law, as uncompromising as justice. We see only a fragment of that life we cherish and would protect and guide. God sees the whole life from the cradle on throughout eternity. We are not infrequently unable to do for our children what we know would be for their good. David, could he have done so, would have died in Absalom's stead. This he could not do, nor would it have availed if he had. Our heavenly Father could—nay, he did, for "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In that passionate yearning for Absalom, that longing to pour out his life for his wayward boy, we see reflected the great love, the holy passion, that made Calvary possible.

One thing more: As studied in the light of David's grief, the folly of Absalom is seen to be not only wicked, it is heartless. Our folly, our rebellion, is none the less so. It is sin against love, and such love! Yet, it lives on, this love of God. Even into the far country it follows us. In the parable the father stays at home. Yet his heart is with his wayward child, and while the prodigal is yet a great way off the father sees him, long before the youth makes out the familiar form of the father. Even in the parable it is the parent, and not the child, whose emotions are beyond control. It is the father, and not the son, who runs, the elder, and not the youth, whose compassion breaks bounds. It is the father who passionately embraces and repeatedly kisses the neck of his boy.

But leaving this wonderful parable, we find the

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reality even more wonderful. Here, the Father comes to earth, and at infinite cost; over mountain, through valley, across desert, journeys into that far country, and, finding his son feeding among the swine, unmindful of the filth, unmindful of the rags, throws about him the arms of love, and exclaims, "My son, my son, come home, come home!" This, at least, has God done for even the most degraded on earth.

The following story is told concerning a father and son. The boy had done wrong. Thrice he had, with reference to some one thing that had been prohibited, disobeyed his father. He was obdurate, stubborn, unrepentant. They lived in an old farmhouse in the country, and as a penalty the boy was banished to the attic, and there commanded to stay for two days. That night there came up a terrible thunderstorm. The father, though pretending to be absorbed in his paper, could think of nothing save the boy. At last, rising, he said, "Mother, I cannot stand it any longer; I must go into the attic." And this he did. Finding the little fellow in terror because of the storm, he crept up beside him, and said, "John, my boy, you have done wrong; the penalty you must suffer, but I am come to share it with you." Do you wonder that the boy's heart was melted and that, a repentant and forgiven child, he fell asleep that night in his father's arms?

The penalty for our wrongdoing, even though we repent, we cannot always escape. It is sometimes best that we should not. Much of David's suffering was the outcome of his one great sin; yet the penalty of our wrongdoing, in so far as we do not escape it, is a burden that our Father will not permit us to bear alone. Even as David would have shared the remorse, the defeat of Absalom—nay, would, if he could, have borne it all—so of our heavenly Father is it true that "he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." In so far as it is necessary for our good that the penalty of our sins be endured, the burden is one we do not need

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to bear alone. God will share it with us. This he has done, and the experience of us all bears witness to the truth, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

As studied, then, in the light of David's great sorrow we learn the meaning of fatherhood. And this, the great yearning of David for his boy Absalom, lets us into the secret of that great love, that sublime passion, which opened heaven and brought to earth Him who had compassion on the sinner and "went about doing good," and who came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

So the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine;
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 15

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."
—Psa. 23. 1.

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As ONE turns the pages of his hymn book to refresh his spirit by a glance at precious and long-familiar words, and comes at last and oftenest, by a kind of spiritual gravitation, to such a hymn as "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"; so, turning the pages of the Book of Psalms, that hymnal of the ancient Hebrew, one finds the dearest song of all in the twenty-third psalm. So pure is the tone of these simple strains, so richly does the spirit of trust and hope arise like a blessed incense from these lines, that unnumbered readers, Hebrew and Christian, have found here both a song and a shrine: there is at once the triumphant note of, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," and the tender trustfulness of, "Our Father who art in heaven."

The Lord. The glory of the psalm is the psalmist's assurance that his guide and protector is God. It is no cause for surprise that God is found in the Bible. These songs and sighs, these precepts and prophecies, were gathered together into one, because God was their subject. But before God could be the subject of the writings he must have been a reality to the writers. Before any man, be he prophet or psalmist, could speak of God in the clear inevitable way these writers speak of him, that man must have found God for himself, in deed and in truth.

The sincerity of this note has never been challenged. It is neither forced nor fancied. It is the simple utter-

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ance of the experience of great souls. It was a fact in the life of the singer of this psalm. As he looked back upon the course of life he had traced he turns in thankfulness and confidence to the One who had led him along that uncertain path; and out of a rich experience, and a full heart, his first word is, The Lord!

For every human soul this discovery of God is fundamental. Until it is made, the leaves of the book of life remain uncut. One may indeed, like Noah's dove, have plucked an olive branch from a waste of waters, but he has found no resting place for the sole of his foot. "O Lord," said Saint Augustine, "thou hast made us for thyself, and our souls rest not until they find rest in thee."

The psalm gives us no light upon the experience which led its author to this exalted faith in God. We are not told whether it grew up gradually, in the gentle nurture of a pious home, or whether the path of righteousness had been found through the sudden turning of some sharp corner of life. Sometimes, indeed, the finding of God may be an experience which brings at first anything but peace. When Jacob dreamed that he had come upon the house of God, his first words were, "How dreadful is this place!" But whether the experience dawns gradually or bursts suddenly upon a man, whether it quiets or disturbs, it is real, it is attainable, it is ultimate. It means that, for that man, God has ceased to be a hypothetical fact, and has become a positive and determining factor in daily life.

For some, to-day, the recitation of the text, with its sublime assurance of God, may be mere pious parrotry. But it can be, and for the true Christian will be, the utterance of the most precious experience of the soul.

The Shepherd. The inspiration of the psalmist did not end with his consciousness of God. It began there. From thence he looked out upon the persons and events of the world in which he moved, and found the scene transformed into a poem of the presence of God. Then,

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first, did the psalmist know his fellow men. This appears in his use of the figure of the shepherd.

There are a number of time-honored scriptural words, which have long served to illustrate God's love and care. According to these, God is a "rock," a "strong tower," a "shield," a "shepherd." But these objects belong to an ancient and Oriental civilization. They can have but little meaning to one brought up in a modern city. Properly to appreciate them, one must consult commentaries and books of travel.

To those, however, who first spoke thus of God, these words and these objects were modern, vital, familiar. The faith of that day was too active to be uttered in terms of antiquity. Men thought and spoke of their religion, and of their God, under familiar figures drawn from the common life of their own day. They found, in that common life, such divine affinities as to make these expressions natural and spontaneous. This is the key to the shepherd figure.

In the psalmist's day few sights could have been more familiar than that of the quiet, slow-moving shepherd. As he stands there with his few sheep huddling around him he suggests neither piety, poetry, nor romance. Yet it is just this homely, familiar figure in which the psalmist finds his picture of the divine care. And the picture is at once so reverent, and so true, that the word "shepherd" has been glorified for all time. The clear vision of the inspired poet penetrated that rude exterior, and saw beneath it a divine ideal. He found the shepherd-likeness in God, because he found the Godlikeness in the shepherd.

This aspect of the psalm is too often ignored. There is, indeed, a blessed consolation to be found in the psalm's marvelous portrayal of the Divine Shepherd. But between the lines may be found rich nourishment for the soul, in that rare spirit which discerns divine traits in human shepherds.

