

FROM
THINGS
TO
GOD

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From things to God

W. J. H. J.

FROM THINGS
TO GOD



BY

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PREFACE.

THE sermons in this volume were preached without notes. They were taken down in shorthand at the time of their delivery, and are printed as they were reported. Their style, therefore, is that of spoken and not written discourse, and does not so easily lend itself to print. Any attempt to change it, however, would have involved not only a difficult but an almost impossible task. Neither would it have been desirable. The chief effectiveness of a sermon is after all the personality of the speaker, and while it is difficult to import this into the printed page, it can be done more fully by preserving than by trying to change the original form of utterance. As sermons therefore and not essays these discourses are printed, and it only remains to be said that the purpose of the author in publishing them is precisely the same

as that which he had in preaching them : to try to make men see that even the commonest life has in it something divine, and to help them a little in the midst of their daily affairs to pass from "Things to God."

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FROM THINGS TO GOD.

FROM THINGS TO GOD.

Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ's : and Christ is God's.—1 CORINTHIANS iii. 21-23.

THE Corinthian Church, to which these words were addressed, was split up, as you know, into parties and consumed with jealousies. St. Paul undertakes to correct this state of things, not by discussing and adjusting the relative claims and merits of the different parties and saying wherein each was right and wherein each was wrong, but by giving to the members of all of them such a conception of themselves, so large and so sublime, that in the light of its apprehension their little, narrow, partisan spirit, with its little cankering jealousies, would fade and cease to be. "You do not belong to parties," he says; "to partisan schools and opinions, to partisan leaders and teachers, you do not belong to them; they belong to you, and all their thoughts and utter-

ances, all their gifts and powers, all their things are yours. Yes," he goes on to say, his mind having once started in that direction, "all other things are yours, of the world, of life, of death, things present, things to come—all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." From things, to man, to Christ, to God—that is St. Paul's conception of the ascending order of the universe and of man's position in it; let us take his thought this morning, and try to read it after him.

"All things are yours." When St. Paul said that to the men of his time it was a prophecy. To-day it is fast becoming a prophecy fulfilled, and we see now as then they did not see, or did not see as clearly as we see now, how true it is that the earth and all things in it are indeed the property of and do belong to man. They belong to him, as we are seeing now, in the first place by a right of ancestral relationship, by a kind of blood affinity, or kindred link and tie. For whether he be regarded as having come out of the earth by a process of special creation or a process of gradual growth, he is in either case the product of the earth, and all the varied faculties of all the living forms which the earth itself contains, are seen and reflected in him.

“Hints and previsions of which faculties
 Are strewn confusedly everywhere about
 The inferior natures, all lead up higher :
 All shape out dimly the superior race,
 And man appears at last,
 The consummation of this scheme of being ;
 The completion of this sphere of life
 Whose attributes had here and there been scattered
 O'er the visible world before.
 Dim fragments meant
 To be united in some wondrous whole,
 Imperfect qualities throughout creation.
 Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
 Some point where all these scattered rays should meet
 convergent
 In the faculties of man.”

And we are seeing to-day how true it is, as St. Paul himself so long ago declared, that man is indeed the heir of all the things and all the forms which all the earth contains ; that by the right of pedigree, by the right of ancestry, by the right of descent and lineage, they do belong to him, they do belong to us.

And they belong to us, too, by possession as well as by inheritance ; or they are coming so to belong to us.

“Canst thou perceive the breadth of the earth ?” exclaimed the patriarch Job, as though he were stating some hopeless and impossible task, and lo, we have almost spanned the skies. “Canst thou send out the light-

nings?" he says again, "that they should go and be thy servants, and say to thee, Here we are." That is precisely what we have done. And we have bent the bow of Arcturus, and the sweet influence of the Pleiades we have succeeded in binding down to our practical purposes in life, as on all the waters around the globe we sail. And the way of the wind we know, and the path of the cloud, and the secret springs of the seas, and the place where light dwelleth we do in a measure know, and nearly all the forces of nature we have gathered up into our strong right hand, and are using at our will. And as the heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time all things are ours to-day, of the world of life, of death. Yes, even of death—and the treasures of gold and silver which those who have preceded us have fought and died to accumulate, and the wisdom and the knowledge and the experience and the apprehensions of truth which they have fought and died to obtain, and the battles for civil liberty, for personal freedom in thought, speech, action, which they have fought and died to win; yes the things of death are ours as well as the things of life. They have made us rich and great and strong, and will hereafter make us more so, for not only are

things present ours, but the things to come will be ours, and will give their glory and abundance to us and minister to our wealth.

Well, then, as much as that of the apostle's declaration when he says, "All things are yours," we are able to-day to read; as far as that in the movement and course of his ascending thought we are able to follow him.

But more than that he says, and higher than that he climbs; can we go on and read the rest of the sentence after him? Can we go on and climb the rest of the way with him? "All things are yours, and ye"—oh, wonderful thought and helpful; great, uplifting, inspiring—"and ye with all your things, with all your things, are Christ's." From them, to us, to Him,—from things, to man, to Christ.

We are talking about property right to-day; that is the length of the tenure line and that is where, in Jesus Christ, all property right is lodged. We own and we are owned. Looking down we are masters; looking up we are servants, and as all things belong to us, so do we with all our things belong to Jesus Christ. Now, observe, he does not say that we ought to belong to Christ or that we ought to be Christ's. "You are Christ's," he says. Whether we

know it or not, whether we confess it or not, our acknowledgment of it does not make it any more true; our failure to acknowledge it does not make it any less true. No matter what we do, no matter where we are, in the Church or out of it, baptized or unbaptized, confirmed or unconfirmed, the fact remains: we are Christ's, and we cannot change that fact. We may refuse to recognize it; we may try to live as though it were not so, and we may succeed in living as though it were not so; but what we think or do or fail to do about a thing does not make the thing different from what the thing is, and according to St. Paul the thing here is this: we are Christ's—his property, he owns us, we are his.

