

FOR TROUBLED HEARTS

CHARLES A. PATTON, M.A.

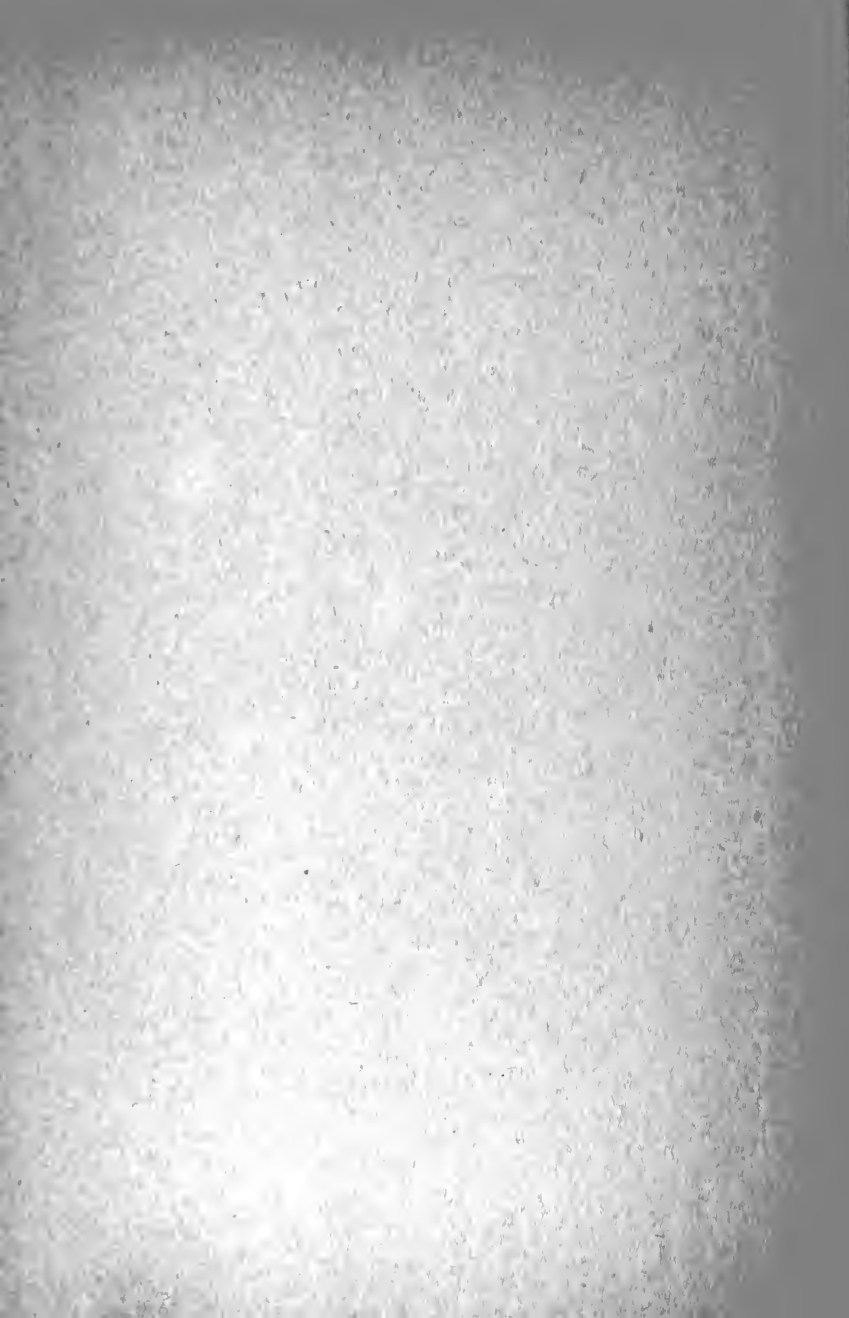
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BY

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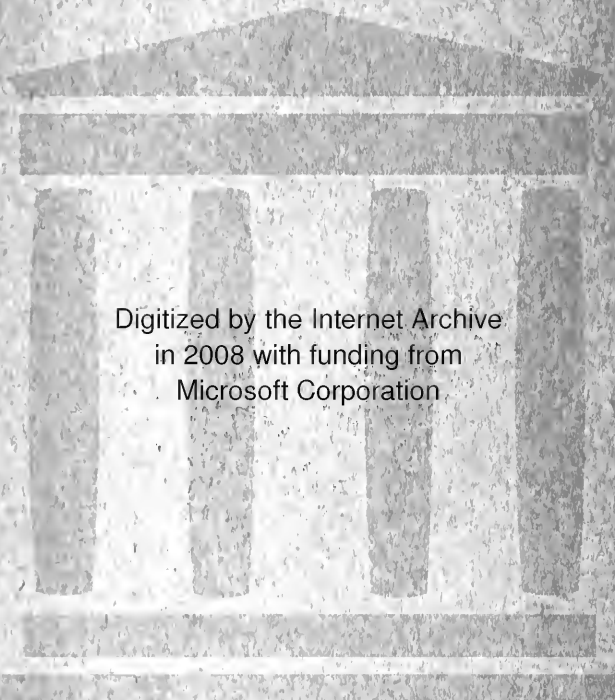
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TO MY MOTHER,
BEST AND DEAREST COMPANION OF
EARLY YEARS, AND WHOSE LOVE IS
STILL AN UNFAILING INSPIRATION,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

CHARLES AUBREY EATON.



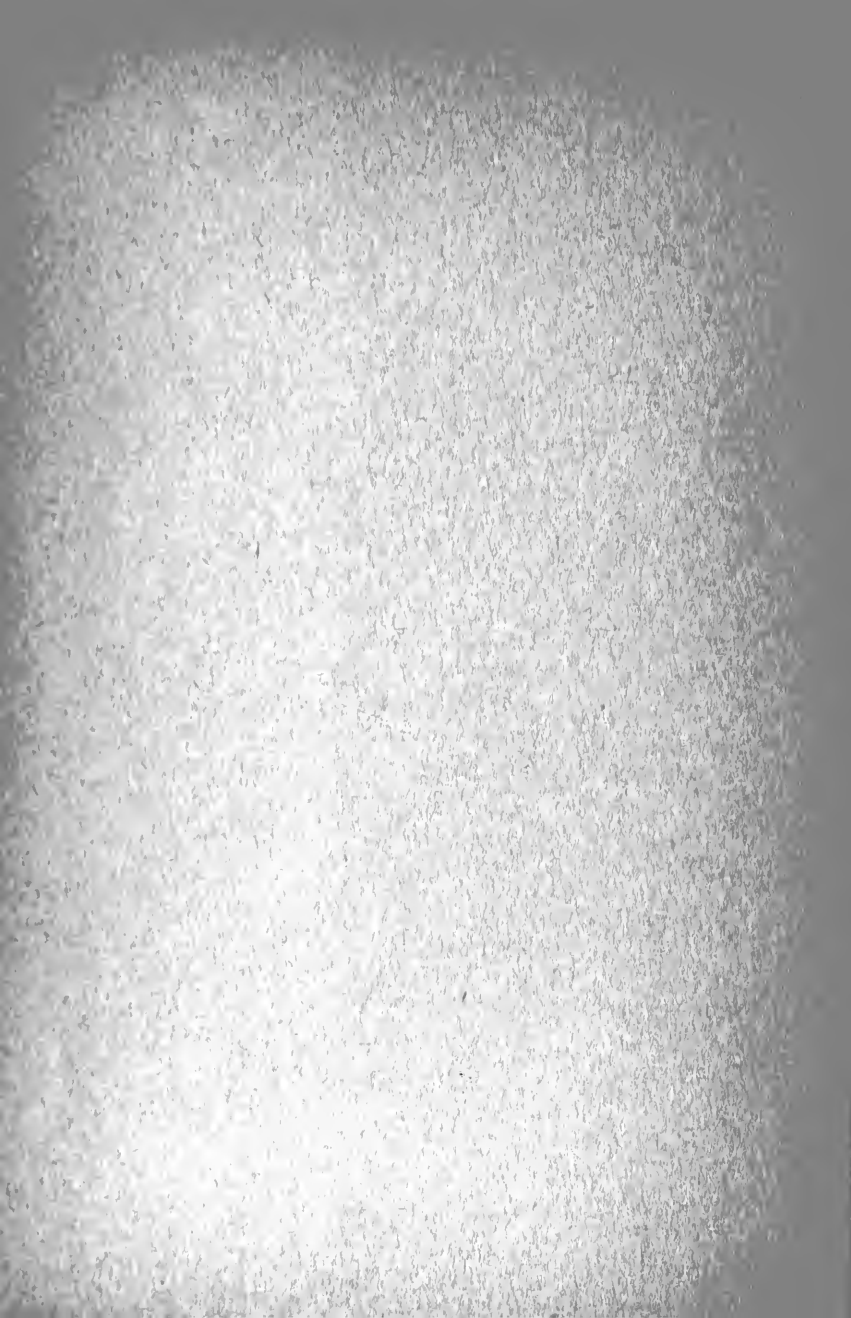
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PREFACE

These little messages were given from week to week in a Sunday leaflet to my Congregation, in the hope that they might prove of help to troubled hearts. They are now published in more permanent form with the same hope and for the same purpose.

CHARLES AUBREY EATON.

*Toronto,
October, 1899.*



FOR TROUBLED HEARTS.



That We May See!

“Lord, open his eyes!” prayed Elisha, and lo, the hills about them were filled with the horses and chariots of the Lord. Lord, open our eyes that we may see the infinite resources at our command as believers. The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand. Omnipotence lies back of the humblest Christian. Niagara lay long, a splendid and awe-inspiring spectacle. Then men learned that its power might be harnessed for service. The mighty torrent rolls on as before, but a thousand lights flash over the land and ten thousand wheels revolve with the hum of industry. The beautiful giant is now the servant of man. So we have too long looked upon the majesty of the Eternal as a mere dread spectacle, when all the time God, thro’ Jesus Christ, has been calling upon us to use

His awful power in our lives. Who can stand against God? And what man can fail when in him and back of him pulses the supreme and complete power of the God of Heaven and Earth?

Rest and Wait.

“Oh! rest in the Lord; wait patiently for him.” Yes, rest and wait. This is the most of life—this waiting. It is so because life is life. We sow the seed and wait. The harvest cannot come without waiting. We lay foundations in business and wait. Success grows slowly. It may come in a moment just as a rose bud may open in a night, but that moment is the fruition of long silent growth.

We wait too often as the prisoner waits, chafing at the bars and rebelling at restraint. The Grace of God bringeth Rest. The basis of this passage is loving trust. If I love God I am at ease in His presence; if I trust Him I waste no energy doubting and wondering, and

pulling up the seed to see how nearly it is ready to spring into life. I drop down upon the forward play of God's purposes. The waves may recede and seem to go out forever, but I know that the tide is rising—let me think of the tide—the waves are nothing. Rest and wait patiently in the Lord, oh! weary one. Thy morning will surely come.

Our Beloved.

In the Lord we possess a revelation and incarnation of God expressed in terms of human life. A scientist goes out and studies the rocks and tells us in scientific language what he learns. But we do not know the meaning of his technical phrases, so he puts his knowledge into common, every-day language and we are interested at once. So we find God in nature as law and power, but we cannot understand. We feel His presence in the course of human affairs dim and shadowy. We cannot read His word to us, but in Christ, God comes forth from the dark-

ness and mystery and makes known Himself and His ways to the children of men We know what love means—we can understand the word Father, and in Christ we know that God is love, and God is our Father.

Compassion

Jesus suffered with the world for the world. He was moved with deep compassion when he saw the multitudes for they were like sheep without a shepherd. We must know the fellowship of His sufferings. The true Christ spirit is a spirit of yearning pity and love. No man is too base for us to hope to reach and help. We are ministers of all for Jesus sake.