It may well be questioned whether, to-day, the

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affinity between the human and the divine is felt deeply enough for the facts of the one to be used, with any sincerity, as figures of the other. It seems more reverent, to-day, to think of God as a king than as a president; more reverent, to-day, to think of him as a strong tower or a shield than as a safe-deposit vault or a gunboat. Men "hold to the one, and despise the other." It is inevitable, however, that continual association of the thought of God, with the language and circumstances of Oriental antiquity, should develop a breach and a contrast between the "religious life" and the "daily life" which are fatal to any real union of the two. It is a union of this kind, perfect and sincere, which is fundamental in this psalm; and which constitutes an element of life and power for which there can be neither imitation nor substitute.

After one's heart has been thrilled by the psalm's pure, transparent beauty—and its beauty is beyond all praise; after one has marveled at the matchless perfection with which the Divine Shepherd is here portrayed—and it is nothing short of marvelous; after one's soul has been sustained in sorrow and cheered in defeat by the blessed consolation which this psalm affords—and that consolation shall never fail—there still remains the psalm's profound appeal for the awakening of a modern spirit which, in the midst of this urgent, ingenious, insatiable twentieth century, shall feel so deeply the truth of God's presence in his world to-day, shall see so splendidly the divine qualities in humanity to-day, that the familiar objects and pursuits of daily life shall again be enshrined in divine similitudes, repeating that pentecostal glory by which men "heard, in the language in which they were born, the wonderful works of God."

"I shall not want." What place does the psalmist himself take in this world where God is present, active, loving, and where men and their pursuits show a real

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affinity with the divine? An answer is suggested in the form of the words in which the story is told.

It is the simple yet profound peculiarity of the Hebrew verb that it contemplates an action solely with regard to whether the action is finished or unfinished. And the psalmist, by the form of his words, has indicated his thought to be not simply, "I shall not want," but rather, "I did not want in the past, I do not want in the present, I shall not want during the future." The Oriental feeling for eternity is here. The Shepherd of Israel slumbers not nor sleeps. The tender words, which speak of the still waters, the refreshing of the soul, the security even in the valley of deathlike shadow, are at the same time singing softly to each other, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

Into this world of God's unfailing love and care, inspired by an experience none can dispute, the psalmist steps with simple sincerity and quiet confidence. He had found God; he had found his fellow men; he has found himself. He sees his true place to be within the sphere of God's wise and loving providence. In the laboratory of his own experience, this strong soul has distilled the spirit of that high faith in which he says, in effect, "If earthly shepherds know how to care for their earthly charges, how much more shall the Divine Shepherd give good care to those who trust him?—and I trust him!"

It is not the courage nor the wisdom of the sheep, but the wise love of the shepherd, that protects in time of danger, and provides in time of need. And not only does the psalmist feel that all his help has come from his Shepherd, but he advances to the deeper confidence that any path, along which his Shepherd leads, is the way of true welfare.

It is a great temptation to find in the words, "I shall not want," an assurance that one shall never lack ease and never meet danger; but the psalmist could hardly have meant this. The landscape of his life included

dark valleys as well as green pastures. His soul could hardly have been "restored" until it first had fainted or fallen. Had his life always been peaceful there could hardly have been the "presence of enemies." The calm courage of these simple words implies no blindness to life's bitterness and sorrow. His faith is sure, because of his recognition that life's true welfare comes from the Shepherd. In the reading of the psalm this may be felt by a slight emphasis on the word "he" in verses 2, 3, and on the word "thou" in verses 4, 5.

Through the simple story of this hymn of faith and hope the Divine Shepherd moves so serenely, so surely, so sympathetically, that before one has finished the reading he catches himself listening for the voice of his own loving Shepherd. It is the Shepherd alone, after all, who can give courage and quietness. The sheep do not know what makes for their health or harm, but the shepherd knows, and his interest is their welfare. The child does not, cannot, know what paths to follow, which pastures really nourish; but the Father knows, and in his loving wisdom he leads by the hand his trusting child.

The experience reflected in this psalm came to utterance only after it had come into being in the life of the psalmist; and the utterance—that is, the psalm itself—finds its only true home to-day in the soul of that reader who translates the story back again from speech to life. This life, this experience, now as then, is for all those who seek the Lord with all their hearts, who discern the sanctity of human life and character, and who, meeting ease without indolence and danger without dismay, trust in the guidance, the presence, and the love of the Lord, the Good Shepherd.

He leadeth me! O blessèd thought!
 O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
 Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
 Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 22

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING

GOLDEN TEXT: "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."—1 Chron. 28. 9.

By L. C. H. ADAMS,

PASTOR METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SHRUB OAK, NEW YORK

SINCE time began there has been but one pioneer. Every possible path has been blazed by the God of our fathers. The nearest approach to originality is made when men step in God's footsteps. Painters, sculptors, explorers, inventors, statesmen, philosophers, the greatest of them, as surely as the smallest, are followers. "Come after me," is one of God's trade-marks, and no man has used it except at his pleasure. Coming from any one else it is but an echo, often indistinct and without authority, for oftenest men are among the foothills, now and then clear and forceful, for men sometimes get up into the mountains, but always an echo. Men can do no more than do over, in a small way, what God has done large.

God is the only Master. Men are but helpers. And all their doing is service to him. In the final issue he is glorified. All blunders and sins are attempts, nothing more. By them speed is reduced but only for a little. By one of God's doers pent-up energy is soon freed and wheels move with quickened pace. Luther Burbank is God's helper, nothing more and nothing less. He opened the throttle and living things that before were leisurely moving bounded along God's way. He is helping God bring his own to its own. So also did John Howard, William Wilberforce, Robinson of Leyden, Kant and Kepler, Benjamin Rush, Peter Cooper, Cromwell and Lincoln, Browning and Wesley—each in his own part of the wide field.

All doing of men has its spring in the depths of hu-

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man nature. In the world of the unseen worthy deeds are brought to life. Strong arms, skillful hands, mobile lips bring the hidden ideal into the light of the real. Painting, building, music, prophecy, and all else, are the seen expression of what has been fashioned without hands by men who are themselves seen only by the medium of members they employ as tools. Men serve God with heart and mind or they do not serve him.

The first movement of a perfect heart is the opening of a clear path for influx of life. The full rich stream is given right of way, for it must flow on without loss of power till all within its reach is vitalized. Is the spiritual nature like the physical? Are its movements automatic? Is it so made that when the flood of life, God's life, moves that way it opens without hesitation, with no other command than the cry of its own need? Yes? How full of life would the world of men then be! For the life stream is always flowing their way. God meets men, all men, at the gates. But listen: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." "Ye yourselves stand on guard at the gates. Lift them! Lift them! And the king of glory shall come in."

The second movement of a perfect heart is a resolute shutting of the gates. The life stream must not recede. It must flow on, but it must not flood. How great is man's capacity for God? God is infinite. If the way for the infinite into the finite were continuously open the finite would be overwhelmed. In the wake of the eternal onrush there would be confusion, wreck, and death. That there may be life there must be arrest of inflow. Spiritual movements are rapid, but the appropriation of the truth of God involves many distinct movements, and each one must be permitted to complete itself. Is spiritual life possible without reflection? Are the quietests altogether wrong? What does God's prophet say? "Be still and know."

In seeking to avoid an onrush of God have we not encountered a greater trouble from privation of God?

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If this were so it were better that the gates were never closed, for death from conflict is nobler than death from stagnation. But it is not so. The movements of a perfect heart are rhythmical. There is first the lifting of the gates, followed by the inflow; then the shutting of the gates, followed by appropriation, and then the return and so on, with perfect precision forever.

The return is a challenge to courage. God has entered and met the soul's need. Why not remain content? Fresh inflow may unsettle safe positions. Questions answered may be reopened. The test of courage must be endured. Rhythm is the law of a perfect heart, and only the perfect heart can render such service as God requires.