What do we call it when we take away a man's property, when we hold it back in our keeping and won't let him have it? We have a word for it, we call it robbery. And that, just that, I think, St. Paul teaches and the whole Bible teaches, is what a person does when he refuses to let Jesus Christ take possession of him. He is robbing Jesus Christ, he is taking away his property from him or holding it back and depriving him of his own. It is just because, it seems to me, this is not more

clearly and generally understood and recognized, that there is a hesitancy on the part of so many people to make a public confession, acknowledgment, of Jesus Christ, to come into and join, as it is called, and unite with the Christian Church. They seem to think that in doing so, by that step, by that act, by that public confession, they are *becoming* Jesus Christ's, and thus and then and there making themselves belong to and the property of Jesus Christ. And they shrink a little from the responsibility of that belonging to Jesus Christ and what it imposes and involves, and lest thereafter they should not be able to live consistently with it and so invite some censure and bring reproach upon him. But they are Christ's *now*, his property *now*, they belong to him *now*. Is it not a censurable, reproachful, and inconsistent thing to refuse to say that they are? It is something even to make an acknowledgment of a just debt; it is usually the first step toward the payment of it, and certainly it is not worse but better to try to pay and fail, than not to try to pay it or even to make an acknowledgment of it. Think about that, some of you.

But let us go on and consider what this belonging to Jesus Christ really is, what it means to us,

and what it is that it does for us when we once come to realize and to be conscious of it.

Climbing up through the scale of being only to ourselves, and going no higher than that, and looking no higher than that, we do not really know ourselves nor see the meaning of things. Like some little child at school who does not and cannot understand, or understands but dimly the deep, far-reaching reason and necessity of his tasks, and would like if he could to escape them ; we cannot appreciate, we cannot perceive and grasp the deep, far-reaching reason or disciplinary necessity that lies concealed in our tasks. Or like some soldier in battle, who in the thick of the smoke of the conflict is not able to recognize clearly and to discriminate between the different forms which he sees advancing toward him, and thinks that his friends are enemies, and his enemies friends ; looking at things as we are wrestling with them, we will surely make the same mistake, and think that those which are really happening to us for our good are happening for our hurt, or that those which are happening for our hurt are happening for our good.

Yes, simply looking at things from the point of view of ourselves, how can we understand

them ; how can we put a right and true appraisal on them ? How could the little seed or the life that is latent in it understand the things that happen to it—the decayings, the perishings, the destructions, the crumbling away, in its deep, dark, prison house, unless it could look on and see that larger, greater, more abundant life ; that life of the beautiful flower, that life of the golden grain, that life of the ripened fruit to which it belongs, and which all its happenings are for ?

How could the life of the world in winter see and understand the things that are happening to-day—the cold, the frost, the ice-morsels, and the shrouds of snow around it—unless it could look on beyond its immediate self to the rich and radiant life of the summer's bloom and splendor, with which it is connected, to which it is moving on, in which it is fulfilled, and which, through all these wintry things and all these dark and cloudy things, it is getting ready to come.

Ah, how can you and I understand the things that are happening now to us—the dark, the cold, the wintry things, as well as the bright, the joyous, and the summer things—unless we can send our vision up to some great height beyond us, to some great life above us, toward which they are

all determining, toward which they trend and go, and see in that the object which all these things are for. From things, to man, to Christ. From them, to us, to Him! and looking at them from there, we begin to know them a little and only then do we know them. Seeing in him the life to which they are committed, to which they all belong, we put new values on them and see new meanings in them. Those sorrows and joys, those tasks and treasures, which come from the world and are given to us by life, and those experiences that come from bereavement and which have been taught us by death, they are ours, yes—but that is not all—and we are Christ's. Seeing that and knowing that, we then know how to regard them; we then know what they are meant to do—not to make us a little bit richer or more prosperous than our fellows, and stopping and ending there, not to make us poor, or poorer, not to make us comfortable or uncomfortable, not to make us light of heart, not to make us sad. Their aim is far beyond all that, and like St. Paul they seem to say, and looking at them from the point of view of the life of Christ, we seem to hear them say, “Whether we are bright or dark to you now, whether things of life or things of death, forgetting what has been already

accomplished in you, this one thing we do and we were meant to do, to press you on, to drive you on, to bring you nearer to Jesus Christ, to lift you up more and more through sunshine and cloud, through poverty and wealth, through all things—to lift you up to the high and eminent place to which you really belong.”

Then we begin to understand them a little, we begin to see some light. Then we begin to understand ourselves a little—those deep and fervent longings which in our hearts at times we do so strongly feel; those dumb yearnings, prayings, passionate aspirations, earnest searchings after something, we know not what exactly—we understand them a little. We see the meaning of them, those tremblings and quiverings of the soul, as though it were on the margin of some deep and mystic joy, as though the breath of some infinite life had touched it: feelings, aspirations which we cannot voice, and which we call on music and song, and heaven and earth, and beauty and religion, and united prayer and worship and praise, to help us to express. It seems to me that what it all means is this, that there is something higher in the scale of being than that point to which as yet we have been able to come, that to something

greater, better, more, we do in fact belong; "ye are Christ's" it means, and Christ's mighty spirit is stirring in our hearts. It is his life we feel, his voice we hear, seeming to say, as he is so are we, or so at least we will be. And the little buried seed will ripen into the rich golden grain, and the wintry earth will burst and break and laugh at last in the summer's beauty and bloom; and the hopes and the aspirations which the winter's frost and snow cannot kill in us but only seem to intensify, will be fulfilled in Christ.