The new life is all of love in its expression. "Faith working by love." This is hard to do. But, if so be that we have the spirit of Christ, we shall be able to do as He did—love our enemies, and in the midst of trial know the peace that passeth understanding.

Obey.

The Holy Spirit is given to them that obey. He helps us to obey. A sick man puts himself in harmony with the laws of health and life; he seeks fresh and pure air, wholesome food, plenty of rest and exercise, and he "gets well." That is, life masters disease and weakness within him. The boy learning a trade obeys instructions implicitly and gradually the powers of a skilled workman are manifest in his life. These are similar to the conditions upon which the spirit is given. The man sick of his sin and seeking moral health earnestly shall be filled with the Spirit in proportion to his willingness to obey. He that hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. If he has no appetite he cannot take spiritual food, and without food he must remain weak. We cannot analyse all this any more than we can understand the mystery of the Godhead or of our own personalty. The Spirit may be present and work and direct and illuminate with as little consciousness on

our part as accompanies the presence of our own spirit, except of course on special occasions when we can say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

We may all be filled with the Spirit. We all ought to be. We all must be if we are to do our part as servants and sons of God. But this means that we shall become more and more filled with the Christ Life. Our moral disease, weakness and selfishness shall give way to the abounding and more abundant Life from above. Surely we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth. Yea—we live, yet not we but Christ liveth in us.

Voice or Echo?

We live in this world but we are citizens of the world to come. Our standards and ideals are of eternity. We cannot be earthy and shallow in thought and life for we think the thoughts of God and from Him is our vital breath.

The Christian is a man who does small

things in a large way. He discerns the perfect will of God. He distinguishes between echoes and voices, between shadow and substance. Between him and the world a vast gulf is fixed. The world lives in and for to-day. The Christian lives in to-day for eternity. The shadow of the throne of God falls across his path. His eyes are fixed upon the prize of the High Calling. He presses forward hoping to attain.

This fits him for the life that now is. It makes all doing and thinking real. There is nothing secular—all is sacred. To live is Christ—and Christ is God. The Christian's life is God's method of revealing Himself to the world. Alas! if that divine voice be hushed amidst the jangling echoes of our worldly nature. Alas! if we put forth our whole energy in mere leaves. It is by our fruits, not by our leaves, that we are known.

How great is our calling! Shall we not seek out the eternal verities—believe them, love them, live them? To us life is serious

business for we look unto the recompense of reward in that great day.



Life.

Paul in his Roman prison found life a joy and death gain. Wholesome and sane in mind, the crosses that he bore became a means of victory. He writes his own life story in a word—"To me to live is Christ." One makes art, or business, or learning his life passion. But none or all of these suffice to satisfy the whole man. Paul was satisfied. The indwelling Lord met his heart hunger, answered the questions of his mind, was to him all and in all. He was sustained by a divine communion. His feelings projected themselves into the infinite compassion of Christ. His was that will which "did always the things well pleasing unto God." Like the starlight lost in the morning sun, his mind lost itself in the light of that mind which could of all the

world say, "I know." Paul knew no life except the Christ life within him.

This is what men are needing; with this, life becomes a joy, death a gain, suffering a supreme gift of God. Here is perfect peace.

Belief.

Faith is the first thing in the world. Without this Imperial quality life could not rise above the scale of blind and dumb impersonality. After all its triumphs modern science stands abashed before the ultimate facts. It can tell us nothing of the origin or essential nature of either life or matter. It has no light to throw upon the immortality of the soul. Indeed it is silent upon the continuity of the present natural universe.

All science, philosophy, all practical life, rests where religion rests, upon faith. Without faith, this world becomes a barren dust-heap, strewn with wreckage and debris, formless, meaningless, the crumbling monuments

of despair. With faith, despite all ignorance and weakness and failure, men can bear to live; can live hopefully, can find incentive and energy for great conflicts, and at last can obey the injunction of the youthful seer:—

“Sustained and soothed”

“By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,

“Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch

“About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Hard Sayings.

All the sayings of Jesus are hard. They contradict what the world considers common sense. They transfer emphasis from the external, the prudential, the material, to the spiritual and unseen. The Life is put first, the meat second. The Sermon on the Mount is one long denial of the blessedness of what men commonly call blessed. Underlying these sayings are the great utterances of truth wherein He set forth the four-square facts of His work: the absolute necessity of a new birth in order to salvation, the doctrine of a

divine comforter, the fact of His own atoning death, and the fearful looking forward to that Day of high and holy judgment. Think on these things.

The Man of Sorrows.

Jesus wept. What fathomless deeps of divine sympathy these words contain. He saw beside Him the weeping sisters, broken hearted and lonely. Knowing what is in the heart of man He must have seen all the pathos of human bereavement and disappointment, expressed in the blasted hopes of these two good women. He saw in Lazarus the solemn tragedy in which sooner or later every child of Adam must play the leading part. No wonder the Son of Man wept when He thought of the long struggle of the world with the arch-enemy Death, and the bitterness and blackness of defeat. He beheld in the weeping Jews, with their veiled hatred and artificial grief, the wreck and failure of self-centred

lives. No wonder He wept. Who among His disciples can look upon the world's woes and weaknesses without sorrow? And to whom can we go with such sure hope of finding comfort and sympathy? Surely He hath borne our sorrows—shall we not know the divine fellowship of His suffering?

Obedience the Way of Life.

Our race fell through disobedience. We were saved by obedience, for Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The splendor and dignity of our first parents in their dominion over the world was lost because they failed to obey God. But the seed of the woman hath been highly exalted because of His obedience, and God hath given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Dream and Do.

Joseph was a supreme dreamer and at the same time a supreme realist. His vision of possibilities for his own life rested upon his surrender to God and the energizing power of a Divine indwelling. While he saw the large outline in dreams he did not fail to fill in the details in practice. He did not go to sleep in order to dream. His visions were the crowning glory of utmost activity and wakefulness of soul and mind. He trusted God for the large purpose and plan of his life: he accepted as his part the improving of every opportunity that offered. Secure in his trust in what he dreamed he turned all the reverses and hardships into stepping stones toward success. And success to Joseph was not a selfish personal gain, but a complete carrying out of God's great plan for his life. We modern Christians need to cultivate the religious imagination as well as the religious practice. To build each small commonplace duty, day by day, into some great plan of God for our

lives which the spirit has revealed to us in moments of spiritual exaltation—this is success.

The Mystery.

“To you,” said Jesus, “it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God.” A mystery is something hitherto hidden and now revealed. We know the mystery of God’s Providence when in Christ we understand that all things work together for good to them that love Him. We know the mystery of iniquity when from the sunlit pathway of life we behold the pit whence we were digged, and feel beneath our feet the mighty foundation of the Rock of Ages. We understand the mystery of godliness when we see it revealed in Christ, “God manifest in the flesh;” “Justified in the Spirit;” “Seen of Angels;” “Preached unto the nations;” “Believed on in the world;” “Received up into glory.” Since we know Him, whom to know aright is life eternal, what manner of men ought we to be?

Surely a crucified Christ can be revealed only in a crucified Christian.

All and in All.

Jesus Christ is all and in all to the Christian because He alone is a complete revelation of God, of man, and of the hidden forces which, when victorious, will make human society ideal. In Christ God translated Himself into human form and speech. No longer need we go into the heights to bring God down, nor into the depths to bring Him up. He is here among us in the person of the Well-Beloved. We can look upon Him and understand Him now. In Christ man is revealed to himself. Here we see what man must come to because of sin, for He became sin for our sakes and gathered into His pure bosom the whole wages of sin which is death. Here also we see what man can become when redeemed from sin. Here in a word are the Ideal man and the Actual man set forth fully in the light of time and of eternity.

The Homeland Hymn.

Mr. Moody, to illustrate the nearness of heaven, tells how, on the shores of the Adriatic, when storms arise, the wives go down to the water's edge and sing a verse of some sweet hymn. As the music floats over the sea, the husbands, toiling in their boats, take up the refrain and thus singing their gratitude for guidance and home love they make their rough and hazardous way safely to shore.

Such is our life. We are citizens of the Homeland—its peace is within us—without are the waves of this life storm-swept and wrapped in the night. Sometimes the light on that far shore is shut from view, but, toiling in the gloom and stress, there floats to our ears a sweet message of love, and, though we cannot see, we trust. Hope taketh hold within the veil; the hand is set more strenuously to the oar: an answering hymn of praise rises from brave hearts, and thus we journey, until at last the Day dawn and the darkness fleeth away forever.

The Plumb Line.

This striking figure used by Amos is full of teaching. God is the Architect of this world's final accomplishments. He furnishes the plan—He inspects the work—His plumb-line hangs in the midst of human life, social and individual. We build according to our own plan—we square things to our plumb-line, and by-and-by God lays His measure against our work and it is condemned—it must come down. History is full of this: Rome built much, but only a little of all her great labor remains to-day. The rest crumbled into dust because it did not match the plumb-line of the Eternal.

In nations, in men, in churches, that only can abide which meets this requirement. Happy the man to whom is given vision to behold the line in the hand of God. Sad indeed is the lot of him who builds to the end without thought of God's requirement and plan and at last finds his life building a heap of ruins.

The Two Kingdoms.

Two Kingdoms stand side by side in this world. One is the Kingdom of death, of darkness, of the Devil. The other is the Kingdom of life, of light, of God. The sinful sons of men are by nature and choice citizens of the death country. The sinless Son of Man and Son of God is Lord of the life country. He is the Door through which all may flee from death to life by faith in His blood. Citizens of the outside are described as dead in trespasses and in sin. No wonder they cannot see light or hear the tones of God's redeeming love. They walk on a way that perisheth. They have no hope and are without God in the world. They are Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel—amenable to God's law, but not under its protection. Citizens of the inside Kingdom are possessors of Eternal life; they walk on a solid way which the Lord knoweth. They have a hope which entereth even within the veil. God is always with them even unto the end. And they are not aliens

but citizens, and sons, and heirs—joint heirs with Christ. The only way by which one can pass from death to life is through faith in Christ whose blood covers men's sin from the sight of God and whose life is placed in their hearts by a new birth.

Why Pray?

Contemplation of nature, and study of the Bible drive men to prayer. "Who can discern his errors?" is the humble question which the awe-struck soul asks itself. And what more natural than the cry of the Psalmist, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

Deep in the sub-consciousness lie hidden sins visible to the all-seeing One, but not plain to the dull vision of man. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins" is the next step in the prayer, as it is the next step in actual experience. If the secret sins are cleansed from the deeps of the heart, and presumptuous sins are avoided, then will the danger of falling over the precipice of the "great

unpardonable transgression " cease, and Jesus will be in deed and truth the Rock of Refuge and Redeemer from curse and guilt.

The Great Sacrifice.

From the Altar on Mount Moriah, where Abraham, the chosen one, offered his only son, to Calvary, where God gave freely His only Begotten to redeem the world, there stretches a pathway of unbroken history, sunlit by divine revelations, shadowed by the sins and follies of the chosen people. The offering of Isaac was God's way of teaching Abraham that a chosen man is chosen for sacrifice—for service. It was the Cross of Christ in prophecy and symbol. It set forth the central truth of sacrifice to be a willing surrender of our very best. It placed faith and obedience, which is faith in action, at the foundation of a life acceptable to the Lord.

For Troubled Hearts.

Like the disciple our hearts are troubled by experiences we cannot understand, by work we are not able to do, by sins we cannot overcome. His word to us is a word of hope and trust. Believe in God, believe in Me. Trust in God there upon the throne—God of wisdom, of power, of justice. Trust in God here, revealed in Me as Redeemer from sin, burden bearer, strengthener for great tasks. Lift up your eyes to the stars and learn that Heaven is manifested in all human life. Just as no ship can cross the ocean without the stars so no human life can run its course apart from God. Yonder is the Father's house, and thither I go to prepare a place for each one of you and I will come again, and I will receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye may be also. Exhortation, command, promise, blest trinity of divine teachings throw their light across our dark way and thus shall we at last get safely home.