Where is found the justification of man's mental endowment? In God's service. Elsewhere all noble gifts work their own ruin. Reasoning is Niagara's floods leaping down the great depths and breaking into fretful waves. Imagining is the building of cloud castles to be wrecked by storms of judgment and then lost in unknown worlds. Engaged in God's service, by continuous increase of power and ever-advancing achievement, they vindicate their right to place among the forces of the spiritual world and bring multiplying honors to him who made them what they are. Bearing with them the enduring marks of their Original, who doeth whatsoever he will, the service they render is willingly rendered. But willingly is not the equivalent of willing. Willing expresses resolution. It is instinct with the noblest and most aggressive form of life. It involves initiative and abandon and devotion of the highest order. It means the commitment of the person, including the power to commit, so that the person passes over into and becomes service. Only he who reaches this end in volitional movement serves God. And he who thinks to serve him by force of circumstance or by the overmastering power of him whom he would serve—by any force other than himself—has abdicated his throne

and has transformed himself into a piece of outdated machinery fit only for the moral junkshop.

Doing is the highway to knowing. Serving God is the directest path to knowledge of God. "If any man will do his will he shall know." Wherever earnest men toil they are brought face to face with God's world, which is but another way of saying that doers are always in the presence of a revelation. The burning bush declared God's nearness, so does the growing bush. Lightning flashing in the heavens shows he is not far off, so does electricity pulling heavy trains. In the beauty of the sunset he is seen, so is he in the beauty of the painter's art. When Patrick breaks stones in the roadway and when Solomon solves difficult questions of administration, God reveals himself. To the open heart and willing mind all things are revealed, and have revealing power. There is no unknowable.

Knowledge of God begins with definition. While we are serving him he emerges from the world of things and assumes definiteness. Obligated to confess him immanent, we yet distinguish between the Indweller and the indwelt. "Through all and in all," he also is "above all." Our resting place is as far from Matthew Arnold's or Emerson's as it is from that of the most benighted idolater. We can serve no created thing—nor can we serve "a force making for righteousness." We serve a God who, by our service, is revealing his spirituality with increasing clearness and, with equal pace, his objective reality.

"Above all," God is "in you all." He has relations with men. Otherwise we could not know him. Knowledge of him implies knowledge of relations with him. Service gathers up the truth of all relations in the single fact of dependence. Original impulse is of God. All after this—application, adjustment, distribution—is of men. Carnegie is a distributor, so was Isaiah. Edison is an adjuster, so was Augustine. Roosevelt brings the force of righteousness in contact

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with public conscience as Moses did before him. Sever connection with power-house and there is no service. Maintain connection and all pulsations along the line of service make known the character of the original impulse and confess their dependence upon impulse for their existence.

All doers are dependent on God for power to do, and their service to God reveals their dependence. Knowledge of God is knowledge of dependence on God. Knowledge of God through service finds its goal in fellowship. Service rendered and accepted proves master and servant of kindred quality. Service, in its last analysis, is self-surrender and conveys knowledge of the one serving to the one served. Acceptance of service is self-expression and makes the one served known to the one serving. From these two facts, kindred quality and mutual knowledge, springs fellowship. Men who serve God know him and are in fellowship with him.

Fellowship freights with meaning the word that leaps from David's heart to find place in the heart of his son. "Thy father's God." In fellowship with God the king had passed into the realm where the light shines clear. The vision he now has of God sets him apart from all other gods—from the God of his youth. He is now, as he was then, the Mighty One, for Israel must be made a great nation and their Helper as able to strike a hard blow as when he broke the bones of the giants of the Philistine plains. But stirring and tragic events, playing upon David's life, have changed the unchangeable God into a widely different Person than the One who helped him crush the lion's jaw. Children have been born in his house. A feeble folk has been committed to his care. Tenderness has been evoked. The power of kindness has been revealed. The God he would have his son know is one who makes men and nations great by gentleness.

The God of Solomon's father is now, as he was in the days when the stripling kept guard over

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Jesse's sheep, a watchful God. Israel is "prone to wander" and must be kept from plunging down the awful abyss of moral degradation where is now heaped the ruinous mass of shameless ones. God will watch. But David has left the sheepecote. His world has opened out from the circle of Judaea's hills and now embraces empire. His responsibilities, from being the safeguarding of a few sheep, are weighted with the administration of the affairs of a people of continuously augmenting power and influence. He is in the daily exercise of abilities of royal character, and with freedom fraught with possibilities of untold good to increasing thousands and with equal possibilities of cursing. His early conception of God fails to satisfy the insistent demands of his larger life. More generous laws than restriction and prohibition must be found to define his richer experiences. His consciousness of sin calls for deeper and broader treatment than the services of an inquisitor. Fellowship with God has fulfilled for him this high office. For a Being engaged in a vast system of espionage and policing it has substituted a Person desirous of knowing that he may help, eager to come into vital contact with human life that he may enrich its freedom with godlike activities. This was the God of Solomon's father—the God he would have his son know—a great-hearted, helpful God.

Those who through service know such a God are kings. They prove their kingly descent by exhibition of kingly qualities. They show their right to place among the mighty by conquest of spiritual principalities and powers. They have already attained to the loftiest heights accessible to men and see nothing above them but the throne of the highest. They are not yet crowned, but the coronation pageant has been fully arranged and the glory of the day is already breaking. Then will begin the era of exalted privilege and vast responsibility.

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 29

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY: THE GOSPEL
OF SELF-CONTROL

GOLDEN TEXT: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."—1 Cor. 9. 27.

By SAMUEL GARDINER AYRES,

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WHATEVER a speaker or writer or teacher sees, or has seen, at some time comes to him for his use to aid in illustrating a point or enforcing a truth. The world of Paul's day was fond of athletic sports, and the winner in the games was the hero of the hour. One day the people of Tarsus celebrated their field day. Young Paul attended, and cheered with the rest, and like a healthy boy of our own time entered into the excitement of the occasion. Now it is a foot race. See! the contestants are off. Paul's friend is in the lead. Now another forges ahead, and then another, and yet a third, but these cannot hold their pace. So Paul's friend finally wins and receives the laurel crown. The tenseness of the struggle enters into the very lifeblood of Paul. In his words "So run" we see it all.

Now the race is succeeded by a boxing match. The endurance of the men is a test of their training. They try first one plan and then another. The victor is the man who suggests to Paul the words of the text "I keep under my body." Is not this a suggestion of the true method of illustration? Paul saw—the Corinthians to whom he writes also annually saw—the great games. He makes their common knowledge the background of his teaching of great truths. In the race Paul sees the lesson of perseverance, in the boxing match the lesson of self-control. In approaching the subject we find that the text has been used for divers purposes. One preacher makes it the background for a sermon on fast-

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ing, and the International Committee probably refers the text to the subject of temperance as applied in its technical sense to the abstaining from the use of intoxicants. We prefer to take it in the apostolic and broader sense as referring to temperance in all things, or self-control for the Christian.

I. *Self-Control in Speech.* A temperance advocate has often lost his cause by his intemperate speech. The discussion of method and the criticism of other methods at times begets more than righteous indignation. The teacher loses control of himself; his patience which should be sevenfold is gone, and with it the present opportunity of doing good, and probably all future influence, too. It is the perfect steel rope that is used to lift the marble of many tons' weight. If one strand is broken it is a risk to use it. It is said that the speech of Garfield nominating Grant for the third term procured the nomination for himself. Intemperance in speech need not be habitual to be hurtful.