That is the message, men and women, it seems to me which the Christian gospel brings to us. It shows us what that is to which we really belong; it says to us, "You do not belong to a life that is poor and weak, and worldly and selfish; you do not belong to sin and pride and jealousy and strife; oh, see the great and wonderful life which the gospel story proclaims; the life that has conquered sin, the life that many of us believe has conquered death; the life that has moved so luminously across earth's darkened sky, that has given such cheer and courage to darkened hearts and homes—that is the life to which you really belong.

"Ye are Christ's," ye are Christ's, is its ringing cry; and—Christ is God's. For nowhere in the

universe, on its loftiest eminence, on its highest ground, is there anything more divine than that life of Christ. Trying to live that life, and day after day to make it ours, not in name merely but in fact, we more and more realize that we are moving on and on, we know not where exactly, but toward what is most divine in the universe. We are not going down to loss and waste, but going up to permanency and gain; not going down to defeat, but going up to victory; not going down to death, but going up to life: and more and more we feel that the trend of all creation is toward the very highest, is toward the very best—from things to man, to Christ, to God; who

“Dwells in all
From life’s minute beginnings, up at last
To man . . .
And, man produced, all has its end thus far
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God.”

THE PERSONAL DOMINION OF CHRIST.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.—
HEBREWS xiii. 8.

EIGHTEEN hundred years ago St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians “the fashion of this world passeth away,” and all human history is an illustration of and a commentary upon the truth of his words. Change and decay are the order of human life, and things which are apparently immovable are not able to stand “‘gainst the tooth of time and razure of oblivion.” There are certain periods, however, in the history of mankind, when the changes in society are exceptionally rapid and radical. Such a period was the fourth century of the Christian era, was the century of the Schoolmen, was the century of the Crusaders, was the century of the Reformation, and such a period seems to be this nineteenth century also, which has witnessed both more numerous and rapid if not more radical changes, in certain directions at least, than any other period of equal duration in the whole previous history of mankind.

Naturally, therefore, at such a time as this, when so many and great changes are taking place in society, in the Church and in the State, when no change seems to surprise us any more, and we are only surprised if after the lapse of a little while no great change occurs—naturally, I say, at such a time as this we are disposed to inquire what is there that will not change; to which we can, in the midst of things that are passing away, with a feeling of security cling, and upon which we may with a proper confidence rest. It is in response to this line of inquiry that I will ask you this morning to consider, first, the fact itself, and then the significance of it, that, despite all the changes that have taken place in the past, that are taking place in the present, or that will take place in the future, Jesus Christ has been, is, and in my judgment always will be, yesterday, to-day, and forever, the one abiding factor in the ever changing economy of our human life. I do not mean to say, of course, that the speculative beliefs of man concerning Jesus Christ have been subject to no variation, or that there have been no changes in what is commonly called the world of religious opinion, for in the face of facts that are patent to every intelligent observer, how could I

or anyone truthfully say that? But what I mean is this :

The personal dominion of Christ over the hearts and consciences, over the lives of men, by all the changes that have taken place, has not been in the slightest measure disturbed, but has, on the contrary, strengthened and increased, and has widened more and more "with the process of the suns." This, I maintain, is a historical fact. We do not need to prove it; it is before our eyes; we can see it; in our immediate audience, we can hear its voice; and with our hands we can touch and handle and come into contact with it.

The first disciples of Jesus had to walk by faith in him. His claim to a perpetual dominion they had to take on trust, for he had not yet been lifted up in the sight of the world. His attractive power had not been widely felt; it had not yet been proved. But to-day, it is not so necessary to walk by faith in Christ. And with the manifestations of his power throughout all civilization and around us on every hand, pervading our best political institutions, permeating our best social economy, leavening our literature, glorifying our art, inspiring our philanthropies, influencing more or less the whole broad move-

ment of our modern conduct, and emanating from a character which, even after the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries, is still regarded as the ideal life of the world, to-day we can walk by sight; and the personal dominion of Jesus Christ, unexhausted by time, unweakened by social changes, unimpaired by political revolutions or ecclesiastical perversions, is before our eyes as an unimpeachable fact.

But then, it may be said, this after all is not an exceptional fact, for there are other religions in the world besides the Christian religion, older, some of them, and having more disciples. And that is true, but the influence exerted by those other religions is not the personal influence of their founders. They would, in fact, survive without their founders.

Take away Mahomet, and Islam still remains; take away Buddha, and the "light of Asia," such as it is, still shines; take away Zoroaster, and the fire still burns with unabated brightness on the Persian altar and hilltop; take away Confucius, and the primitive religion of the Celestial Empire is in no way impaired; but take away Jesus Christ, and Christianity is gone. His name is stamped on every page of the New Testament writings and on every chapter of ecclesiastical

history; it is found in every creed, in every liturgy, in every form of worship; for Christianity, in its essential and distinctive character, is simply Jesus Christ and the influence which he exerts. And so, from the very outset, wherever the great tidal wave of the Christian religion swept in its propagandist path among the peoples of the earth, from the shores of Palestine, across the waters of the Mediterranean, through the mountains of Asia Minor, along the banks of the Danube and the Tiber, to the far-off coasts of the British Isles, it is the form of the personal Christ that is always seen on the topmost crest of the wave, commanding attention, provoking thought, eliciting homage and love. While, therefore, there are other religions in the world, of venerable age and with numerous disciples, it is none the less true, as Mr. Lecky remarks, that "it was reserved for the Christian religion to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen hundred years has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, which has shown itself to be capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, and which has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active

life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists.”