Power.

Paul expressed a great wish when he told the Philippians that he desired to know "Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." He longed to know the Person, His power, and all the external circumstances that surrounded Him in His redemption of mankind.

It is a striking thought this—that we may know in our daily lives the same power that raised Christ from the dead. The power of an endless life ought to be sufficient to make us victorious over all the trials of our every day experience.

This is an inexhaustible fountain. The more we learn to draw from it, the more we shall be able to mount up with wings as eagles—to run and not be weary—to walk and not faint.

A Conditioned Promise.

We can only claim the promise of the Lord's continued presence when we are engaged in work worthy of our high calling in

Him. It is useless to bemoan the absence of the spirit when we are doing nothing to make His guidance necessary. He is to lead us into all truth, but not unless we are seeking to be led. He will take the things of Christ and reveal them unto us, but not unless we are interested in the things of Christ. The organ of Christian apprehension and progress is obedience. He that is willing to do His will shall know of the doctrine. We too often forget that the promise "Lo! I am with you always," is attached to the command "go into all the world." The chief proof of the Lord's divine origin and mission was the fact that He worked the works of God. The Father was always with Him because He did always the things that were well pleasing unto the Father. The Spirit of God will never assist the works of the world. He is here to guide, inspire and strengthen those who seek the high duties of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Books.

God reveals Himself to the mind in His World-Book—the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. The unbeliever says “when I consider the heavens.” The christian says “when I consider Thy heavens.” To one the world is full of law, to the other it is full of God. The World-Book reveals God in His matchless power and wisdom. In the Bible—the Word-Book—God makes Himself known to the moral nature of man. The whole scheme of redemption flashes its white light over the dark depths of sinful human nature and reveals its helplessness under the law—its hope in the free grace of divine love revealed in Jesus Christ. The believer steps reverently through the world for he is ever in the presence of God and within him he feels that God, the loving Father is present as an indwelling life.

Fear Not.

“Fear thou not: for I am with thee.” Well may we fear as we face life and death. As the burdens and black shadows lie before us, as we feel the poor, futile energy with which we have to do our life’s battle. We know so little, we are so weak. It is so easy to be bad, so hard to be good. But “fear not, for I am with thee,” saith the Lord. No shadow can long withstand the light of that presence. No mountain of difficulty but must melt before that power. No ignorance and weakness but will be helped by that wisdom and glorified into victory by that majestic Conqueror. Underneath are the everlasting arms. “Be not dismayed for I am thy God.” The world is filled with God. However great the forces around us—however unfathomable the deeps over which our frail skiff makes its tempestuous way, God is always greater, and nothing is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “I will strengthen thee from within, like the

tides of returning health to the arm of the sick. I will help thee from without, for the chariots of the Lord are ten thousand; yea My help shall be successful; ye cannot fall nor fail, for I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Brave toiler take heart—the Lord is thy victory—thou canst in Him do all things.

In the World, but not of the World.

There are two ways in which the Christian is to touch the world—directly and indirectly. We are prone to adopt the second to the neglect of the first. Aloofness from real life was no practice of the Master. He went where men were, just as they were—He sat at their feasts and with wonderful words of love and rebuke and wisdom changed the scene.

Christians ought to touch the world directly—we ought to mingle with men just as they are and thrust our influence upon them. We are to directly storm the fortress of sin and wrong. Sometimes the garrison may be

starved out, but usually much real fighting has to be done. We must not allow society to set us to one side and say—"Stay there apart by yourselves—sing your songs and pray, but do not touch us." Rather let us proclaim our message everywhere and carry the cross of Christ to the very centre of the life about us.

The Angel's Word.

"Fear not," said the angels in kindly phrase to the wondering, watching shepherds. "Fear not," is the message of the Christ to the world. Our sorrows fall like night about our homes and hearts. Our burdens seem too heavy to be borne. Our sins—whither shall we flee from their power? And in the midst of it all comes the sweet words "Fear not." This day is born a Saviour. Yea, well may there be Glory to God in the highest when upon earth is peace through His blood to the lowest.

Hear and Do.

In the rhythmic and majestic parable with which our Lord closes His mountain sermon He probes to the core of a common human failing. All can hear but few become doers of the Word. We hear for aesthetic enjoyment; we hear for others and exhibit facility in fitting the discourse to our neighbor, poor needy soul. But to hear in order to do—that is indeed rare.

There are always two foundations, one of which must form the basis of life. We may build upon obedience to God's immutable law; upon life rather than form; upon facts and reality rather than fancy and appearance. This is rock foundation; its opposite is shifting sand.

There are always two kinds of building, good or bad the work goes on—and every sin is builded in as surely as every virtue.

There is one test. The same rain, the same floods and winds beat upon good and bad, rock and sand alike. The trial of adversity and

prosperity, the trial of joy and sorrow, of victory and defeat, of life and death come to all alike.

There are two results always in the nature of cause and effect. The one contractor puts in good lumber and stone and work; his building of life and character is at last accepted. The other puts in knotty lumber, poor brick and stone, hasty work and at last his building is refused. "And it fell not," will be eternally true of every character founded upon the regenerating power of Christ. "And it fell" will be the sad wail of weeping angels over the doom of lives based upon self and the enjoyment of the things that perish.

Triumphant.

Paul never expected the Christian to escape trials, but he did expect the Christian to triumph over trials. The Believer has in his heart the Power which turns all hardships and sorrows into occasions for joy, and what to others is defeat, to him becomes a blessing.

We are left here in order to grow. Character is the result of conflict. But in all our weariness and burdens we have the sweet assurance that "all things work together for good," and that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Root Before Fruit.

If we are to do our best work it can only be by a deeper and larger knowledge of God—"this is life eternal to know Thee," and life eternal is the energy and wisdom which makes the Christian mighty.

Let each one then, seek the silence of heart communion with the Father. When we see Him as revealed in the glorified Christ we shall love Him with all our hearts and minds. This is the first thing—to open the soul to the direct influences of God. After that the God-life within us must express itself in act, and word and character. It is folly to overlook this truth. The same Lord who commanded the

golden rule said also "except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." He who calls upon all to love their neighbour as themselves says also "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned." Unless there is a deep life within there cannot be a high life without.

Obey.

Obedience is the watchword for the coming year. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do." We kiss the cross, and, holding it to our hearts, follow Thee with joy—not the slavish fearful obedience of the hireling—not even the stern following of abstract principle along the thorny path of duty, but rather the glad answer of love to the voice and will of our Beloved. "For My sake"—this is to be the motive which will impel us in all our doing and thinking. For Jesus sake—for love of Him we shall toil and wait, and carry our cross with joy, and the answer to this divine

obedience will be a deeper knowledge of God's truth—a completer revelation of Himself in us and through us—a victory that, in Him who is with us, shall overcome the world.

Eye or Bit.

“I will guide thee with Mine eye.” This was the word that David heard from his Heavenly Father. David had sinned. At first he did not confess and repent, and his sorrows were many. When at last he sought the Lord, like the prodigal son, he found forgiveness. Then the Father said, “Be not henceforth like the mule that needs a bit and reins to guide him, but be so close and open to Me that the least look, hint, love-touch of Mine will show you the way—“I will guide thee with Mine eye.” God guides everybody, good and bad. This world is a school, a testing place wherein sin may be mastered and character fit for heaven formed. To do this God gives every man his test: one man has riches, another honor, another all prosperity, another all ad-

versity, another health, another sickness, sorrow and death. In each case God guides the man to the test best calculated to lead him to a sense of his dependence, and so to the Saviour. Wherever, in these cases, the man seeks and finds the Lord, there he knows what this means—"I will guide thee with Mine eye." God always uses means. When I pray "make me a good man," He answers "yes, go bear that burden, meet that temptation," and I murmur because I expect to be made holy miraculously without means. Surely Paul scounded the deeps of this philosophy when he learned that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

As Little Children.

Childhood is given to show how we ought to feel towards our Heavenly Father. He desires that we be in spirit as little children. Without this simple, honest trust, this perfect confiding love, no man can see the Lord. All things are real to the child, and to the child

of God who has been born again into life eternal. Life is real, work and play are real, duty is real, God and Heaven and time and eternity are real, and we spend our days joyfully, taking from the hand of His love all He has to give, with thankfulness.

Precious Seed.

It is useless this weeping and toil unless the seed be good. We may sow and watch for the crop to appear but unless the seed has life in it our sowing is in vain. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him. Let me ask myself what is the seed I am planting here? Is it the dead chaff of sin? Is it some imitation—seed of good works and respectability? If so the only harvest will be an eternal hunger and disappointment. Sow the wind. But thou shalt reap the whirlwind. Sow sin; thou shalt surely reap death. Or is this seed the living seed of a redeemed character? Am I doing

good deeds and speaking kind words because within my heart dwelleth the living Christ? Then, though the way be long and hard, though there be heartache and backache, though it seems like throwing the seed away, doubtless God, who giveth the increase, shall some day bring me back to Himself—my seed grown to ripened sheaves and the evening full of glory and sweet rest.

Doctrine and Life.

It is easy to be religious: it is hard to be Christian. The one has to do with the intellect and emotions: the other is essentially and actively moral. It lays stress upon what a man is and does, and measures his life by its effects upon his fellowmen. In both cases doctrine is a prime necessity, but whereas in religion doctrine may be but a pleasurable exercise of the mind, in Christianity doctrine inspires and equips for action. Paul's doctrine was in solution—it was part of his very life blood—it illumined his intellect, strengthened

his will, fired his imagination, quickened his conscience, and imparted to his emotions a virility and saneness peculiar to one under the influence of the Christ-life. Doctrine that is not a part of the whole man is more apt to be a hindrance than a help. Not until it has entered into the very blood of the man and enriched and fed his whole being can it become the Bread of Heaven.

Meditation.

The habit of meditation is an essential of Christian growth. It is like the silent processes of physical growth. It reveals God in all His relations to the world as Creator, Governor, Father. It opens larger areas of the heart to the incoming of the Lord as Cleanser from sin, and Companion and Comforter. It feeds the heart and inspires to high endeavor. It is like fuel to flame, seed to soil, food to body. Without it vigor wanes and progress is impossible.

I suggest that we con over small sections of the Bible which come as a special message to our hearts. Turn the diamond towards all lights so that its splendid flashings may be seen in all their beauty. Contemplate also the person of our Lord in all His loveliness. The Lord is high and lifted up and before Him we veil our faces and cry "Holy, Holy, Holy." But He is also the Good Shepherd who hath compassion and knoweth His own and layeth down His life for his sheep. Read also such books as Phelps' "Still Hour" and "The Imitation of Christ." These search the heart like sunlight—sometimes like fire. Brood over the tragedy of human life, its tears and burdens, its incompleteness, its pathos, its victory and peace in the Lord. And pray for definite objects, expecting an answer. Surely thus shall we see Him in His beauty, and be able, to cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

Finding and Losing.

When Caiaphas urged the death of Jesus for all the people he was uttering a God-given truth in the spirit of the devil. Had he offered himself to die for the nation he would have shown the spirit of Christ. Selfishness sacrifices somebody else in order to save itself. Christ sacrifices Himself in order to save somebody else. Selfishness finds its life of present enjoyment but loses its possible life of eternal fruitage and growth. Christ loses the present life that He may find the Eternal Life of God. The grain of wheat abides alone retaining its own life within itself. This is really death and failure. When it falls into the ground and surrenders its life, behold, it leaps up multiplied a hundred fold. This is really life and success. The faith that believes this and follows it is the victory that overcomes the world.

The Light.

“I am the Light of the World.” This solemn affirmation proclaims its author to be God or to be a madman. The latter is inconceivable since His whole life, His every action and utterance, the attitude of His mind, the effect of His thought upon others emphasize that saneness and sobriety which is one of the most striking features of the New Testament record.

If we go back a little we read, “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” “I am the life,” says Jesus, in another place, of Himself. The light is here defined in its essence as life. In another place He says, “They that walk in darkness knoweth not whither they goeth.” “I know whence I come and whither I go.”