Intemperance in speech not only injures the one speaking, but has its effects on others. Hearts are wounded by the sarcastic word. The friend has become an enemy by overhearing the word of snobbish contempt, and love has become indifference at the revelation of supreme selfishness given by a few chance words. No truer words on the subject have ever been written than those of Maude Wilder Goodwin in her *White Aprons*: "There are whips whose whistle is never heard in the air, and stripes borne for life that no outward eye can take note of."

Another place for self-control in speech is in the expression of religious experience. How often have good people been misunderstood and the church brought into disrepute by extravagant profession. The climax of doctrines, Christian perfection, strange as it may seem, is subject to the greatest abuse in this regard. It seems almost as if the devil were striving to thwart the higher aspirations of men. Men sometimes long earnestly after

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the heights and are on so much higher ground than they were that they declare they have already attained. Others, hearing the declaration and seeing the life which is yet imperfect, believe not and turn aside.

From this comes a corollary in thought. Self-control should be exercised in expressing our differences of opinion. Once upon a time vituperation was a part of the argument. In a controversy Toplady called Wesley a canting hypocrite and Wesley called Toplady a chimney sweep. This spirit has not entirely disappeared in our own time. At a camp meeting at which I was present some years ago, when certain brethren preached on the doctrine of holiness, those who believed would help the preacher by saying "Amen," "Praise the Lord," because the shibboleth of their favorite theory was used. When others who did not hold their extreme view were to preach, they would either absent themselves from the services or, if present, groan and say, "Lord, help." It seems a poor kind of holiness, so different from the real doctrine of Paul's thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

II. *Self-Control in Appetite.* We have been speaking of the outward expression of our lives. Let us come a little nearer. There is need for an exhortation to self-control in appetite as well as in speech. Not so long ago a great man passed away at too early an age. He was a great scholar and executor, but with a life marred with the grossest physical appetite, which made him a gormand, and which some of his personal friends think brought him to an untimely death. Not many years ago another great scholar whose name is known among the mighty, laid down his life at the age of fifty-six. His life was shortened by his habit of much drinking of beer. These two notable cases are examples of hundreds of other men of a lower class in the social scale.

Real self-control can only come from within. In these days there are many helps for men with the grosser appetites, especially for the man who has become a

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drunkard—the church, Keeley cures, societies of many kinds, closing laws, prohibition by great corporations and states. In spite of all of the helps men continue their march to dishonor and to death.

The recent accounts of the investigations of the Committee of Fifty contain some interesting results. We are confirmed in our views of the baleful influence of the saloon, but are surprised and pained to learn that the saloon has to some extent usurped the place of the church. Some saloons add to their usefulness by acting as an employment agency, and above all the saloon, with its comradeship, bright lights, warmth, and in some cases good music, presents an opportunity for an easy escape from the narrow environment of stifling rooms and crying babies. We preach an everyday Christianity and then withdraw the building dedicated to the worship of God from its use for six days in the week. Shame be upon us! It must be admitted that the institutional church is not entirely a success. The reason is not because the idea is not good and right, but because in the first place too many things are undertaken and only half done; and in the second place because the local church is, I fear, caring more for the numbers and statistics which can be advertised than for men.

Sometimes our temperance workers become discouraged and are not sure that the world is getting better. The drinking of beer is largely on the increase, due in large part to the presence in our midst of European beer drinkers. The use of alcoholic drinks has decreased per capita more than half since 1840. Great corporations and smaller concerns insist on temperance on the part of their employees. In earlier days the men insisted on having their grog as part of their wages. But that has ceased.

Playgrounds, parks, gymnasiums, Young Men's Christian Associations, free lectures, clubs, better tenements, missions, churches, organizations, and individuals are

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all striving to bring about a better day. Christian workers, philanthropists, educators are all trying to solve the problem, and continuous effort *must* produce results.

III. *Self-Control of the Passions.* In the battle for self-control the fight centers in the passions. Strange to say, every base passion is the perversion of some good element of character. There is a righteous anger and a true pride and a glorious ambition, all of which in a state where control is lacking become debased. Even love, the supreme passion, trails its garments in the mire and dirt while it might have been exalted to the very throne of God.

The book of Proverbs has more to say about anger than any other book of the Bible. That book contains the sum of all human wisdom on the subject. There is a physical warning against the indulgence of the temper. It has been claimed by a prominent physician recently that the indulgence of temper introduces a poison into the system which produces illness. If so, that proves that one should take as much care of his temper as of his lungs or heart. How many a man has surrendered his leadership by giving way to his temper.

Pride is a more subtle passion. It has in it something of good. In certain directions it may even become a saving grace. But when it becomes boastful and Pharisaical there is nothing of good in it. In our time it takes a very noxious form. The desire to keep up appearance, leading to great extravagances, is one of the curses of this time. Men go to jail for it, sell their honor, and even life, for appearance's sake. Down with pride of this kind! It is a menace to our civilization. Some who would scorn to indulge in the baser passions are subject to this evil. Like all other evils, it is not only evil itself, but is the road to other ills.

When we speak of self-control of the passions we must include those of the baser sort. "Lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin." John in his vision perceived

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that the society of heaven was composed of an aristocracy of goodness. In our day we are more wont to condone sin in this direction than formerly. Do we realize the awfulness of sin as much as did our fathers? Some declare that the social evil is on the wane. But the slaughter of its victims is continuous. Death from such a cause is not an easy one. It is filled with torture and madness. What awful penalties are here—far-reaching—damning. Children are consumptive, cancerous, scrofulous. And O, the burden of sorrow and woe! Get the report of the New England Moral Reform Society of Boston and read the sad stories there portrayed so vividly. Dastardly meanness, treachery, dishonor are all involved in the sad stories. The heart aches as one reads and realizes. The poor woman who leads a life of shame pays an awful price for her living—social ostracism—a short life—not often for more than five years, the investigators tell us—and, most awful of all, the wrecking of soul as well as body.

We have not touched upon several forms of passion. We cannot do so on this occasion. Unlawful and cheap ambition, the passion for the praise of men, greed for gain, desire for notoriety, and one other that we might call the passion of indifference—all demand a warning and an exhortation.

When we have found ourselves such a bundle of passions and we struggle to overcome, what hope is there for a man? There is only one true source of help for any man. A Christ-filled life is the prescription of the Great Physician. Then come, all ye passion-driven souls, poor and wretched, weak and blind, come and find strength for your struggle. And whenever and wherever men and women come to Jesus Christ his great heart is touched, and He helps. Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Be strong! We are not here to dream, to drift—
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong! Be strong!

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 6

SOLOMON CHOOSES WISDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."—Prov. 9. 10.

By DAN B. BRUMMITT, D.D.,
ASSISTANT EDITOR THE EPWORTH HERALD, CHICAGO

"In the beginning God!" So it stands at the outset of the written Word. It stands as truly at the outset of all great matters. The world is so ordered that, in any enterprise, we must start with God. Else we start on the shortest, surest road to confusion and failure.

God is the great First Fact. Now, getting at facts is by some esteemed a very commonplace and trivial sort of study, though it is really so only when facts are got at by piecemeal and unintelligently. To get at them and see them in any sort of unity, we must start with God, who is first of all facts. And no fact is rightly or fully seen until we have seen how it stands in relation to God.

The gathering of facts is a part of our education in wisdom. Since God is the great First Fact, we must not only seek all the other facts that an educated man should know, but above all else we must be seekers after God. He is in some way concerned with every fact which we discover. He placed it where we could find it; he intended that we should find it; and he meant that our finding it should affect our thought and conduct toward himself.