Let us now go a step farther, and consider the significance of this fact. Seeing what Jesus Christ has been and done in history we can also see what he is. For if it be true, and I am not aware that it is disputed, that the power of Jesus Christ has shown itself to be different from and greater than that of all great men combined, it must be other than human; it must be divine. If time, the great destroyer that weakens the influence of everyone else, has not in the least impaired it, it must have proceeded from an eternal source. Without any finite limitation to it, as far as we can perceive, in its range of action, it must have proceeded from an infinite source. Overcoming all obstacles, and obstacles, too, which others have found insurmountable, it must have proceeded from something like an omnipotent source. Without a sufficient and adequate cause or explanation in human nature, as we know human nature, it must have proceeded from an absolute source. Free from every evil taint and making exclusively for righteousness, it must have proceeded from a perfect source. Perfect, absolute, omnipotent,

infinite, and eternal ; these the positive philosopher tells are unthinkable terms, conveying no definite meaning to us and which we have no right to employ. And so perhaps in the abstract, and up in the air, they are unthinkable terms. But looking at the power of Jesus Christ on the earth, at what he has been and done and is doing in human affairs, and comparing that power with all others that have energized in history, we can truly say, using in part the language of an English theologian, that while in themselves, indeed, these are unthinkable terms, yet so far as we can enter at all into the comprehension of them, we see them in Jesus Christ. And for us at least, and as far as we are concerned, "the Absolute was born at Bethlehem, the Perfect died on Calvary, the Omnipotent rose at Easter, the Infinite ascended from Bethany, and the Eternal came down at Pentecost."

Thus do we reach the conviction, not by the subtle processes of metaphysical analysis, nor by the delicate balancings of textual and critical study, for which the great majority of us are not qualified, but by observation—by looking at facts ; by the positive method of historical review and comparison, that among all the sons of

men there is none like unto the Son of Man. And the conviction, the reasonable conviction, is forced upon us that Jesus Christ, wielding a sceptre invincible and divine, is on the throne in this world, King of kings, Lord of lords, God manifest in flesh. Here, then, is the fact, and here is the significance of it: The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a perpetual kingdom, it does not pass away, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the Kingdom of God.

Let me now direct your attention to some lessons which the fact teaches, and first this: In the fact of the perpetuity of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world we find the true unity of the past and the principle of continuity in history. When the French savant, by one of those lucky guesses, as we are wont to call them, but which are rather the inspirations of genius, hit upon the character in the Rosetta stone which answered to the royal name, he was enabled, you remember, by that clew to trace out the whole hieroglyphic puzzle. In like manner, when amid the strifes and antagonisms and conflicting interests of the past, we once succeed in finding the royal name of Christ, the veil is taken away, the confusion is confusion no

longer; it resolves itself into order. We see that all the changes which have taken place, that all the dire calamities which have been experienced or victories which have been won, that all the defeats and losses and overthrows which have been encountered, have had the effect ultimately to bring out more fully in the hearts of men and in the social economy of the world the power of Jesus Christ, to make it more widely, more profoundly felt, to establish more securely his influence and kingdom on the earth, and that all things have been moving to this end. And this applies not only to Christian history, but to history prior to the Christian era. Here is the explanation of the wonderful story of the Jewish nation, of the Greek, the Roman, the Egyptian nation, of all the nations of antiquity, which by their national struggles and developments were preparing the way for the coming of that Kingdom of the Son of Man which came in Jesus Christ, and which, through all the overturnings that mark the course of the past from the earliest time to the latest, has been more and more conspicuously appearing in the world.

In the perpetuity of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ we find the true unity of the past; we

also find in it the true hope for the future. The age in which we are living has witnessed many changes, material and mental, and the coming ages will doubtless witness many more ; but the result will be to enlarge and deepen the dominion of Jesus Christ. The world will become not worse than it is, but better. Not in the way, perhaps, of direct and continuous advance, but through ups and downs, like the course of one who is climbing a precipitous range of mountains, occasionally going down into little ravines, stumbling, falling, losing his way, and making turns every now and then which temporarily reverse his path, and yet all the while steadily and slowly pressing on toward the distant mountain-top, which by and by he reaches, gradually will Jesus Christ gather all human life about him. All forms of human pursuit will acknowledge him, all departments of human knowledge will pay their tribute to him, all the aspirations of the human heart, in art, in letters, in music, in philosophy, in science, in commerce, will reach their consummation in him, and even the voice crying in the wilderness, uncertain where to find him, and which can only say, "perform the immediate duty and be content with the wages which it gives you," will exclaim at

last with peace and joy, "Behold the Lamb of God," and "Crown him Lord of all."

Finally, in the perpetuity of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ we find not only the true unity of the past and the true hope of the future, but also what is the true duty of the present hour. And comprehensively stated, what is that but to make all human society, at home, abroad, everywhere; to make all human society in all the depth and breadth and intricacy of its complex relationship, feel and respond to the supremacy of Jesus Christ? It is indeed a large and formidable task, requiring prudence and wisdom and good judgment and common sense, as well as enthusiasm and zeal. It is a task requiring all kinds of gifts—scholarship, wealth, knowledge of affairs, administrative ability, power to influence others—and well might we be appalled at the proportions of it, if we did not remember these two things: First, that the Christiana Church already possesses these gifts. In her membership are to be found to-day the great majority of the ablest, wisest, strongest men and noblest women of Christendom, who have proved themselves to be such, and who can accomplish almost any task to which they earnestly apply themselves; and second, that in fighting for

him who claimed the homage of all men, and who for eighteen hundred years has been making good the claim, we are fighting, not on the losing, but on the winning side! And therefore we go into the battle with the inspiration that is born of that conviction. With this inspiration, and these qualifications, let us have the consciousness that we are co-workers with God in the fulfillment of that purpose which runs throughout all human history, which has been unfolding itself throughout all the ages, and which will receive its consummation when all nations, kindreds, tribes, and tongues shall be gathered around the throne of Christ and his dominion shall be established over all.