Jesus Christ is not *a* light. He does not claim that He has *some* light. He affirms that He Himself is *the* light. The light which guides man is within him. Sin has darkened its glory and changed it to an *ignis fatuus* or fool’s fire. Christ implants Himself, in

response to faith, in the heart of the sinner and lays hold of and illuminates the whole man. His mind becomes clearer and able to apprehend truth. His soul sees God. His conscience speaks with unerring judgment. His very body is ablaze with that divine life which makes it possible to believe that the body shall rise again.

The smallest acquaintance with history proves the Lord's words to have been true—He is the light of the Bible. We understand all the history and types and symbols of the Old Testament in Christ. He illumines the page of social progress and, blazing in splendor about the stygian gloom of all slaveries and villianies, He is gradually driving back the shadows and bringing all under the dominion of light. Surely He is the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

God's Sabbath.

The Lord had healed a man on the Sabbath, and to the Pharisees who objected He replied, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." This is one of those illuminating utterances that break forth from the hidden divine deeps of our Lord's nature, revealing the mystery of God almost beyond the capacity even of the spirit-filled to comprehend. God's Sabbath is now. He rested from His labors, as we read in Genesis, and His rest is still going on. Man's Sabbath is a shadow of God's Sabbath. And since God, ceasing from His labors in physical creation, continues His labors in moral governance and spiritual redemption right through His real Sabbath, so must the Son of Man, so must men thus work in their shadow-sabbath. This is how men ought to spend their Sabbath day—in spiritual, sacrificing work and worship. This is rest in the Lord.

Jesus First.

To Paul it was always Jesus first. From the noon-day hour before Damascus to the end of his stormy life the one consuming passion—the all-absorbing thought for Paul was Jesus Christ. “To me, to live is Christ.” “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Paul’s practice and doctrine grew out of his personal relations with his living Lord. The personal Christ transformed the Apostle’s life as to its motive, its purpose and its horizon. “To know Him” was for Paul to become a spiritual man rather than a formal legalistic man; a universal, compassionate, shepherd-hearted man, rather than a Jewish sectary; a believer in righteousness from God through faith in Christ, rather than a believer in righteousness of law externally fulfilled by works and forms. Trust, work, victory—these are the key words of a great life hid with Christ in God.

The Preacher.

At the end of his journey, Paul gave in a single solemn charge his view of his own life, now completed, and of Timothy's life, just begun. God was the first fact in both lives. This was the core of all the apostle's thinking; "In Him we have our being." Before and after his conversion he made God the basis and ordering principle of his life, and Jesus Christ who for the first time revealed to Paul all that he wished to know of God and unto whom and by whom are all things in all realms—this was the second great fact. Especially must the apostolic life be lived in full sight and expectation of "that day" wherein Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead, and all building of dross shall be tested beyond endurance, and all building of reality set forth in its eternal splendor and beauty. "His appearing and His Kingdom" are given as two further solemn sanctions for an apostle's life. Paul did not succeed, measured by the world's standard. Timothy must not expect success either in this

sense. Hardships, misunderstandings, are to be his lot. But the ministry is to be tested to its utmost. It is a fight with a two-edged sword, sharp and terrible. It is a race, and, forgetting the things behind, every nerve must be set and every muscle strained to reach the prize. And at last amidst the dwindling lights of this life, amidst the ashes of human failure and unbelief come to fruition, amidst the dread awakening of those who choose shadow instead of substance, the apostle, young and old, will receive upon his scarred brow from the scarred hand of his Lord, the Crown of Righteousness.

Grow.

Christian progress is always a growth. Life must come from life in the spiritual as well as in the natural world. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. The Christian is a living personality whose roots are struck deep into the eternal—his life hid with Christ in God. The branch must

abide in the vine, otherwise it withers, and cannot grow. No formalism will do—no mechanical building by external means. The Christian is born, not made. The new life must be nurtured. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ” was Peter’s exhortation. That is the plant is to be kept in the warm sunshine of God’s free favor as expressed in Christ, and its life must be nurtured by knowledge, as revealed in the Lord and His word. The atmosphere of Christian growth is the free grace of God. The nourishment is His word.

Abiding and Fruit.

To abide is simply to stay on the sunny side of the wall. He who abideth in Christ is to produce much fruit. Apart from him we can do nothing. We can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. The branches bear the fruit, and if the branch is barren the Vine, even Christ, is robbed of His glory. Going to church is not fruit: neither is reading the Bible; nor prayer, nor any other such

spiritual exercise. These produce fruit, but they are not fruit. Sunshine, rain, fertilizer—these are not grapes, but by means of these the vine produces grapes. So the house of God, prayer, Bible reading are essential to fruitful Christian living, but they are not the fruit.

Resistless.

At the coming of the morning all grim creatures that love the night creep away seeking artificial darkness. But the myriad living family of nature, open-eyed and songful, leap up gladly to welcome the day, and before the sun shadows flee away, in warmth and light the business of the world is done, and all that love darkness rather than light cannot withstand the day. Winter likewise flees from the smiling face of spring. Some inanimate objects, mere soulless clods, abide unwarmed and silent, but all living things meet the spring with joy, and winter is forgotten in the abundant vigor of the new birth. So is the resistless Christ. He is the Light, the Spring-

time of the world. He meets the individual with salvation from sin, its power, its guilt and its punishment; with a balm that healeth all wounds; that distilleth all sorrows into victorious character; that changes the solemn, silent grave into a door of hope; with an answer for all questionings of the mind. He meets organized humanity with the gift of a divine energy equal to the heavy tasks of social existence. Resistless is the Christ. If we withhold our homage the very stones will cry out.

God's Patience.

The patience of God passeth understanding. He sitteth in the centre of the universe—supreme, holy, righteous. He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. The very breath with which men blaspheme His name is given and sustained by Him. He has all power in Heaven and on earth. He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. His justice never faileth. Against these facts must

be placed the actual condition of the world—wrapped in sin, all hearts selfish and rebellious, doing despite to His love; presuming upon His power. How patient is God to keep the world alive by the breath of His power. He waits for believers to grow slowly into a full understanding of His word and will. Our mistakes, failures, and wrong doing He forgives. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” He beholds the oppressions, the heart-ache, the lusts, the cruelties of the world, and He is patient. He gives to all every possible opportunity to repent and be saved. There comes a time when patience must cease and justice will put forth its iron hand to hush the world’s sin and remove from the presence of Infinite Holiness the abomination of desolation. Against that day the blood of Christ is freely offered as an atonement for all sin.

So Great Salvation.

It is indeed a "great salvation"—great in its origin, its authority, its means and method, its end and result. It makes men to be the sons of God. It fashions society into the image of the Kingdom of God. If the case requires so vast and valuable a remedy how can we hope for escape if we neglect so great salvation? Great indeed, for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

The Empty Grave.

"But Him they saw not," so sorrowfully said the disciples to the stranger on the road to Emmaus. They could not fathom the empty grave any more than they could understand the cross. But with us there is great joy over the empty grave. Our hope is not in the grave, but at the throne of Christ. The empty grave is the pledge of our Lord's divinity. He surely had power to lay down His life and He had power to take it again. It seals our religion as unique among the creeds of man. We make

no pilgrimages to the tomb of Christ. He is risen and we know the power of His resurrection even in the midst of cross-bearing. The empty grave seals and pledges the believer to eternal life and changes death from a tyrant ruler to be dreaded to a slave whose office it is to open the door for us into the Palace of the King.

The Lord is at Hand.

Peter in his first Epistle presents as a motive for Christian life the fact that "the Lord is at hand." Not only in his mind but in the minds of the other apostles there was a conviction that the Lord would speedily return according to His promise. While the passing of the centuries declares that in this they were mistaken, the principle still holds true. He is at hand and we must conduct our lives as in His sight. "A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night." The Lord is at hand, and because He is, judgment is begun in His house.

All our doings, our ideals, our achievements, are to be brought to the test. If they conform to His purpose, to His thought, to His love, we go forth to our task strong in the strength of that sublime word, "Lo, I am with you always." "The Lord is at hand."

A Merry Christmas.

Christmas comes but once a year, but it seems to come more quickly than it used to. The year since our last Christmas greetings has sped on swift wings into the Eternity whither all years and all men take their way.

The Pastor wishes every member of this Church and Congregation a happy Christmas. If your way is stormy may this day bring you the Peace that passeth understanding. If you are "keeping watch by night" may your Heavens be flaming with the light of the world, and may the eternal voices sing unto your heart "Peace and good-will." If thou art in weakness of body may thy spirit rest in

the Lord, and shall not the everlasting arms be unto thee thine exceeding strength?

Since the first Christmas day set the Universe aqiver with heavenly harmonies because of God's unspeakable Gift to men shall we not love as He loved, and in the measure of ability, give that others may rejoice? Forget not thy neighbor worse off than thyself. Share thy joy with him for the Saviour's sake.

“Joy to the world! the Lord has come!

Let earth receive her King!”



A Happy New Year.

We are not put in this world to be happy. We are here to work. Happy is the man whose God is the Lord. “That your joy may be full” was the object of Jesus' words to His disciples. But joy comes not by searching. Happiness is the only thing worth having that cannot be found by searching. It is a flower that can only be obtained by possessing the plant that produces it. We can give happiness. We cannot borrow it. Wouldst thou have a

Happy New Year, Brother? Then set thyself to work in the world. Forget thyself, thy petty jealousies and viper envies. Obey God. Love Him and love men for His sake—then, like a lily bursting into radiant bloom thy joy shall blaze forth from the depths of thy faithful loving heart.

“When I sought Happiness

“She fled before me constantly

“Wearied, I turned to Duty’s path

“Then she sought me, saying, I go this way
to-day

“I’ll bear thee company.”

The New Year Resolution.

The new year is the time for resolutions—don’t make too many. Indeed one will be enough. Resolved that we seek to know more and more of God, whom to know aright is life eternal and life temporal. If the new year brings us into the immediate presence of the King, it will be crowned with richest success. If we are more self-centred, more worldly—

know even less of God at the close, it will be the most disastrous year possible. One resolution for each new year will cover the whole case. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."



Troubled Hearts.

All hearts have their trouble. Sooner or later the pain of living, the peril of character, gives to every life its dark hour of doubt, conflict and defeat. We are like Moses who felt the burden of his people greater than he could bear; like David who, unaided, could not face the giant. The passing years sober and steady the mind, and the outlines of this unknown universe break upon the vision as something to be feared. Each man must do battle alone in his heart with his sin, with his deadly, seductive inertia, with his paralyzing doubts. Each man, as life enlarges, must feel the burden of human woe and wickedness that weighs his race to the earth—yea, crushes them even into the grave. We lift up our eyes, but from

no silent fellow mortal cometh help. What then? What indeed but the man of Nazareth with calm, sweet voice speaking to all troubled hearts—"Believe in God, believe also in me. Foundation thy life upon Eternity. Turn thy weary feet towards my Father's House. I am the Way because I am Truth revealed from Heaven, and I am Life inbreathed into trusting hearts by the Father. I am the Way—there is no other way, for of all the sons of men I alone know whence I came and whither I go." This is the peace of God which passing all understanding, shall yet garrison our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.



True Hunger.

Jesus had to use language as He found it. Into these ordinary words He read a new meaning. He found hunger of body and poverty were most common. His great truth was that this hunger and this poverty have no meaning except as they stand for great facts in the spiritual realm which lies back of all we see and

feel. When the spiritual hunger and poverty are known and satisfied, then this earthly hunger and poverty will cease to be. In a word our Lord bases all social experience upon spiritual forces, and the sure and quick method of changing these social experiences is to discover and act upon and with the spiritual forces.

The Cross.

There is no life without a Cross as its centre, and the Cross of Christ is the central fact in all human history. There, hanging between the two thieves, we behold the stainless One, and in His death we learn what sin is, what justice is, what love is. My sin made the Cross necessary and God's love made it possible. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Love's Anointing.