When we pass from the study of facts to the study of principles, laws, causes, and such like "higher" subjects, still the first word of Genesis is valid and unchanged: "In the beginning God!" He is before all principles, all laws, all causes. God as the great First Cause is more than a philosopher's phrase. Because he *is*, all these

are. Every truth of physics and of metaphysics depends on him.

Of what worth, for example, is the synthetic philosophy, if it cannot find God? It puts nothing together so that it will stay. It is no more than a hopeless attempt to describe a circle, when no center is given. If the seeker after truth denies God, or—what is the same thing—denies that we can find him, he has denied the very wisdom which is the end of his quest. It is as though the astronomer should be agnostic concerning the sun, or the polestar; as though the Atlantic liner's captain should disbelieve that New York's existence could be proved.

So, in the beginning of wisdom there must be piety, which is the seeing of God. It matters not what form of wisdom we seek, this law holds true. We would learn about things, let us say. That means investigation, discovery, interpretation—in a word, natural science. But always we are dealing with *God's* things. To forget that is to limit our attainment, at best, to a learned ignorance.

Suppose the wisdom we seek has to do with right living. That means study in whole realms of ethics, morals, conduct. But life is of God, and he has profound purpose in it always. Therefore must we relate both the problem of life and the problems of life to him.

We go further, and would understand our own souls, and our high destiny—for we are sure it *is* a high destiny. To come to that wisdom we must be religious, and to be religious is to consider ourselves as in the presence and purpose of God.

Is it not plain, then, that we cannot avoid God? At every turn we face the alternatives: God or confusion; God or darkness; God or folly. We do not desire confusion; we are not content with darkness; we are ashamed of folly: we must fall back on God!

But our greater concern, in considering this text, is

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with fear. "The *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It is not enough to reckon with God. It is not enough, in the search for truth, to see God at the center of things. He must be—he will be—discerned to the accompaniment of a certain emotion.

Our affrighted ancestors filled their heavens with dread deities who inspired terror. The sensualist worships Bacchus with a shallow and fleeting hilariousness. The fatalist, in the grip of his relentless gods, is filled with despair. But these emotions have no place in the breast of the child of God. He *fears* the Lord.

"Fear" is a word of many moods. At its worst it is abject, unreasoning, hateful. At its best it is noble, self-respecting, own brother to love. And "the fear of the Lord" is fear at its best. It comes whenever we are conscious of our dependence on God, and rejoice in our dependence. In a better sense than the Iron Chancellor meant, we are able to say, "We Christians fear God, and nothing else in the world."

The man of wicked life may fear God, but such fear as his has no part nor lot with wisdom. He cannot find wisdom, for he has shut wisdom's door in his own face. The rejecter and the selfish get not consolation, but dread, out of their fear of God. But the reverent man, as he finds everywhere evidence of God's justice and mercy, of his truth and tenderness, of his holiness and gentleness, finds also that reverence grows stronger within him, until it is a very passion of holy, loving, ennobling fear.

Such fear is one of the soul's sublime emotions. It becomes the greatest better than the humblest. It stirred through all the being of the great astronomer as he exclaimed, with humble exultation, "I think God's thoughts after him!" Every discovery, every new revelation of divine power and purpose, is at once a source of new awe and new delight, of solemn gladness that enriches life.

To miss that is a loss so great that nothing can com-

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pensate for it. A man may achieve "success" of a sort, and boast that he has no place in his life for sentiment. But his is a starved and shriveled soul. He may be wise as to markets, and processes, and materials, but there is for him no standing in the market place with bowed, uncovered head as seeing a new vision of God. There is no fear of God, divinity, in his business, and one day the last spark of divinity in himself will die, and he will have no more capacity for God, no outlook on the life that is life indeed.

The perfection of fear is—love! If God's revelations, increasing in wonder and beneficence, arouse the soul to reverent and grateful awe, what shall we say of the supreme revelation—"The Word was made flesh"? Is not that the crowning revelation of God? Surely we can love God supremely because he has given us, for our redemption, the express image of his person in Jesus Christ. But must we not also fear, in the presence of this supreme revealing of his nature?

Has not God put a new atmosphere of sanctity about all this common life of ours? We speak of "those holy fields," and make laborious pilgrimage to the obscure land where Jesus walked in the flesh, and which for distinction's sake we call the "Holy" Land. But is not all the earth now holy, since he has dwelt here? Palestine is only an incident; every road and home and tree and field and bird and beast in every land was honored and exalted when Jesus came to earth.

The Son of God was born of a woman. Does not that make womanhood holy, and motherhood sacred? He was once a child. Has not childhood therefore a new value and a nobler dignity? He lived a man's life, under a man's conditions. How can manhood henceforth be content with low ideals or ignoble self-estimate? Jesus Christ is God's appeal to all mankind: Reverence thyself, as one who may be adopted into the family of heaven!

The Jew of Old Testament times was told often

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enough that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. But he never came to the full understanding of the saying's truth. That was left for those who can look back to Bethlehem and Golgotha and Olivet. However much the Jew knew of the fear of God, we know more. Whatever incentive he had to reverence, we have more. All the wisdom he could attain to was not to be compared to that which waits for us, in him who is "Christ, the wisdom of God." To know him is the supreme wisdom, and the supreme humility.

Is it not so? Let the history of nineteen centuries answer. Jesus Christ is the mightiest intellectual force of the ages. He has made all knowledge consistent with itself. He has made the pursuit of knowledge a sacred quest. He has harmonized nature and providence, and has joined the wonders of creation to the wonders of grace by his revelation of the heart of God.

Not even a modern scientist can by searching find out God. The world of nature is full of contradictions, inconsistencies, failures, until we look at creation in the light of redemption. But when we have seen God in the face of Jesus Christ all wisdom becomes more wise, all science sacred, all truth more crystal clear, all the instincts of normal living more imperative and reasonable. In Christ and through Christ the world has become infinitely more wonderful, and infinitely more holy, than it could have been without him.

So in Christ does the fear of God come to perfectness in holy and transfiguring love. And his love makes wise beyond all the wisdom of the schools. For unworldly wisdom there are none who can match the humble, obedient, happy disciple of Jesus Christ.

When a lost sinner has found life in Christ he has come by way of the valley of humiliation. He has been in dread of the wrath of God upon him for his sin. The finding of the Saviour has changed this alien terror to filial reverence. But the sinner has done more than find Christ: he has found himself. Many a man dates

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his intellectual awakening to the time of his conversion, when for him literally the fear of God was the beginning of wisdom.

It appears, then, to sum up, that in the beginning of our search for wisdom we must reckon with God; that this reckoning with God must be with humility and reverent fear; that the perfection of this reverent fear is love; that such love is attainable only by those who have seen God in the face of Jesus Christ; and that with the wisdom born of this holy love God will freely give us all things. Is there not here the raw material for a program of life? Indeed, life must draw on this material for its plan and its purpose, unless life is to be forever an unsolved enigma. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.

What of the days that are to be? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." But some things are sure already as to the future. The more we know of God the more we shall love him, and the more we shall hold him in reverent, filial fear. In the presence of the Almighty, the cherubim which Isaiah saw, swift and joyous servants as they were, had two wings with which they covered their faces. The nearer we get to the Throne, the more shall we be in the spirit of reverence.

Now we know in part, and love in part, and fear in part. Then shall we know even as also we have been known, and that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom shall be wisdom's crown and glory, transfigured into the perfect love which casteth out dread.

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 13

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

GOLDEN TEXT: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psa. 122. 1.