Here, then, in the midst of things that are passing away, is the one abiding factor in human life, to which we can with a feeling of security cling, and upon which we may with a perfect confidence rest. For despite all the changes that have taken place in the past, that are taking place in the present, or that will take place in the future, stands, and will forever stand, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS TRUTH—A STUDY IN METHOD.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?—ST. JOHN xviii. 38.

THAT question of Pilate's has not ceased to be asked; it is asked now more than it was then, with more persistency, by more people, concerning more things. The intellectual inquisitiveness is greater to-day and the field of inquiry bigger—so much bigger indeed that it would be a presumptuous and hopeless task to undertake to traverse it. I need scarcely say that the purpose I have in view is not so wide and scattering as that, and without attempting to answer the Roman Governor's question, I simply want to indicate the path on which, in my judgment, a person must move in order to reach an answer. My aim is not to show what truth is, but the way in which to find it, and the study to which I invite you this morning is a study in method.

What is truth? First, I remark, truth exists. That may seem to some of us like a superfluous kind of statement, like saying the earth exists; of course it does. And yet there are a good many people who apparently do not believe that

truth exists, and who ask that question of Pilate's, not with the expectation of receiving an answer to it, but as he seems to have asked it—in the strong and deep conviction that it does not have any answer—a vain, empty, and useless question which it is hardly worth while to ask, or which, if it is asked, is simply asked to show how hopeless it is to ask it.

There are a good many such people, I say. They may not be here in this church this morning, or they may be, for they sometimes go to church, but they are here numerous enough in New York City. We often meet and talk with them, and from their conversation—sometimes from their silence—they make the impression upon us, not so much that they are hostile to religion, or even indifferent to it, but that after thinking and studying and inquiring more or less about it, they have finally reached the conclusion that the religious problem, interesting as it is, important as it is, is a problem that cannot be solved. This I say is the conclusion they seem to have reached, that apart from what they can learn by a mathematical process or by what is called a physical or scientific process, there is nothing that can be called truth, and that in the attempt to find it there is no success to be had.

Their state of mind is fairly well represented by the old Persian poet, who has recently been translated and brought to light because his words are so expressive of the state of mind of many people to-day :

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and sage, and heard great argument
 About it and about, but e'ermore came out
 By the same door that in I went.

With them the seed of wisdom did I sow,
 And with mine own hands wrought to make it grow ;
 And this was all the harvest that I reaped—
 I came like water and like wind I go.

There was a door to which I found no key,
 There was a veil through which I could not see,
 Some little talk awhile of thee and me—
 And then no more of me and thee.

Are we not sometimes tempted, my friends, to have just a little of that feeling ourselves? When we think of all the voices, so numerous, so different, so conflicting, so bewildering, that are sounding around us to-day ; the different religious bodies, the different sects and parties, the different schools of thought and the different leaders in them, are we not inclined to have that feeling ourselves? And when we think of the Protestant and the Romanist, and the Anglican and the Dissenter, and the old conservative critic and

the new progressive critic, and the different interpretations which they put upon the Bible, and the different things which they see in it, and the different doctrines which they find, each of them claiming so stoutly that he alone is right and all the others wrong—are we not sometimes tempted to feel as the Roman Governor did, and to say with him so hopelessly, so despairingly, “What is truth?” Is it not after all but the shadow of each man’s self, his prejudice, his preference, his temperament—a vain, transient, fugitive thing that has no permanence in it, and that what is regarded by one man or one set of men as true to-day is rejected and denied by the next? and truth, what is it? Is it indeed at all?

Now, that was the state of mind of Pontius Pilate’s age, to which in the judgment hall he simply gave expression, and that too, is the state of mind, to some extent at least, of the age in which we live, and into which, at times, we are so apt to be drawn. And yet, when we come to consider and examine it a little more closely, we find that it is not only an undesirable state of mind, but a logically inconsistent and self-contradictory state of mind, and that we cannot get away from the conviction of the

reality and the existence of fixed and absolute truth. Suppose, for instance, a person declares there is no such thing as truth. Does he not at the same time and with the same breath declare that there is? For that at least is true, or that he thinks is true, that there is no such thing as truth, and so in denying it he affirms it and contradicts himself.

Suppose he says, again, there is no such thing as error. Then that is true that there is no such thing as error, and to deny it is an error, and therefore there is such a thing as error.*

Suppose he says again, yes, there is such a thing as truth, but then it is unascertainable—we can never discover or find it out or know anything about it. Is not that also an inconsistent statement? Suppose you tell me, for instance, that there is something there back of that chancel window, but that you do not and cannot know anything about it. Then how do you know it is there? Must you not know something of *what* it is—not much, perhaps, but a little: that it makes a noise back there or casts a shadow—before you can say *that* it is? Is it not equally contradictory for a person to say there is such a thing as truth, but we do not and

* See "Philosophy of Religion," by Professor Royce.

cannot know anything about it? Then how does he know that there is such a thing? Must he not have some little knowledge of *what* it is—not much perhaps, but a little—in order to say *that* it is?