"She hath done what she could," is the high eulogy pronounced by our Lord upon Mary at the feast in the house of the Leper. Break-

ing the alabaster box of nard she anointed His head, then stooping down she poured the remainder over His feet and wiped them with the hair of her head. Coarse utility, which in this instance was thievery, complained at "this waste," but the Lord, by gentle rebuke preserved for future ages of the Church that divine sanction under which has grown up all aesthetic life. What less than this can any of His disciples do? Are we not to stoop at His feet and anoint them with our noblest love and praise and adoration? Is He not worthy of our best? Shall we not tenderly touch that thorn-scarred brow with the precious ointment of our submission to His love and life? We cannot be niggardly. When we have done and suffered and sacrificed our best, we may hear Him say "they have done what they could."

The Cana Feast.

The Lord reveals Himself as human and divine. He shows Himself interested in the common doings of common people, thereby

declaring that the every-day activities of men are worthy the attention of God. This He illustrated by His presence at the marriage supper in Cana of Galilee. There also His glory was manifested, for He showed that He had God with Him and possessed all the freedom and power of divine sonship. He is to be obeyed and believed in. And this belief is the crowning glory of the threefold process, "testimony, personal contact and experience" in the life of the Christian.



Life and Light.

At the creation God said, "Let there be light." This was the first step from chaos. The heavenly bodies became the light and life of the creation. But when God made man He gave him a new light—for He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and God's life became man's light.

Come and See.

The 1st chapter of John's Gospel gives us an outline of God's revelation of Himself to men in its origin, its nature, its method, and its result. "In the beginning was the word and the word was God." Here is the origin of all that we know of the Gospel—God. We keep forgetting that this is God's world, and that He has spoken His love and thought and whole nature to us. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This is the nature of the Gospel revelation—Jesus Christ sacrificed as a Lamb for the sins of men, that thro' His shed blood men might be rendered before God as tho' they had never sinned. Then we come to the method of the spreading of the Gospel. Andrew is pointed to Christ. He first finds his own brother and brings him unto Jesus. So Philip finds Nathaniel, and to his criticism replies, "Come and see." We need to profoundly study this passage. We have become so encrusted with machinery and methods that we weary ourselves out running

our "machine," and have no energy left to do the spiritual work required of us. If the members of this Church, or of any Church, were to become each in his own way, apostles of the cross and follow the example of these early disciples, there would be such a Pentecostal awakening as should cause the world to wonder and believe.

In the last verses of the chapter, whatever else may be taught there, we find warrant in the promised sight of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man for believing that in Christ all the spiritual agencies of the universe are at the disposal of the believer.



The Lord's Faith in our Faith.

It is a striking commentary on human nature that Jesus refused to commit himself to certain who believed in Him because He knew what was in man. He had no faith in their faith. God demands not only faith but a certain kind of faith. A mere impulse, or sentiment—a cowardly effort to escape hell after a

long life spent in the service of Satan—these do not take the place of saving faith. To approach the Almighty God through faith in Jesus our Saviour, is the highest, most solemn and divinest act of which man is capable. The Lord has no mercy on shams. He demands honesty of purpose, and he who cometh thus will in no wise be cast out.

The New Test of Greatness.

“I have left you an example that you should do as I have done.” So spake Jesus unto the disciples as He rose from the lowly task of washing their feet. He brought to them and to us a new rule of greatness. The world’s idea is that a man’s greatness is measured by the number who serve him; the Christ idea is that a man’s greatness is measured by the number whom he serves. “He who would be greatest among you let him be servant of all.” This is a hard Gospel—it cuts at the root of selfishness and pride; but Christ practised His own Gospel and He both left us an example to

do as He did and with the demand He gave strength to meet it. This changes all life from slavery to service; it dignifies all work; it sweetens all hardships; it crowns the long struggle of life with a new meaning and blessedness.

Happy the Unhappy.

The philosophy of the Beatitudes seems to be this. God has been crowded out of the human heart by sin. The experiences of sorrow, poverty, hunger, are means by which is created a vacuum in the sinful heart, that nothing on earth can fill. Then God comes in and fills the empty place as the surrounding air rushes in to fill a vacuum which has been created for it. Happy therefor are the unhappy for by their mourning they discover their need of God and by comfort He once more enters their life. A life without God is a nightmare, a mere dream. These trials are the shocks which awaken us to self-consciousness and then to God consciousness, and then we live.

A Changed Emphasis.

It used to be that Believers were hated, persecuted, reviled for being Christian; now, Believers are criticised for not being Christian. While a good deal of this is captious fault-finding the change of emphasis is a fact worthy of note. Never has a crucified, Christlike life been so revered by the world as now. If we could only get back once more to the empty grave—to the upper room—to the mount of ascension—if we could only hear the whole message of our Lord again, and like the “sent ones” of old, go out from the secret place of the most High with the breath of Heaven upon us, what might we not do for His dear sake and in His name?

Salt and Light.

Christians are the salt of the earth—that is they are to penetrate the mass of society as salt penetrates a body. They are the Light of the World; that is their lives are to illumine the whole expanse of life. These two de-

scriptions of His followers given by our Lord emphasize their high calling in a unique and striking manner. It brings religion down from the clouds and places it where it ought to be in the centre of every day affairs. The true demonstration of the divinity of Christianity lies in this test. It has been a savor of life counteracting the corrupt tendencies in individuals and society at large. And surely it has been in the person of its adherents a beacon to guide to a purer manhood and diviner ideal of life.

Suffer as a Christian.

When we open the Epistles of Peter we are surprised at a new word in his vocabulary. It is the word "suffer." It was Peter who would not allow his Lord to wash his feet; it was Peter who declared that though all should betray Him yet he should never betray Him—yet he denied Him thrice. It was Peter who refused to listen when Jesus predicted the agony of the cross. And yet in these Catholic

Epistles we find this same apostle insisting that the Christian who follows Christ must suffer. Not as a busybody, not as a breaker of the law—but as one who comes into positive conflict with evil and who is stung by the serpent that he seeks to crush.

Christianity is a religion of suffering, of sacrifice, of cross-bearing, of heart agony, of victory through defeat, of joy through sorrow, of gain through loss, of salvation through the crucifixion of self. This is Peter's message in word and life because it is Christ's message. We do well that we take heed unto this sublime teaching, for it is surely a light shining in a dark place.

To Whom ?

“To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life,” said Peter when his Lord gave him the opportunity of retiring with the unbelieving multitude. To whom? “oh to pleasure, to business, to battle, to the delights of learning,” is the oft repeated answer of

those who love this world best of all. And then? And then—"oh we leave that matter alone."

But Jesus has "the words of Eternal Life." And to Him men will therefore come in spite of themselves. We sometimes talk as if religion is a thing of machinery and rules. How crude! If all Christians and Bibles and Churches and history were obliterated to-day, to-morrow some one would be seeking a Christ in response to the agony and yearning of his empty heart. Religion made the Bible. The words of Eternal Life are what men need most to hear, and in Him who alone is the Word—the Truth—the Life—in Him alone can we find rest.

A Symbol that Speaks.

Paul is too wise and broad a thinker to base his whole case upon a single proposition but in one instance he does so. "If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain and your faith is vain." He stakes his whole success upon this

one fact, and unflinchingly declares that if this fact is proven false Christianity must leave the field. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the resurrection the main corner stone of Paul's preaching, "That Christ is the Son of God, given to die for the world's sin"—this is his message and he rests this magnificent fabric upon the rock foundation of the resurrection.

To illustrate the experience of the soul in being born again Paul seizes upon baptism as its supreme symbol. When I believe I die with Christ, I am buried with Him and when I am justified I rise with Him to a new life—and Baptism is the one simple yet sublime symbol of this great transaction. The Spiritual world is but dimly seen. How thankful are we then for such a symbol that gathers up and simply expresses a whole cycle of Spiritual and Eternal experiences. Baptism, according to Paul, is an Eternity of divine and human experiences expressed in a symbol, and the meaning of the symbol lies in its form.

Like Him.

It has often been said that men make their own gods. One thing is certain, men become like the god they worship. If a man believes in the one true God—holy, benevolent, just—his moral nature will take on those characteristics, and his moral instincts will be strengthened and ennobled. If a man believes there is no such God, his moral nature suffers paralysis, and his downfall and degradation is certain.

The Higher Purpose.

It is a strange but glorious truth, this doctrine of the "Higher Purpose." God's providence is a great reality. Every man who has faced decisions difficult to make, and who looks back upon those hours of mental and spiritual stress is conscious of the presence of a hand stronger than his own—of a compelling wisdom higher than his own. The sense of mission, which is the mark of all great souls, is evidence of God's present purposes in human life—for this sense of mission implies One who

sends, and upon whose authority the mission is undertaken.

Abraham, when he went out believing God, not knowing whither he went, and in the lonely mountain offered his son Isaac, rose to instant recognition of this Higher Purpose. So with Jacob at Bethel and in his struggle with the angel; so, too, with Joseph, who had "God with him" in all the adventures of his Egyptian sojourn. But in Jesus we see this sublime truth fully set forth. At twelve years of age He knew that He must be about His Father's business. And the whole story of His life, His cross, His victory over death is an orderly following of the conscious purpose and will of God who sent Him to redeem the world. "He leadeth me, O blessed thought!"

The Deep.

We do not run thin in our Christian life so long as we immerse ourselves in the vast life-giving truths of such passages as John's prologue. It saves us from shallowness. It

puts the facts of life in their proper perspective. It bases our faith so broadly that we can bear the heaviest burdens with ease, and be filled with the energy of God. Launch out into the deep. Drop the plummet of thy prayer into the unsounded ocean of His Presence. Thus and thus only can'st thou know the fullness of His grace.

Prophetic Patriotism.

Prophetic patriotism is not the least divine feature of Old Testament thought. The prophet believed in his country; loved it; longed beyond expression for its progress and happiness. But his view-point was not that of an ordinary citizen; he looked upon his nation from God's standpoint. He believed that God called his nation as He had called himself to perform a certain high and noble service for the whole world. He believed in the divine purpose running through the history of his country. To him patriotism consisted in finding out God's thought for his nation and then

helping the nation to fulfil it. It therefore came to pass that prophets could look with equanimity even upon the blotting out of their national existence if by this means the real, universal, beneficent purpose of God could be prospered. This is a Christian conception—to lose in order to find is the Christian method, and the divine law of universal service is the standard—or ought to be—of all Christian patriots. They must ask, not what will help our country, but first of all, how can our country help the world.

Fact not Form.

“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God.” So wrote Paul to the Romans. He was only emphasizing an old truth. We read of the “uncircumcised heart” and “circumcised heart” often in the Old

Testament. "Oh Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved," was Jeremiah's cry. And Samuel, much impressed by Saul's size, when the Lord would reject him, hears this word from the divine lips: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart." This was the charge hurled against the Pharisees by our Lord—"Ye cleanse the outside of the platter."

It is a dreadful delusion this by which we continually put the form for the fact, the profession for the practice. And that is where the incarnation of real life for one generation becomes mere empty form for another. Men rest their hope of salvation upon morality, or church attendance, or general conformity to law as far as outside conduct goes. But God looketh on the heart—and when the secrets of human life are laid bare before Him in judgment, each man shall stand forth as he is, not as he has appeared to be. Wherefore, oh man, humble thy heart toward God. Surrender it

through faith, and receive a heart of flesh which shall be real and no sham.

Separated unto Sin.

The characteristic of sin is that it distinguishes and differentiates the sinner. Absence of consciousness in any part of the body is evidence of health. It is the diseased member that suffers pain and imparts its pain to the whole body. So, when a man sins, he draws the attention of the universe to him. God looks upon him in sorrow and pitying love and at last in judgment. Angels weeps over his fall. Devils rejoice and society is uneasy from the fever caused by his presence. A man cannot sin alone. He sins against himself, against his fellows and against God. His family suffer for his fault. If he persists in sin God has to separate him from the rest, for his presence is as irritating as the presence of a foreign substance in the eye. Who knoweth the power of God to save? And who knoweth the awfulness of human sin?