By FRANCIS M. TURRENTINE,

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THIS is one of the great commemorative psalms of Hebraic literature, and as such is rich in historic suggestion as well as beautiful in pure poetic sentiment. It is a psalm of tender associations and blessed memories. When Saint Richard, the Bishop of Lincoln, was told by the physicians that his hour of departure was near, he cried out these exultant words, as many another saint has done. It is a pilgrim song which the psalmist wrote for the people to sing at the time of their goings up to the holy feasts at Jerusalem, and to the pious Jew these processional observances were all inwrought with the deepest religious impulses of his nature.

These pilgrimages to the Holy City were not only made in obedience to legal command, but they were occasions of special religious privileges through which the religious nature of the people found an outflow, as under the sway of these great ceremonials the deepest sentiments of their hearts would find expression, and the God of their fathers would receive their highest tribute of praise.

Most truly, therefore, could the joyful participant in these festivities exclaim, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!" These poetic lines over and over again expressed the praise of the gathering multitudes as they passed through the gates into the Holy City, the very atmosphere of which was conducive to religious exhilaration.

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This text has been used on many occasions, at dedications of churches and at other important times, and for varied purposes. When Dean Stanley preached the funeral sermon of Sir Gilbert Scott, the architect of Westminster Abbey, in the spring of 1878, he chose this verse as the motto for his sermon, which was upon the religious aspect of Gothic architecture. But it has a more personal message than that. It may suggest to us, for example, that

1. The feet of men seek ever the paths which lead back to God.

Man is religious at the very source of his nature, and for him there is no escape from religious impulses and desires. Whether he wills it or not, by the very constitution of his nature, now and again the soul cries out for God, "for the living God." Travel the world round, seek out all the conditions of the sons of men—in many respects perhaps as diverse as the setting from the rising sun—and it will be found that all will have some shrine at which to worship, and some object toward which the outgoings of their religious impulse will be directed. At the very core of humanity's life there is a religious instinct and a moral sentiment. George A. Gordon says, "As a cathedral built in the heart of a great city rises with the other buildings round about it, keeps company with them a certain distance, and then leaves them all behind, soars away skyward, and at last, solitary and alone, looks up into the infinite spaces, so every man lives among men. He rests with them upon the same political and social foundation; he stands with them in a wide and important fellowship; he rises with them a certain way, and then he goes beyond them all, and the last look and reference of his spirit is to the Eternal."

Man's religious impulse is his deepest spring of action. For this he will make the longest pilgrimages, suffer the most pinching privations, and die the most uncomplaining death. Under the inspiration of this

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impulse he will also rise to the highest possible altitudes of human attainment. Life at its best travels the path which leads back nearest to God. All substantial social progress, all remaining moral good which marks the path of human going, are facts of religious evolution. There is at the heart of mankind an ineradicable desire for God, an insatiable longing to stand again in the Holy City of the divine presence, which impulse, if followed, leads to the highest achievements in the moral and spiritual realms.

After all the toils of the philosophers and the ethicists, who at times may seem to swing loose from the faith, and yet nevertheless seek the triumph of the spirit, we may ground our contention on this, that the determining force of life, that which at last achieves the best, is the working out and the development of that quenchless energy which is at the very center of human nature. No matter what name may be given to it, man in his noblest moments feels it to be the heart's yearning impulse to know and to worship the true God. Daniel Webster never said a truer thing than that "Religion is a necessary and indispensable element in any great human character; there is no living without it. Religion is the tie that connects man to his Creator and holds him to his throne." Let all the wise theorists remember this statement of fact.

2. Man's restoration to the right relation to God affords not only the occasion for great gratitude and gladness, but it is the essential condition of life in the development and perfection of character.

In the economy of divine administration the minister of God is the accredited moral leader of men. God's prophets are supreme in the moral sphere. Under commission as a messenger of God every preacher is the moral director of human character. Where there is wrong he is to denounce it. Where there is right he is to indorse it and to identify himself with it. And in the exercise of his divine gifts, and in the execution

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of the divine decrees and purposes, the servants of Jehovah work in and through the church.

The church is God's mighty agent in the world affecting and directing in all human affairs. It is but natural and right that men should look to her as the exponent of all that is right and noble. She is expected of all who understand her mission to be the uncompromising foe and scourge of all that is mean and hurtful to men and destructive to character. The church stands apart from the level of things merely earthly, and by the high moral purposes of her saving mission among men she has a sacred sphere all her own. She has no rivals in her mission. In turning men from sin unto God, in directing the feet of men to earth's safest moral highways, no other institution may take her crown.

The church is humanity's recognized moral guardian. Man's spiritual commonwealth is the home of his soul, the house of God, the kingdom of heaven in the earth. Therefore the great moral dynamic, the one supreme power that is to mold the characters of men and fashion human society, is the gospel of Jesus Christ, of which the church is the exponent and defender.

See, the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Still supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove:
Who can faint, while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.

He who would know life in the deep joy of a perfect moral restoration, in the gladness and strength of a self-respecting moral manhood, let him turn to the blessing of the house of God. Let him learn to tell the towers thereof. Let him mark the bulwarks of Zion, go round about her and consider the beauty of her palaces; with unaffected gladness of soul go into the house of God, stand frequently within her holy pre-

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cinets. Divorcement from the rich spiritual privileges of the house of God never bodes good to our moral well-being or spiritual health. Dr. Munger, the biographer of Horace Bushnell, writes that to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* it may almost be said we are indebted for Bushnell. It is quite as true that from the church come development in personality and progress in spiritual integrity. Why, then, should we not be glad and rejoice when we hear the divine invitation, "Let us go into the house of the Lord"?

3. Something akin to the satisfaction which the worshiper of old found for his longing spirit in the temple, only richer, fuller, and more blessed, man now finds in the fuller and completer revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Revelation is not only a progressive movement through the history of the race, but its unfolding of God has been of such a character as to meet the demand of the human heart at any particular period. By the very philosophy of human nature our God who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these latter days spoken unto us by his Son. When the cup of human desire was full, and the purposes of God in human well-being were at full tide, then said he, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." The will of the Father for his people is "the kingdom," a great rich spiritual inheritance, a kingdom of light and grace. For as many as receive him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God. Jesus Christ to a longing, aspiring soul is the very high noon of light and life, for it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. The veil of the temple hath been rent in twain, the light of God's full day has had its dawning, all incomplete and unfinished conditions of revelation are forever past, and Jesus Christ to the souls of men is the very Shekinah of God. We behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.

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With all the majesty and glory of this revelation, it has, moreover, a very beautiful and practical relation to human life, entering into the minutest concerns of our being. How often must it be repeated, before it becomes as familiar and as indisputable as the most universally received axiom, that Jesus Christ is humanity's perfected character, "the holy of holies in human life," not simply an ideal Person, but your Brother and mine in all that makes for righteousness in the lives of men? Perfected grace was the beauty of his manhood, the charm of his character. And yet the inspiration of it all is not simply that he was sinless, but that as a man among men he was without sin in the even balance of a correct life. To us in the stress of toil and life it means more than that he did no sin, or than that he was far removed from a world of temptation and harm. The deep yearning of soul for a life correct in all its moral bearings, for a right spirit in the unhindered freedom of the soul's progress, finds its perfect answer, and rests in its surest and sweetest repose in the undisturbed companionship of the Son of Mary, our adorable Lord. To love him is to become like him, and one day to see him as he is. In John's vision he saw the Holy City and the temple thereof, which needed not the light of the sun, nor of the moon to lighten it, for the Lord God and the Lamb were the light thereof. Even so now the Lord himself is the light and the glory of the temple of human life.

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 20

CHRISTMAS LESSON: GREAT JOY

GOLDEN TEXT: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2. 11.