Now, this may seem to some of you like an ingenious and subtle and hair-splitting play upon words, and perhaps not very practical. But it is not a play upon words, and it serves to show with what invincible persistency of conviction we do believe and cannot help believing in the positive reality of truth, and that when by some sophistical process we try to get away from that conviction, we only go round in a circle and come back to it again. We cannot get away from it. And my apology for engaging you with this little bit of metaphysics, if an apology be needed, is the hope to make it evident that the state of mind more or less prevalent in our time, which declares or seems to declare that what we call truth is after all but a matter of opinion, a notional, fugitive, transient thing that has no permanence in it, is not a reasonable state of mind, but logically inconsistent and self-contradictory; that we cannot get away from the conviction, even when we seem to, that somewhere in the universe there is to be found an absolute, fixed standard of truth.

Well, how can we find it? This part of the subject is not so metaphysical; how can we find it? To what doctor or teacher or book or scholar or sect or party shall we go? Our Roman Catholic friend has an answer ready for us and says, Listen to the voice of the Pope, for he is infallible and speaks with an infallible voice. But how are we to find out that he is infallible? Simply because he says so? Surely not, and we shall need some other infallible voice to tell us that he is infallible.

Our Presbyterian friend says, Listen to the voice of Calvin. But there seems to be some difference of opinion among our Presbyterian friends, which may become serious, as to what the voice of Calvin is.

Our Episcopal friend says, Listen to the voice of the Church. But what voice of the Church? For it is not always perfectly clear to every person what the voice of the Church is, or where we find it expressed.

Now, all these voices and utterances are good enough in their way. Each of them perhaps teaches some little measure of truth and reveals some aspect of it. Yet from the very nature of the case it is only a partial aspect. No man, no body of men, no age, no school of thought, is

able to reflect it fully, but can only see a fragment of what is right and true. Its observation is limited to its point of view, and when its point of view is changed its observation is changed. You remember Matthew Arnold's words :

The outspread world to span
 A cord the gods first slung,
 And then the soul of man
 | There like a mirror hung;
 And bade the winds through space
 Impel the gusty toy.
 Hither and thither spins
 The wind-borne mirroring soul,
 A thousand glimpses wins
 But never sees the whole ;
 Looks once, drives elsewhere,
 And leaves its last employ.

Now if we could only reach some point of view, or if someone could come and take us up to a lofty height where we could with our vision sweep the whole of the scene; where we could look at things, not through the medium of one particular time or one particular age,—as they are apt by it to be dwarfed or unduly enlarged and emphasized and seen out of right proportion and relation to other things,—but through the medium of all the times,—the fourth, the sixteenth, the nineteenth, the twentieth century and away beyond, then I think we would be in a position to see them as they are. Or if we could look at

them with the mind of one who, though born in a particular age, however remote, is yet felt to be the contemporary and companion of all the ages, and who seems to speak to and see and live among them all—then it seems to me we would have discovered the true method by which to search for truth, the point of view from which to look, the path on which to move in order to see and find it, and then more and more we would continue to find it.

Now, is not that precisely the mind of Jesus Christ? Is not that the point of view and the method of Jesus Christ? It has been pointed out as a remarkable thing in Shakspeare that although he lived at a period when there was so much of local interest transpiring in England, both in the Church and State,—the great throes and struggles of the Protestant Reformation, great political intrigues and wars at home and abroad,—there is yet so little of it reflected in his writings. His characters are simply men and women; not men and women with the dress and the fashion and the gait and the manner of that particular time, but men and women always. It is the great cardinal passions of the universal human nature—its hates, its loves, its rivalries, its jealousies—of which he treats and

speaks ; hence he speaks to all the ages, and men and women everywhere find in him a voice.

Pre-eminently was this true of one far greater than Shakspeare. Living among a people whose minds were much disturbed by great burning questions of the day—questions concerning the policy to be pursued abroad, or to be pursued at home ; questions concerning deliverance from the oppressive power of Cæsar and the payment of taxes to him ; questions concerning the rites and ceremonies of the temple and the traditions of the elders ; questions concerning parties and their relative merits and claims, the Sadducees and the Pharisees and the Essenes—questions about which all Israel at the time was deeply and engrossingly concerned, and yet he does not speak of them ; he has little or nothing to say about them. He rises above them all, calling himself, not son of David or son of Abraham, but simply Son of Man. He seems to see and touch and feel the great universal human life, as it throbs in every people and beats in every age, and the voice with which he speaks is a voice for sons of men. He gathers his disciples about him and in the quietest, simplest way tells them what to expect when he has gone away, and what will happen to them. He says that

though the earth itself should be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll, his word will still endure. He does not seem to be living and walking so much in Galilee and Judea, as on the great highway of the ages, and he looks forward to the time when they shall come, not a few peasants and fishermen and some Galilean women, but from the east, west, north, south, and sit at his feet and learn of him as in some great kingdom of God.

When upon one occasion the Emperor Justinian was about to surrender to the clamorous claims and the harsh and violent demands of the mob, his wife Theodora is represented to have said to him that it was better to meet and go down to death as the avowed ruler of all, than purchase life for a little while by yielding to the unworthy exactions of the unrighteous few, and empire, she tells him, "is the best winding-sheet." Empire, universal empire, throughout all the world, throughout all the ages, is the winding-sheet of Jesus Christ. Victorious in the wilderness, victorious in Gethsemane, before that worldly-minded Governor in the judgment hall, victorious on the Cross, because his eye looked not upon the unworthy demands of the immediate occasion, but upon

the everlasting years, upon all future times, and wrapped around him in the winding-sheet of empire does he die.