And Follow Me.

Following Jesus is serious business. If any man would come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me." Peter denied his Lord. Later he had to deny himself in order to become a real witness. Self drags like a dead weight upon our spiritual energies. To deny self—its importunities in behalf of ease, of cowardice, of neglect of duty, of moral slumber—this is the first step for the Christian. As a man lost in the snow must fight hardest against the deadly drowsiness which ends in death, so we must deny ourselves and keep struggling forward towards that Light which is indeed and in truth the light of the world.

If the only begotten Son of God had His world-redeeming cross to bear so must every child of God bear his own cross. Having negatively denied himself the Christian must positively take up his own cross. That is, we must follow Jesus into the thorny but blessed path of sacrifice and service. We are not call-

ed for our own sakes so much as for the sake of others. And in all this there is the sweet assurance which makes all burdens light and all self crucifixions easy, "Lo I am with you alway."

Heaven or Hell?

These two awful words ought to be thought of together—Light and Darkness; East and West; Right and Wrong; Heaven and Hell. We err in materializing our thought. God is not an arbitrary tyrant who pleases to put one man in a lake of fire forever and another man in a sunlit city of peace regardless of their deserts in either case. God is just, and every life is judged in view of the eternity of facts and experiences that lie back of that life and enter into it. Suppose we look within ourselves for a moment. We find at once two sets of forces. One we call evil. To allow these the mastery changes our appearance—blights the intellect, cripples the will, and ends in complete degradation. One set of these forces

we call good. To give them the mastery means progress, growing strength, calmness and peace of mind, right development. Suppose we enter Eternity with the evil supreme in us, and with eternal powers follow forever our evil lusts. What Hell could be worse than this? Or supposing we enter Eternity with the good in us supreme, what Heaven could surpass in raptures the growth forever of mind and all the high powers that distinguish man? We make our own Heaven and our own Hell. Christ is sent to save men we say. We simply mean that by giving Him our trust He puts the right within us on the throne of our lives, and so we find ourselves in a growing Heaven of victory and peace.

Behold.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel we have attention called to our Lord by the Baptist three times in a striking way. "There standeth one among you whom ye know not of, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to

unloose." This is the great announcement of the Messiah's presence. The next day he said "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and the next day the Lord is again pointed out, "Behold the Lamb of God," this time in the expectation that some would follow him. Such is Godet's interpretation of these passages. The Saviour announced, the Saviour pointed out, the Saviour followed. These are the three steps by which men become followers of the King. When we remember with Paul that "there is none righteous, no not one," that "all are shut up under sin," that "every mouth is stopped," this word comes with hope and power to our hearts—"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Machinery versus Life.

One of the striking features of modern religious work is the emphasis placed upon what is called "the practical." How often do we hear lengthy discussions of how to do things.

“How to run the prayer meeting.” “How to get members to work.” “How to organize the workers.” “How to make sermons.” “How to preach” and occasionally “How to practice.”

It is all too seldom that we hear a presentation of the great fundamental facts of the Christian faith and life. If our young people were taken into the vast deeps of the Divinity of Christ, His Redemptive work, the Resurrection from the dead, the work of the Spirit, the nature and existence of God, such discussions would tend to dignify and strengthen their religious experience. The fact is we are in danger from an excess of machinery, and, finding it running slower and doing less and less work, we are seeking help by adding still more machinery. We need life, and a life so deep and potent that it shall set our big machine aquiver with power. Life can do without machinery, but machinery without life is a positive hindrance and harm.

All and in All.

Christianity is passion for Jesus expressed in living. This was Paul's conception of his calling—all the life he knew was the life of an indwelling Christ. Instead of bringing every case to the test of an external rule or code he simply surrendered his powers to the control of the indwelling One. If a thing was right Paul would be taught it by the Lord; if wrong the same teaching would be present for guidance. The Apostle's reward was Christ; his strength was Christ; to him Christ was indeed all and in all. Here is where we fail. We have Jesus as Saviour; we study Him historically; we believe in Him—but we do not go the whole length; we do not possess Him; we are not possessed by Him as the supreme vital, moving, present Force within us. We do not fully learn what this means: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." We must press on until we shall seize that for which Christ seized us and be able to say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ."

Our Lord is Risen Indeed.

Our Lord is Risen Indeed! The only place the world can find a living Christ is in a living Christian. We too, are witnesses of His resurrection. We know He is risen because He is our present, living, loving Saviour and Lord. The Church is on the eve of a great new revival based upon a new and noble effort to put the Life and words of our Lord into practice. Hitherto we have emphasized our life as a subjective thing to be considered apart by itself—something too sacred and fragile to be thrown out into the coarse battle of every day affairs. We have studied how to get this life in our souls; how the spirit moves upon it; how it is affected by prayer, and other Christian exercises. Now we are beginning to consider this life from the practical stand-point; we are passing from Life to Living. We need a Spirit-filled Life, but it is not real unless it produces a spirit-filled Living. We have a crucified Christ—let us have a crucified Christianity. It is our living, not our life that

testifies to the world the sublime fact that we are risen with him.

Also in Me have Confidence.

Our Lord's confidence in Himself is one of his striking characteristics. "Believe in God, believe also in Me" are His words of exhortation to the desponding and bewildered Eleven. The confidence in both cases is the same, but it may be possible that confidence in God has as its base an intellectual apprehension of the Divine presence in the world, while confidence in Christ rests more upon an experimental basis. It is safe to trust in Christ. He is the sinless one. He showed always a serene sense of power. The essence of His life lay in His unbroken oneness with God. His influence at large in the world gives new grounds for such confidence in Him, while what He has done in our own hearts remains a convincing reason why we should trust and not be afraid. He who stilled the winds and waves with a word and has likewise stilled the turbulent passions

of our rebellious natures—He who raised the dead and has brought life to our lives—He who explained and reconciled the bewildering mysteries of the universe and of God's relation thereto and has reconciled, and set in order the weltering chaos of our sinful hearts—surely He may well say, "Believe in me also," and we answer "Lord we believe, help Thou our unbelief."

All.

"All and in All!" This is Paul's rapturous summary of Christ's place in the Universe. All of God in His relations with man is revealed in Christ: all of man in his relations with God and with his fellow-men is revealed in Christ; all of the unseen kingdom of the spiritual clusters about His presence. All the meaning and mystery of the created worlds stand forth in Him who spake peace to the wild winds and waves, and healed all ills with a word. "Christ in all." The sunset takes on a new splendor, for as in the Eternal City, we behold Him in the midst of the glory. "In

all!" The storm trumpets His majesty, the falling rain and summer zephyrs whisper His love. The cold purity of the starlight shows how far away holiness is from sin. "Christ in all." We modern Christians are so much better than Paul; we cannot dream of putting Christ into our politics, or our business, or our social intercourse. Here is room for solemn searching of heart. Is Christ all to me? Is He in all my thinking, my doing, my living? Is He in all the great and all the small affairs of my life? How shall I answer?

Spirit, Vision, Purpose.

These three supreme words must be thought upon—Spirit, Vision, Purpose. The work of the Church is to keep alive the truth that reality in this life is Spirit. We are citizens of a Spiritual Kingdom. Our religion is a supernatural religion. And without the presence of the promised spirit we must fail.

The man or church without vision, outlook, horizon, never advances. A lightship anchored

always in the same place is useful and necessary—but on the whole the great ocean liner does the most. We need Idealism. We must cultivate a divine dissatisfaction with self. Elasticity and adjustment are cardinal qualities in Christianity. Let us seek the Truth and at all costs, fearlessly espouse it.

Purpose, too, oh Brother! We of all the world are seized of the highest purpose. God's purpose is to save the world. All men and all of each man. We press on, not to gain some comfort for self, but rather that we may seize that for which Christ has seized us—that we may become indeed and truth Salt and Light to the world.

Go.

The reason we are Missionaries is that we are in possession of or rather are possessed by a universal life—the life of God. The glad announcement is that “God loved the world.” His love, like His life, is all embracing. When we surrender to Him we become His children;

we stand at His view-point; we think His thoughts after Him; we love with His love; we follow Him through the immensities of the moral and spiritual universe.

How then can a Christian be other than a missionary? Christ has promised to be with us always. Shall we confine His being with us to some small corner of His world? No—a thousand times no! The Gospel is universal, not parhisional. It is sent like the rain and sun upon just and unjust alike. God is everywhere. He pervades and sustains the All. How can we who have this all-pervading expansive life within us refrain from reaching out to the uttermost parts of the earth? To refrain from missions is to deny that we possess the thing we say we have. You can no more bind the living Church of Christ back from her universal conquest of all lands extensively and all life intensively than you can confine the world-illuminating splendors of the rising Sun.

The Good Hand.

It some times seems that the hand of God is not good. But when we look below the surface of things to the unseen God, true goodness is not hard to find.

For the Christian the good Hand is very real and present. In perplexity the Hand is present for guidance and we can sing:

“He leadeth me, oh blessed thought,

Oh words with heavenly comfort fraught,
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,

Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.”

In sorrow we have learned the meaning of the good hand of God. Underneath are the everlasting arms. He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Heine has an exquisite little verse in which he describes one passing through sorrow. George Eliott translates it thus into our cold English prose: “At first I was almost in despair and I thought I could never bear it; and yet I have borne it—only do not ask me how?” The Christian is willing to be asked “how?” and answers with joy,

“Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”

Ye.

The first great Christian sermon under the Dispensation of the Spirit was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost. It brings into vivid contrast the man's past and present. Then he was only a hard-handed fisherman—ignorant, shrewd, impulsive, passionate, forward in speech and action. It was Peter who had something to say on all great occasions in our Lord's life. It was he who declared “I will never forsake Thee,” and who within a few hours denied Him thrice.

And it is the same Peter who stands to-day calm, courageous, confident, pouring forth a torrent of argument, interpretation, appeal, application, which for keenness of spiritual insight, logical adaptability to the end sought, and skill in presentation has never been surpassed. Whence the change? Whence, indeed but from the baptism of Life and Power

which had just overwhelmed him—the coming of the Comforter.

The subject of this sermon is Jesus Christ, crucified and, risen, the suffering Messiah according to the will of God. The point of attack is the conscience of the hearers. “Ye, by the hands of wicked men did crucify and slay.” “Ye!” This is the solemn truth. So long as I am not covered by the blood of Jesus as my salvation from sin, that blood stains my hands as evidence of my guilt. This is the supreme sin that we believe not on Him. And unbelief is so exceeding sinful because in its essence it is denial, rejection, murder of the Son of God.

Peace on Earth.

Jesus was born in the midst of poorest surroundings to show us that what men are rather than what they have makes them great. The sky suddenly filled with the heavenly hosts praising God reveals how close we lie to that spirit world out of which we come, into which

all must some day go, and in which those who really live do move and live and have their being.

“Glory to God in the Highest” they sang, and surely redemption through Christ is glory enough to merit such sublime ascription. “And on earth Peace” among men whose good pleasure it is to accept the Unspeakable Gift. He is our Peace. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ.

Why?

“Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?” This is a question that our Lord must always be asking, and it searches all hearts mercilessly. The principle involved is this:—A man who calls Jesus Lord, must be what he says he is and do what he says he believes—outside and inside must correspond. Unless he is a doer he is not a true hearer of the word. If he takes Christ as his Saviour from sin he must also take Him as Lord of his life. We “do not” mainly because

of ignorance. We see only the surface of things, and having a form of words are deluded into believing that we have the substance of the gospel. We do not "know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." Sentimentalism evaporating in noise; prejudice freezing our spiritual energies into strange distortions—keep us from doing what He says. Habit—form—conventionalism—keep the Christian from taking up his cross. Selfishness and love of ease paralyze spiritual life. "Any man who loves wife or children more than Me is not worthy of Me." Jesus must be both Lord and Christ



The Spirit and the World.