By BERTRAND M. TIPPLE

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"To be happy is the first step to being pious"—so wrote Robert Louis Stevenson. To be healthily pious is to be happy. A member of the Hawthorne family said of Mr. Emerson, "He is always smiling, though there's nothing to smile at." We are informed that on reflection the criticism was recalled, and it was said, "If Mr. Emerson has nothing to smile at, perhaps he has something to smile for!" The keynote of Christianity is that of joy. We have something to smile for! And our religion is at its best at Christmas time.

This opening hour of the first Christmas is full of joy, great joy. The earth is joyful, the shepherds are joyful, the angels are joyful, the heavens are joyful. But the angels are the most joyful of all. The shepherds are startled, surprised, astonished. The angels are joyful—so joyful are they that they will not permit one of their number to go unaccompanied as the bearer of the "good tidings," but they must needs appear as "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest." The angels are getting the most out of this first Christmas.

The shepherds are joyful. But their predominant feeling is that of amazement, astonishment, bewilderment. The element of fear is largely present. No doubt all this gave place to joy as the moments passed and they had time to think over what they had seen and heard. Surely their joy increased as, acting upon the suggestion of the angelic messenger, they went unto

Bethlehem and found the babe lying in the manger. It was all true! Heaven at last had spoken to earth; had spoken in a language that even shepherds could understand; had, indeed, spoken *to* the shepherds. Henceforth an open heaven would be above them, above all who faithfully work out their lowly tasks. A Messiah, a King, a Saviour, had come. The prophets spake the truth. The promise of God is fulfilled. The character of God is vindicated. Spurgeon tells us in his own wonderful way of an evening by the great waters: "The storm was raging, the sea and the thunders were contesting with one another; the sea with infinite clamor striving to hush the deep-throated thunder, so that the voice of the Lord should not be heard; yet over and above the roar of the billows might be heard that voice of God, as he spake with flames of fire, and divided the way for the waters. It was a dark night, and the sky was covered with thick clouds, and scarce a star could be seen through the rifts of the tempest; but at one particular time, I noticed, far away on the horizon, as if miles across the water, a bright shining, like gold. It was the moon hidden behind the clouds, so that she could not shine upon us; but she was able to send her rays down upon the waters, far away, where no cloud happened to intervene. The prophet seemed to have stood in a like position. All round about him were clouds of darkness; he heard prophetic thunders roaring, and he saw flashes of the lightnings of divine vengeance; clouds and darkness, for many a league, were scattered through history; but he saw far away a bright spot—one place where the clear shining came down from heaven. And he sat down and penned these words, 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.'" This great light was no longer far removed across leagues of dark and angry seas. It was above them, about them, upon them. God had provided for their thirst refreshing

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springs, for their minds the revelation of truth. He had matched the heart's craving with heart's love. He set eternity in them, created them with instincts that reached out and out to the farthest boundaries, that cried out, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Today he answers that cry with the announcement, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Well might they be joyful. Even the stones were ready to cry out for joy. Happy shepherds!

But the angels were the most joyful beings on this first Christmas. How we love the angels! They are our ministering spirits. And they delight to minister to the humble ones of earth. They wing their flight with willing hearts to the shepherds watching on the bleak hills. They are our faithful guardians. They bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against the stones. They encamp round about us. How we love the angels! And angels bring us our Christmas message, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." But, as I said, the angels are the most joyful, theirs is the great joy.

God has chosen them to be the bearers of the "good tidings." They realize the importance of those tidings. They can measure their worth. They can see their far-reaching influence. The shepherds cannot comprehend it all. Succeeding generations will appreciate more fully the meaning. Still even those dwelling in the most remote future will sing:

Who is equal to these things?
Who these mysteries can brook?
Faith with eagle eyes and wings
Scarcely there may soar and look;
Thought must seek the height in vain,
All her musings turn to pain,
Whelm'd beneath the mighty load
Of that word, *Incaruate God*.

The angels, however, understand and rejoice. They share the secrets of the throne. Three years before

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Bach died he visited Frederick II, king of Prussia. Frederick was in attendance at a concert when word was brought to him that the great musician had arrived. The king at once sent for him, not giving him time even to don a court dress. When Bach entered, Frederick announced with enthusiasm, "Gentlemen, Bach is here." The world had had its poets—Homer and Thespis, and Aristophanes and Sophocles, and Euripides and Æschylus. The world had had its philosophers—Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. The world had had its historians—Herodotus and Xenophon and Thucydides. The world had had its conquerors—Camillus and Hannibal and Pompey and Cæsar. And the angels know the world has now its Saviour. In simple language they announce his entry. Throw back the curtains of the night and let them sing for joy, "Glory to God in the highest." God has elected them to be the bearers of these "good tidings." Yes, the angels have great joy.

They joyfully anticipate the joy which their announcement will give to the shepherds and to the multitudes outside of and beyond the shepherds. The anticipation gives them great joy. It is more blessed to give than to receive. It is fully as blessed to carry the news as to hear it. Precious news is this they have to impart to the shepherds. Listen! "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In him are all the families of the earth to be blessed. He shall judge the poor, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. Listen! He shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Listen! The Spirit of the Lord God is upon him. The Lord hath anointed him to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent him to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed gar-

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ments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation." Good tidings are these! In an ecstasy of joy the angelic messengers hasten to herald the news to the waiting shepherds on Bethlehem's plain. Standing at the grave of Edmond About, Renan said, "I doubt whether the temple of my dreams is not the cemetery. Peace which elsewhere is but a chimera, here only becomes a reality. Soon, I believe, we shall say, . . . 'Happy are the dead.'" Renan's words are the words of despair. He could not have heard the "good tidings" of the angels—"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Yes, great joy have the angels with their good tidings which proclaim the conquest of the grave, the overthrow of evil, the eternity of life. This is the joy of the Christian ministry, the joy of telling the "good tidings." There's a joy in hearing, but O, there's a great joy in telling! Spake James Chalmers after years of hardship, "Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experience, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give it me surrounded with savages, with spears and clubs, give it me back again with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground—give it me back, and I will still be your missionary!" The sufferings were not to be compared to the joy of preaching the "good tidings." In describing the angel who appeared to the two Marys at the tomb on Easter morning the record is, "His countenance was like lightning." His message was, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Who shall deny that his face was "beaming" with the joy of his "good tidings." Yes, the angels have great joy.

They are the sharers in heaven's richest gift to earth.

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All heaven shares in that gift. Christ was closely related to every being in the sky. The angels loved him, worshiped him, rejoiced in him. The sacrifice of the Son of God is their sacrifice. It is written that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. But his departure affected all heaven—affected sorely the angels. And yet the angels have great joy in announcing the “good tidings” to the shepherds. This is the law of happiness. Drummond says, “There is no happiness in having and getting, but only in giving; half the world is on the wrong scent in the pursuit of happiness.” There is a joy that comes to those receiving gifts. It is pleasant to be remembered. Many hearts will be made glad this Christmas by the “remembrances” from loved ones and friends. Boxes and bundles will be opened with great glee. There will be joy and yet not great joy. Many will be happy and yet not altogether happy. Something will be lacking. And this because they have not caught the real joy of Christmas. The spirit of Christmas is one of great joy. But it is a joy born of sacrificial giving. To give, to give that which costs one thought and heart and comfort, is to know the joy of Christmas time. Many will have gifts, numerous and rich, but still they will not be altogether happy. Many will have few if any gifts and yet they will have great joy. Beecher said, “In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up, that makes us rich.” That is the receipt for the Christmas joy. Yes, the shepherds had joy, but the angels had great joy!