Here, then, is the point of view from which to look for truth: the point of view of Jesus Christ, of him whose vision seemed to comprehend in its vast far-reaching scope their questions then and ours—the things, the thoughts, the questions of men in all the ages; in whom not the light of a particular time or a particular land, but the light of the world appears; whose voice is not the voice of truth as seen in part, but as seen in its wholeness—the voice of truth itself.

Here is the point of view—the point of view of Christ—at which we must try to put ourselves, in order to see what is right and true. And not with the mind of the fourth century, not with the mind of the sixteenth century, not with the mind of the nineteenth century, but with the universal mind of Christ that covers all the centuries, must we try to solve the questions, the vexed and vexing questions which are with such great urgency pressing upon us now. Then and then alone, men and women, will we more and more see and know how we ought to think to-day and what we ought to do. Then let us take our great modern life, with all its great,

fierce, burning questions and contentions, and let us go with it back to Jesus Christ, to look at it from his high, great, comprehensive point of view, to learn of him what is right and true.

Yes, let us take our questions, our hard personal questions—questions concerning duty which we cannot solve for ourselves; questions concerning the world, the loss, the pain, the suffering of the world; questions concerning life; questions concerning death; questions concerning the life through which we are passing now and the other life beyond toward which we are moving on, let us take them all and study them in the light of the mind of Christ and in that light let us try to find an answer to them.

Oh, great, wonderful, universal Christ, whose voice has spoken to the sons of men in all ages, whose light has illumined, whose spirit has guided, whose presence has blessed and sustained them in the midst of perplexities, doubts, fears, bewilderments, to whom else can we go? We would rather run the risk of being mistaken with thee than right with anyone else. But thou wilt guide us right, wilt teach us how to act, to think, to live, to die—to die in hope—and wilt show us more and more of the glory and the brightness of the truth as it is in thee.

THE LADDER OF LIFE.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set . . . and he dreamed.—GENESIS xxviii. 10, 11, 12.

HERE is a picture—quite a commonplace one—of a young man starting out in life. The scenes of the past are closed ; the future lies before him, unattempted and uncertain, and the only thing that his father can do for him now is to say to him as he does, as every father would say, at such a time, “God Almighty bless thee, my son, and make thee good and prosperous.” With this invocation as his only heritage, he enters upon his career, and goes forth into the world to measure himself with, and to find his place among, strangers. This is his situation when we overtake him in the text. He has journeyed, it seems, a whole day from the parental roof, and now as the day is closing and the “glimmering landscape fades upon the sight,” and the twilight gathers and the darkness deepens, he lies down to rest, this solitary traveler upon life’s great pathway, with the earth for a bed and the

stones for a pillow and the skies above for a covering.

And yet, rough and rugged as is his couch that night, his sleep is sweet and peaceful; and he dreams of a luminous ladder stretching from earth to heaven, of many angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and of a comforting voice of God speaking to him and saying, "Behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places, whithersoever thou goest." Now, in this dream of Jacob at Bethel, although the place is so remote and the time so long ago, we have, I think, a picture of Christian life,—indeed of all true human life, which, when true, is Christian,—standing on the earth, planted firmly there in the midst of human affairs, duties, interests, pleasures, yet receiving inspiration, guidance, comfort, help from a life above the earth, and resting like a ladder on this world and the next.

Let us look at this picture for a little while and see what it has to teach and suggest. The Christian life, like all life in this world, rests on a physical basis, for human nature consists of body as well as soul, and "what shall we eat?" is a question, not of so high an order, but just as urgent at times, as "what shall we do to be

saved?" It is, therefore, a question which a Christian man, like every man, must ask, and like every man must somehow manage to answer, for no matter how devout and pious and spiritually minded and intellectual a person may be, he cannot subsist on a diet of pure thought and emotion. The keenest logic, the most delicate sentiment, the most brilliant reasoning, wait upon appetite. The poet, the artist, the statesman, the man of affairs, the philosopher, the philanthropist, the reformer, are conditioned in their loftiest flights of imagination, in their noblest self-sacrifices for a suffering humanity, by the inexorable mandate of a recurring physical hunger. Christian life, therefore, must stand on a physical basis, it must rest on the earth. Christian people must engage in the great world struggle for bread, for physical food and subsistence, participating in worldly affairs, and thus doing their part to develop the physical wealth of the world, bringing more and more its hidden treasure out and making this world in a physical sense a more comfortable place to live in.

There is, I know, a danger to the Christian life in this, of which I will presently speak, and yet, great as the danger is in living in the world,

there is a greater danger in trying to live outside of it. It is only by coming into touch and contact with the real, active, busy, manifold life of the world that the Christian life can maintain its purity of heart. That may seem like a strange statement to some of you ; nevertheless it is true, and experience has proved it true. Christian men and women have at times tried the experiment of living outside of the world, but their efforts have not been successful. They have been, on the contrary, very disastrous and bad, and by their well-intentioned but most unwise endeavor to climb up into the heavens by a ladder which, like Mahomet's coffin, was suspended in the air, one end of which did not rest and stand upon the ground, they have ultimately fallen, ladder and all, into the mud and mire of the ditch. And the scandalous story of the monastic orders—the monasteries, the convents, the abbeys, and the other religious houses in England at the time of the Reformation, where the plainest principles of purity and morality were wantonly disregarded and violated, and even the common decencies of conduct had ceased to be observed, and which perhaps more than anything else gave rise to the Reformation—should be sufficient, I think, to teach this lesson to us. And no matter

how great the apparent gain may be or praiseworthy the motive, or good for a time the result, the sure and final outcome of ignoring the physical basis of the Christian life, the natural human worldly basis, of trying to withdraw it from its true and proper environment in the common life of the world, is not to make it more spiritual, but to make it more corrupt, not better indeed than the worldly life, but something very much worse.