The work of the Spirit for the world seems to be summed up in reproof, conviction, regeneration by means of the truth.

He shall convict the world of sin because they believe not on Christ. To disbelieve in Christ is to ignore God. Men are held guilty for what they do not do. To believe not on

Christ is to assert one's own self-sufficiency. But without God as revealed in Christ the body becomes at last a mere dust heap. The mind is an inarticulate echo. Thought is a nightmare, a dream, an unreal shadow—and the moral nature which makes man man, is but the vain illusion of fancy. Man returneth to the dust whence he came. And since he ignores or avoids or denies God how can his spirit return to God who gave it?

If there is sin the Spirit comes to show that there is also righteousness because one, even Christ, goes to the righteous God.

Since there is sin and righteousness as well it follows that somewhere there must be judgment, and adjustment, between them. The Spirit therefore convicts of judgment. The Calvary drama was a tragedy of the unseen—God was marshalled with His hosts against the Prince of this world who is Satan—and on the Cross our Lord wrested the power of death and sin from the hand of his great antagonist forever. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.

Separate unto God.

If we are to witness for Christ with power our testimony must be in the life we live, "What you do thunders so loud I can't hear what you say" was a solemn rebuke.

The Christian is a unique and unusual man. He must be peculiar, not in the matter of mere form, but as to the principle of his life—as to his ideas, as to the centre around which his whole being gathers itself. The world lieth in the Evil one—the Christian abideth in the true Vine, even Christ.

The friendship of the world is enmity against God. We are His friends if we do His will. The world is centred in self; its Prince is the Devil, its end is Death and Hell. The church is centred in God, its Prince is Jesus Christ, its comforter is the Spirit, its end is Life and Heaven.

Come ye out from among them and be ye separate. Not in mere secondaries and small prejudices—but in deed and in truth and in life. Deny not the Lord by a frivolous, selfish

life here for He will deny all such at that great day.

Prophet, Priest and King.

The Old Testament writers exhausted all realms of thought and experience in an attempt to name the expected Messiah. "Wonderful, Counsellor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace;" "The Lily of the Valley;" "The Rose of Sharon;" "Emmanuel, the Chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely." Such are a few of the more striking names which came to be applied to the promised one.

Prophet, Priest, King, are words used to express the Messianic office. The first sets forth the Lord's mission of revelation. He is to speak the thought of God concerning men and interpret to themselves men's thought concerning God. The second refers to His work for the world in bringing the sinful nigh unto God through His blood. The last lays emphasis upon the place He is to occupy as Creator and Saviour of the race.

Christianity is Judaism spiritualized—it is the law fulfilled. The Jews had their Pass-over; we have ours in the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the heart of the believer, and freeing him forever from the curse of the law and of death and sin. They had their High Priest who made atonement once a year for himself and the people. For us the Holy of Holies is open to all, and our High Priest, touched with a feeling of our infirmities is in His own person sacrifice and priest. They had a form—we have a life. They had a Temple—we have God, a Spirit. Their worship was prescribed—ours is to be in Spirit and in Truth. They had their Sinai with its awful “Thou shalt not”—we have Calvary with its “Thou shalt love” and “It is finished.” To us He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—blessed for evermore.

System.

If Christian giving is merely a reluctant dole cast into the treasury without prayer and with no idea of the work for which it is intended, then it is not Christian and it is not giving. But if we give as the expression of the life of God within us our giving becomes the highest and holiest act of worship. God puts burdens upon us as a mark of honor and love. In a family the child who never has any part in the home duties is understood to be very untrustworthy. In the family of God He asks His children to be workers together with Him. The more work He gives us to do the more reason we have for thanksgiving. This is a work of His love and confidence. It is a recognition and test of our faith and at the same times becomes the source of increasing faith.

There is only one way to give and that is systematically. A little every Sunday counts up in the year. We can spare the little spread over the year. We cannot spare a sum at one

time which will equal the sum of our weekly offerings. Get a benificence card—study up the whole work of the denomination—and then put down your gifts—as the Lord has prospered you.

Narrow and Broad.

The two ways are always open. The strait and narrow way that leads to God is a hard way. It never can be otherwise. It requires the full exercise of all the powers of mind and heart to walk therein. The broad way leading to destruction is always easy at first. It requires no energy, no outlay of mental or moral force to walk therein.

A man can fall down hill by merely surrendering to the force of gravitation. He must climb and persevere in order to mount to the summit. A man can become a drunkard easily enough, but it takes untold effort in order to reform.

The narrow way is hard at first, grows easy and ends in glory, in eternal peace, rest, joy,

life. The broad way of sin is easy at first, grows darker and harder further along and at last ends in awful gloom, wreck, judgment, death.

Christ is the Way. In Him we find energy to seek the kingdom of life and direction for the journey. With Him we have first the cross and then the crown. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

God Is.

This simple sentence has lately been a great blessing to some of our congregation. It is a very old truth. Its helpfulness lies in the new emphasis placed upon it. We forget so soon. We take up our burdens as though we had to bear them all alone. We cannot bear them, and in the midst of depression and gloom some one says, "God is." The old truth startles us as tho' we had not heard it a thousand times. "God is." Well, I need not worry. "God is." I have a Father pitying me. I have a Shepherd leading me. The majesty of His Omni-

potence upholds me. The exhaustless deeps of His wisdom are for my help. Let me rest—the burden is still heavy—the way long and lonely. But “God is” and nerved by that glorious fact the place I must fill is to me the very gate of Heaven—the place of triumph rather than the place of tears.

Disciples Indeed.

A Christian is a follower of Christ. Socrates had his disciples, Luther, Calvin, Socinius theirs. And men were proud to be called such. But what glory lies in the thought “I am a disciple of Jesus.” He taught of God and life and love. His doctrine is luminous with hope and peace. We believe what He believed about God. We believe what He believed about human life, about sin, about salvation, about our fellow men.

Alas! We use the word lightly. To be His disciple is to strenuously emulate God in thought and expression. What would it be if all we who call ourselves His disciples were to

live His life completely? Surely that were the Kingdom of Heaven come.

The Sin Covered.

God takes infinite pains to avoid the effects of His justice upon sinful man. The Israelites looked upon a brazen serpent to escape the poison bite. Noah had his ark which did for him and his family what righteousness and repentance would have done for the drowned world. And Christ is the great all-inclusive means whereby the Father makes it possible for us to escape the penalty of our sin.

Once a year the High Priest, on the great day of Atonement, sprinkled blood upon the cover of the sacred ark. This was a propitiation. It covered the sins of the people from the wrath of a just God. Jesus Christ in His blood covers the sins of the world from the gaze of God. If any man refuses to be so covered by the blood of Christ, he must stand in all his nakedness before God alone—and at

the judgment he will call for the rocks and hills to hide him. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.

Labor of Love.

The Vineyard Parable teaches that all acceptable service must be without selfishness. The moment a man begins to serve God for a reward, for respectability, or social position, or trade, or even for the sole object of obtaining Heaven, that moment he takes his place among the "first who shall be last." Like the rich young man, we must chose between a high love and a low love. God loved, and therefore gave His Son to save the world. We love, therefore we work for Him. If reward comes we are that much richer, but a labor of love is its own reward.

We learn from this parable also that God is Sovereign. He can do as He likes with His own. We know we are free. These two facts rise like two beautiful pillars side by side until

their capitals are lost to view among the vaulted immensities of eternity. It comforts one to remember that God rules. It makes sorrow easier to bear—it sweetens the cup of joy. It helps us to work in hope, knowing that God will at last have His way in this world. His will must be done here at last even as it is done in Heaven.

The Living Truth.

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Sometimes we emphasize the way to the exclusion of the Truth and Life. In this age we emphasize the life and must do so more and more. But there is danger of thinking of life in its external expression rather than in its essence. The modern church is one vast machine. We polish the machine and add here a wheel and there a cog and are highly pleased at our splendid "organization." Meanwhile the grist ground is steadily growing smaller. We pause and consider and hit upon the happy plan of adding more machinery.

Alas! The trouble is that the fires are burning low and neglect here means that our splendid machine will stand still and silent by and bye. Life in essence is our need; the Life of God in the soul. One cannot live out what one has not already "lived in." There can be no life in expression without life in essence. Jesus is the way to union with God. He is the living truth which feeds and inflames the new life. He is the life itself in its essence and in its practical expression in good words. Surely apart from Him we can do nothing.

The Entrusted Talents.

The Parable of the talents bears upon its face obvious truths, which, because so obvious, are apt to be overlooked.

Every man has some talent. It is often urged as an excuse for complete idleness that only one talent has been given, but one talent is enough to insure reward for its proper care, or punishment for its neglect. From God's standpoint all talents are small. The man with

five and the man with two are each said to have been faithful over a "few things." Proper perspective is humility. Faithfulness in a few things is rewarded, unfaithfulness punished. Heaven is promotion in service, Hell is solitary confinement without work. The man who lives for self declares his independence of and indifference towards his fellows; God at last takes him at his word and he is sent into that shadow-land where there is no talent to use for the good of others. To have a talent means to use it. No man really possesses knowledge that he cannot use. Five-talent people are those of great wealth, great intellectual endowment and great public position. Two-talent people are the middle, moderate class who form the bulwark of every state and the backbone of every Church. One-talent people are those who can only cast a mite into the treasury, yet who are equally precious with the others in the sight of God.

Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?

The Cyrenian was compelled to bear the Cross of Christ; shall we be compelled? Just so long as one man is in arms against God—one soul full of hate and rebellion; just so long as oppression grinds the face of the poor and the ten commandments have no place in politics; just so long as in distant lands one dark face is turned despairingly heavenward from the midst of degradation and woe, so long must Jesus be stumbling through our streets crushed by the weight of His Cross. I ask you to believe on Christ to-night, not for the sake of escaping hell, although hell is awful to contemplate: not for the sake of gaining heaven, although heaven is well worth a great struggle to gain, but for the sake of helping Jesus Christ bear His Cross. Will you come to Him willingly and say, "My Lord, lay Thy Cross upon me—I will help Thee, I will love Thee, I will stand with Thee before the hate of the world and go with

Thee through Thy long dark journey after the lost. I am Thine, use me. Let me have the fellowship of Thy sufferings."

Ponder This?

"Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." A man must be dead to sin or dead in sin. There is no half-way about the matter. Between the old life and the new a vast gulf is fixed—a whole universe, for "as far as the east is from the west so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Dead to the law: dead to the sin that gives the law its sting and power; dead to the rudiments of the world—the mere a b c's of the soul life. Your life must be hid in God, or be hid from God. The sinner hides himself. The saved man is hidden. The ark was a thought of God—the incarnation of His Holy purpose. The sons of Noah were hidden with him in the ark. So in like blessed companionship are we who believe hidden with Christ in God. There are

we safe; for no wrath, no storm, no judgment can reach us in time or eternity.

What is thy Life?

“Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” There is nothing like the pathos of human life. We each one step out upon our life’s journey so bravely, confident that our lot will be different from all others: and we find it the same. We smile through our tears; see a rainbow of hope athwart the darkest sky; hear a sound of abundance of rain in the midst of sorest drought; feel certain of eternal life though the world is crusted with the bones of dead generations and the rumble of the dead waggon never ceases in our streets; struggle with zeal to leave some impress upon the onflowing years which future ages will remember and revere: and then we die. If to our hearts this little drama is so pitiful how must it appear to the Eternal.

Faith.

Faith is the greatest fact in man's experience. When for the first time we face the vast problems of our own being we are staggered, confused and not seldom overwhelmed. Incredulity follows, then unbelief, then despair. The everyday relations which seemed so real and binding suddenly vanish like mist. The soul stands out, alone and unrelated. Life's span seems but the brief gleam of a star falling through the night. The utmost endeavor of reason proves impotent and fruitless—as well try to see across the Atlantic at midnight as to fathom the grim stretch of existence over which we are hurrying. When we reach this point,—when the past is a mystery too dreadful to look upon and live, and the future is a yawning gulf bottomless and shoreless ; when above us hangs no star and within us light is quenched in doubt ; when mind wearied with beating against its prison cage sinks down listless and life becomes a

mockery and a curse—then comes Faith, the good angel of the universe, and Faith saves us.