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 27

REVIEW: THE BURIED LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4. 23.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD has a poem called "The Buried Life." In it he declares it to be the common custom of men to wear disguises lest their frankness be met by indifference or blame from other men. Moreover, he says this secretive habit is ordained by fate. For fate, foreseeing that man would be a frivolous baby, decreed that his real life should be hidden deep within him lest it should be damaged by his capricious play. Certainly the poet's notion agrees with many facts. Body and manners and speech—the clothing of the soul—are often its deceiving masks. Things are not what they seem to be. That has been often true in the crises of history. It is still oftener true in individual life. In that lack of agreement between the inward and the outward, between the depths and the surface, there is sometimes cause for dismay and sometimes cause for cheer.

In Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde the dual nature is quite according to life. But the transformation of the body so that the debased, criminal nature gets a brutal misshapen covering, in agreement with itself, while it doubtless represents an ultimate truth, is not in accord with present facts. Frequently the outward life is a polished lie. A man recently arrested for house-breaking was during the day a respectable and respected merchant; at night he was a burglar. And that double life he had lived for years. Institutions as well as men sometimes become living lies. John in the

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Apocalypse spoke of a church which had a reputation for life and was dead. The military orders were organized to defend Christendom against the Saracens, but they ended with a purpose to make supreme their own wealth and power. Monasteries were for religious shelter and discipline and service, and they became over and over places of cruelty and foul corruption, suppressed in more than one country and interfered with by law many times. The inner life—the buried life—which gives birth to our motives and plans, does it contradict the life upon which human eyes look? The question is not, Have we evil tendencies which we fight to annihilate as men fight with wild beasts? but, Is our real life hidden from view because we dare not expose it? God save us from that! Hypocrisy breeds cynics and nauseates God.

But there may be cheer in the thought of a buried life. There is such a thing as reserve. A soul may not be able to set forth all its treasures. The good that appears is from the pressure of that which is hidden. The clear spring which bubbles up into the light of day has subterranean sources. It is man's buried life which is appearing in his best work. Olive Schreiner's dream of the painter with a marvelous color in his pictures and his untold secret; the painter who, as his pictures multiplied, became paler and thinner and then died; the painter upon whose breast was the unhealed scar from which the blood had come for the mixing of his paints, is a parable. It is the hidden life which gives virtue to enduring work. Del Sarto looked at his painting and said: "All is silver gray, placid, perfect with my art," which was the worst possible thing for him. There was no unexpressed hidden life lying back. His performance equaled his longings, his reach was no greater than his grasp. Raphael, he said, made mistakes in drawing which a child might correct, but Raphael had reach, insight, passion beating in heart and nerves and muscles and longing to get out, and

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that made him heavenly in his art. Wagner was jeered at, hooted, regarded as insane; he was poor—too poor to own a piano; and he endured the abuse and the poverty, sustained by his wife and by Liszt, and compelled the recognition of the individuality and poetic passion which sobs and clamors all through his music. Beethoven was deaf, but heard sounds in his soul and sang them and laughed and beat time as he walked the streets, while the ignorant rabble scoffed at his ecstasy, and the great buried life of the man broke out into music as bewitching as the moonlight and as solemn as the sea.

It is a blessed thing to discover and be sure of and be deferential to our best selves. Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control are the poet's trinity of duties which lead life to sovereign power. And what we see in ourselves to revere may be more truly ours than what we see to control. "To see oursel's as ithers see us" may prick the bubble of our vanity and save us from strutting, but to see ourselves as God sees us may break the fetters of our sin and save us from fear and falseness. How can we know the best that is in us? Wagner was helped to partly by the abuse he received and partly by the adoring sympathy of his wife and father-in-law; Beethoven partly by his affliction and solitude and partly by his friends. Affliction often brings self-knowledge. Ignatius Loyola found his spiritual mission through a wound which brought him near the gates of death. But love is a better revealer than fear.

When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean we say, and what we would, we know.

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A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.

And that blessed touch of love, by means of which, in our human relationships, self-discovery often comes, is the chosen method of God, preëminent and preferred among all his methods for making us acquainted with ourselves. The discerning touch of God's love in Christ reveals our best selves and our lapse from them. In Jesus, "strong Son of God," who also is our brother, we get the revelation of all that is holy in us and the rebuke of all that is evil. He is the Ithuriel spear of the Father whose touch makes us know our sin and our possible saintliness.

We are to remember that the word "heart" is not to be given the limited meaning which is common to it in our day. It does not mean the seat of the emotions. The "heart" among the ancient Hebrews was credited with the functions which now we assign to the brain. It was the physical home of rational life. It was equivalent to the word "soul" as that word is used in modern days. It may stand for personal, spiritual life. "Guard thyself" is the text's order. And no one who stops with the care of the body or with the culture of the intellect has obeyed the order. Moral qualities and spiritual instincts must be attended to, and if they are not, self is neglected. And if we are not to shirk in part the duty which the text lays upon us, God must be consulted. Life is not guarded if it is not religious. If it is to be properly garrisoned and its forces marshaled for worthy warfare God cannot be omitted from the process.

"Guard thyself above all guarding." The margin of the Revision suggests that rendering. There is nothing

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so important. To care for your fortune, your circumstances, your business are duties which cannot compare in rank with this. Dr. E. Ray Lankester, in his recent valuable book, *The Kingdom of Man*, makes a powerful and worthy plea for increased attention to nature study and for proper government endowment of scientific research. The appeal should be heeded. Out of the laboratories of brave, patient, brilliant scientists splendid treasures of truth and secrets of power are pouring. Nature study is not only fascinating but vitally important. Man's control of nature not only belongs to his progress but is necessary to his existence. But the control of nature is not so important ultimately as the control of self. To know the elements of matter and the forms of life will not compare in value for either the individual or the race with the knowledge of the needs and glory of the soul. And such knowledge comes not through physiology and not through psychology, but in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it is in the face of Jesus Christ.

"Keep thyself." It suggests our power. The care of the life which is supreme is not turned over to blind forces. We are not in the grip of fate. We are not the sport of chance. The plea of helplessness, whether it proceeds from ordinary cowardice and laziness or from a scientific theory, gets no sympathy from this text. Our freedom is recognized. If the appeal is not issued to a free soul it has no force. The task outlined is not beyond our powers. For its performance we are responsible.

One other thing we must remember is that the guarding of the interior personal life does not mean its seclusion. No selfish end is to be in view when we give ourselves to this supremely important task. It is true, solemnly true, that the nature of our secret life is to determine our eternal destiny, but also true that the comfort of other lives is influenced thereby. "Keep thy heart above all that thou keepest, for out of it are the

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issues of many lives." We must not dream that personal life can be guarded by retaining it miser-fashion. Giving it is necessary to keeping it. Tennyson's trinity is incomplete. "Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control" will *not* lead life to sovereign power. We must add another duty. Its name is "self-sacrifice." Without its practice we can never measure up to the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

When the divine buried life is seen, loose it from its graveclothes and let it go. Rough, bearish, thorny exteriors may be a sore trial to loving hearts who are hurt by the rough outside even though they may know the good inside. Carlyle passionately lamented over his dead wife and longed for just five minutes in which to tell her how he really loved her through the time of misunderstanding. The lament was too late. Augustine, weeping over his dead mother, recalled that she said he had been dutiful, but passionately he contrasted his scanty kindness with her absorbing slavery to him. That contrast could not be softened. It was too late. Let the divine life have a resurrection and power and control and absolute sway in the visible life, so that God may rejoice in it and men and women may see it. May the Christ who called the dead Lazarus out of his grave call us out of our torpor, indifference, and death into life beautiful, visible, and eternal!