The First Thing.

Faith is keen visioned. She pierces through the murky and forgotten past, and beholds God's throne back of all and explaining all. Reason sees Sources. Faith sees *The Source* of all things. When faith comes the clouds lift and we behold the beautiful links which bind us evermore to Him who made us, keeps us, leads us, loves us. Faith sees Him as He is, and in the clear light of that seeing we can trust Him.

Faith hears well. Above and below life's discords she hears love's gentle music. From the past she hears the Father's voice saying to each soul "go forth." In the present she hears one whispering "It is I, be not afraid." And in the future she hears with great joy the welcome "Child come home." Faith is stronger than death, swifter than thought.

She gives peace when all around is battle, hope for despair, song for tears, smiles for sorrow, victory for death, trust for dismay, calm for storm, life for death; a Father and a Father's love for the cruelty of blind fate, God and His good kingdom in the place of earth, death and a sunless hell.

O Faith, come like a dove to our hearts ; grow mighty within us until by and by thou shalt spread thy strong pinions and bear us to the bosom of our Father above.

Follow Me.

In those days you would have seen Him moving about among the people healing, helping, loving, forgiving, rebuking. When He saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for they were like sheep shepherdless. They followed the low single desire for mere existence, as did the sheep, and night found them scattered and lost. Then the Shepherd with wondrous love and patience sought them

out and taking them in His bosom bore them home.

We are like that. We have lost our way. We are in trouble. Debts and duties pile high upon us. We sink down. Some unknown woe gnaws at our heart. We sleep and wake and the grey morning tells us that one more day must be struggled through. We are lonely for we have sinned. Foolish, blind, selfish, sinful, dying, how can we escape?

Jesus calls, "Follow Me." We have rejected Him long enough—we have spurned His outstretched hand—we have cared not for His crown of thorns. Let us awake from our dream of death and cry "Jesus Lover of my soul—let me to Thy bosom fly."

Then shall we hear Him say, "My child I forgive thee, Thou art Mine forever and none is able to snatch thee out of My hand."

My Rock.

My strong habitation, my rock, my fortress, my God, my hope, my trust, such is the precious possession exultingly described by the Psalmist, and in this strong habitation he puts his trust. God possesses him and he possesses God. The fortress is his because he is in the fortress. We can never say my Rock unless we are on the Rock. This complete rapturous possession is the holy secret of the Christian life. I am in God and God is in me. That is the way Christ thought of it. So often we want to keep the fortress in sight and play outside, dangerously near the enemy, but with hope of reaching shelter if a sudden movement is made by him. This cannot be. We need not go outside for pleasure—in Him is joy; nor for food, He is the bread of life, and the water of life; nor for work, it is divine work to do His will, and His will is that we abide in Him. "In Thy cleft, O Rock of Ages, Hide thou me."

God's Teachers.

The Father loves all men and desires all men to love Him. But we do not all love Him, and He has two special agencies by which He brings us to the place where we can think, and, thinking, learn to love. The first agency is Prosperity. Once in a while it succeeds. When I count my blessings and find them so many and so great ; when I learn that the stars shine just for me and the flowers look up to tell me that God loves me, and all the manifold duties and opportunities that enter into the making of our character spring out of the thought of God ; when I meditate on these things I am led to cry " Father Thou art mine and I love Thee for Thy love's sake."

The other great agency is Adversity. When the stars go out in the storm we look eagerly for the lighthouse. When our idols are broken we turn to God. We live among the sordid shadows of this struggle for existence until all the energy goes out of our spiritual being. Then rises the storm. We feel the building

that we have built about us shake and tremble and at last it is swept away. We sink down and hide our faces from the dreadful fury of the storm. But by and by we find that we are still unharmed—we look up—the accumulations of a long time, a life time, have been swept away. But the blue sky is above us; we rise and breathe a new clear air. There is nothing between us and God. We can see him as He is and, seeing we love Him for His love's sake.

Into all the World.

In the last hundred years while the estimated population of the world has doubled, the number of members of reformed churches has quadrupled.

Then English speaking Christendom had not one missionary society, now we have no less than one hundred and fifty which raise annually for foreign missions twelve millions of dollars.

Then educated men and women held aloof and none would go to heathen lands as missionaries. To-day over seven thousand are there of whom nearly one-third are women and there are thirty-five thousand native workers. Then in all heathendom there were three hundred evangelical converts. Now there are three millions.

These are of course only approximately correct figures, as changes come so rapidly, but they serve to illustrate the movement of the outreaching life of God in the Christian church.

“A church without missions is like a bird without wings,” says Dr. Parker. Yes, it is like a bird without song, without freedom, without that buoyant upspringing life which makes the lark mount to the heavens singing as she rises.

Life made Easy.

“The Love of Christ constraineth us.” The word means to compel completely. It may constrain us to a thing, or cause us to refrain from a thing. It makes small difference whether we consider it to be the love that Christ has for us or the love we have for Him. We love because He first loved us.

Just as the trees put forth their leaves and buds and fruits, just as the birds sing, the stars shine, the waters give their rippling music, so we work and give and sacrifice because the Love of Christ within us constraineth us so to do.

This is a universal force. It is mightier than logic, than arithmetic, than all the economies. It is Life itself direct from God. With this as the foundation principle of our life labor becomes a privilege, burdens help us forward, duty loses its loud, stern word of command and all we do or think or purpose becomes one glad exultant, triumphant song.

Why?

“Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?” This is a question that our Lord must always be asking, and it searches all hearts mercilessly. The principle involved is this: A man who calls Jesus Lord, must be what he says he is and do what he says he believes—outside and inside must correspond. Unless he is a doer he is not a true hearer of the word. If he takes Christ as his Saviour from sin he must also take Him as Lord of his life. We “do not” mainly because of ignorance. We see only the surface of things, and having a form of words are deluded into believing that we have the substance of the gospel. We do not “know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.” Sentimentalism evaporating in noise; prejudice freezing our spiritual energies into strange distortions keep us from doing what He says. Habit—form—conventionalism—keep the Christian

from taking up his cross. Selfishness and love of ease paralyze spiritual life. "Any man who loves wife or children more than Me is not worthy of Me." Jesus must be both Lord and Christ.

Common Things.

There are no common things. You call a daisy common and yet it takes the universe to warm and color it. The whole sun is necessary to give the tint to the lily, the form to the leaf. The life of the plant by the roadside is controlled by the same majestic laws that govern the stars in their courses. From the face of the flower we read the law of God. There is nothing common. We speak of common men. Common men are ordinary, everyday men. Who is a common man? I do not speak of the working man for that is a phrase full of injury to all who use it. A working man is a man who works whether with his hands or brain, and such a man is not common. Look at the vast mysteries of law and

life which form the basis of man's food supply. Behold the curious and complicated social system that has leaped into being to give his powers play. Ask him how long he wishes to live and he will tell you that an eternity is all too short. Can such a being be called common?

God is not common and God is everywhere, therefore wherever we walk in this wondrous world of ours let us step reverently as in His presence, and learn that the earth is His for He made it. Man is His child. In Him is life and He is love.

The Fall and Rise of the Sons of God.

The result of the disobedience of Adam and Eve was an unholy self consciousness. They had a knowledge of wrong experimentally. Distrust became the rule of life for them. They hid in the garden from God. Adam tried to put the blame of his sin upon God. Eve put it upon the serpent and the serpent was silent.

The second result was the cursing of the serpent. Death had come and all the creation must be made to groan and travail because he who had dominion over it had chosen to sin.

The woman had disturbed the relation between soul and body and henceforth she must perform her sacred office of motherhood in anguish. To Adam was given sorrow and toil and death, and lest they should eat of the tree of life and condemn themselves to an existence of misery, God in His great merey shut them out of Eden.

All this suffering was the result of sin. It is the price of his greatness that man is so closely related to all the creation that when he falls he drags his race and the other creatures over which he has dominion down with him into indescribable ruin and chaos.

But we must not think of the first Adam as though he were all, "As in Adam all died so in Christ shall all be made alive." The second Adam was born of a woman, tempted

in all points like as we, yet without sin. He is the original life of God. In Him we once more become the true sons of God.

Which shall we choose, the first or second Adam? the serpent or the seed of the woman? shall we take the sin-tainted, accursed, fevered life of the thousand generations of lost men to be our life? their death to be our death? their portion to be our portion? or shall we by faith in Christ take for our life the pure eternal God-life flowing from God through His Son? shall we take Him for our portion? "Behold I set before you this day life and death, choose ye."

The Prayer Dove.

Noah had been tossing long and waiting for rest from the flood. He sent forth a raven which flew to and fro among the carcasses and drift and brought no answer. Then he sent out the dove and she returned at night wet and weary. Again he put her forth and she brought him at evening an olive leaf plucked

off. The third time he sent her forth and she did not return and Noah's heart was glad.

Is not this a good illustration of prayer? My first prayer is like the raven, a mere wild questioning, a desire to see God, to get something. It is the echo of the old chaos within me. It is of low origin and brings no answer. Then I send forth the dove and she comes back stained and weary. I wait awhile and again I put her forth from my soul's window and she returns with an olive leaf, a promise from God, a token of life, and when I put her forth again lo! she comes back no more. And this is good. Prayer is its own best answer. And when my thought and will are so in accord with God that when I pray they are caught up by His on-moving presence and carried forward with Himself into eternity shall I not be glad? Is this not my best answer?

Thy Kingdom Come.

This petition looks for the progressive coming and over-coming of God in His world. God

is King. A part of His Kingdom is in revolt. I pray that in my heart and in the world's heart rebellion may cease.

The coming of the Kingdom is the growth of a new life. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," is the process. The ultimate foundation of the kingdoms of this world is force; of the kingdom of God it is life. This means slow, eventful development. We have seen the grain fields laid low by storm, or dried down by drought, or devoured by the worm—yet harvest comes. We have seen the Christian life undergoing drought and storm and eaten by some vile worm of passion—but there has been growth and by and by harvest. When I pray, "Thy kingdom come," I mean that I have surrendered my whole life to God; that I want Him to use me in the gaining of the whole world for Him, and that these two things are accomplished through Jesus Christ in whom is life.

What About This?

Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners. Who is a sinner? What is sin? Look up this night at the stars; they are big, but they have no souls. They obey instantly the voice of God, who sitteth in the midst of them to guide and govern. They are ruled by law. They have no will but God's. Not so with man; he has a will; he may answer yes or no to the call of God. If I leap as readily to answer the will of God as do the stars I have no sin. If I have never surrendered my will to His will, and when He calls answer no, either by negative indifference or positive disobedience, then I am a sinner. This is sin, and out of this all sins receive their exceeding sinful nature. It only takes a moment to determine whether I am a sinner or not. Christ is here to help us surrender our wills to God as He surrendered His will to God in the garden and upon the cross. He has borne all the suffering due all the sinfulness of all men. You take advan-

tage of what He has done, when you surrender your will to Him; or in other words when you believe. Will you believe now?

Do You Know This Man?

God took all His eternity, and power, and wisdom, and love, and incarnated them in the person of Jesus Christ, and He was called the Son of God. God gathered up all the possibilities of human nature, all its eternities, all its unique glories, all the fulness of its divine sonship, and incarnated them in the person of Jesus, and He called Himself the Son of man. God gathered all the beauty and fragrance, and majesty, and life of nature, and planted them in the breast of Jesus and called Him the Lily of the Valley. In His bosom God's heart of fulness and man's heart of need beat together, keeping time to the harmony of the unfolding universe. Is this a manhood worthy of our thought? How can we help falling down with Thomas and crying, "My Lord and My God."





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