I remark again that it is only by coming into touch and contact with the great life of the world that the Christian life can preserve its sanity; not only the excellencies of its moral character and the purity of its heart, but the excellencies of its intellectual character and the purity of its head. And when Christian people look upon the Christian life as a little path, not leading into and across the great face of the world, but leading outside of and apart from it, they are apt to become unbalanced in judgment, wanting in common sense, in practical wisdom and knowledge, and in their effort to save their souls they sometimes lose their minds; or, if they do not lose them wholly, they lose them a little and in part. We have seen it in the past, we see it also to-day: men and women whose Chris-

tian life, although so earnest, so zealous, so sincere, yet seems to be up in the air, not standing on the ground nor resting on the common mother earth, beautiful perhaps as a theory, but flighty, queer, eccentric, full of extravaganzas and sentimentalisms, and which when brought down to the common, practical, hard, every-day life of the world does not work.

This leads me to say again that it is only by coming into touch and contact with the great and real and busy life of the world that the Christian life can exert to the utmost its influence in the world. A story is told, I remember, of an old philosopher, that he would become at times so absorbed in deep meditations concerning the mysterious nature of God and the human soul that he would stand almost motionless for a period of twelve hours or more in the hot and open sun, with bare, blistered, swollen, bleeding feet, so full of beautiful thoughts concerning immortality and the life to come that he forgot to put his shoes on.

My friends, if this Christian life of ours is to be a real power and influence in the world, if, as Jesus Christ meant, it is to touch and shape and control the world, if it is to be something more than a beautiful bit of idealism; then, instead of

standing by itself motionless and fixed in some sweet and beautiful place apart from the world, it must put on its shoes and go forth into the world, must come into contact with it, must learn how to move on all the great world thoroughfares of toil and traffic and pursuit, engagement, amusement, and pleasure.

How is the great political life of the world to be Christianized and redeemed if Christian people do not take a part in politics? How is the municipal life of New York City to be brought more fully under Christian influence,—and I presume it will be admitted by all parties, by persons of all political complexions, that there is room for improvement,—if when election day comes so many Christian people, instead of going to the polls, run off to Tuxedo or some other place in the country and go hunting and fishing?

How is the great amusement life of the world to be purified and redeemed from its debasing and corrupting tendencies if Christian people, the best of them, do not participate with discriminating engagement in it? How is the great business life of the world to be redeemed from its hard avarice, from its selfish greed, unless there are many Christian people there who show by

conduct and example that while they too love gold they love God more than gold?

How is any great department of the world's great life to be Christianized and redeemed except as we understand it and know it and come into contact with it, and in that way try to help it?

Yes, for the maintenance of its purity, for the preservation of its sanity, for the exertion of its best and most effective influences, the Christian life must stand on a physical basis, must rest on the earth, on all the earth; must come into relation, must keep itself in touch with this real, great, busy life of the world.

But now, without elaborating this any more, let me go on to speak of the other side of the subject. I have said that there is a danger to the Christian in trying to separate himself from the world. There is also a danger in living in the world. Jesus Christ in clear and vigorous language has pointed out that danger. "How hard it is," he says, "for one who trusts in riches to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Strong language, strong language; let us not skip it when we read the gospel story. Let us try to find out what it means, for of this

we may be sure, that the sayings of Christ are true; not true because he says them, but that he says them because they are true.

What then is the kingdom of heaven to which he here refers? Not, as I understand it, a kingdom of heaven beyond the grave and in some other world, but a kingdom of heaven here, on the earth, which those who trust in riches are liable to miss and not enter. And why? Because they are apt to trust too much in riches, to make them their heaven, their only heaven; and to want no other heaven and by and by to think there is no other. In trying hard to minister to their physical needs, their physical wants and requirements, duties, pleasures, interests, and gratifications of appetite, they are apt to overlook and ignore their higher ends and greater, to forget indeed that they have any higher ends, and after a while to cease altogether—the soul lost, dead—to cease altogether to feel them. They look out on life, and all they see or care to see or try to see is money; and the stars in the firmament over their heads are simply stars of gold. “Oh, come and shine upon us,” they say,—the poor as well as the rich, for the man who is trying hard to be rich is virtually in the same case with the man who is rich,—“ye stars

of golden light; come shed your beams upon our hearts, come make us happy and glad, come more and more, ye golden stars, be our God, our religion, our heaven on earth." Now, when that is the heaven which men so engrossingly look for, they find it hard to see and enter any other.

And yet, says Jesus Christ, there is another and a better heaven on earth. Ah, my friends, are we not beginning to-day to find it out a little, that this materialistic life, however comely and fair, which moves and finds its being and its gratifications in the physical senses, is breaking down under its own weight and is not giving to men the happiness that they had expected from it? Are we not beginning to find, I mean the people at large, that the physical treasures of life are not the only treasures nor the greatest; that there are treasures in the mind, treasures in the heart, treasures in the soul, which if diligently sought may be abundantly had, and which if missed, leave us poor indeed?

There is a kingdom of mind culture. Long ago it was said by a wise man that a Tamerlane standing at the gate of Damascus, pannoted in armor and with glittering battle-ax upon his shoulder, is a less important factor in the history of the world than the little boy play-

ing at nine-pins in the streets of Metz, whose movable types were destined to move the world. Yes, and they have moved it and illuminated and glorified it. They have given new treasures to it, liberated new forces in it, and spread a new heaven of letters and learning over it. The kingdom of intellectual culture—how hard it is for a man whose thoughts are engrossingly fixed upon mere material treasures to enter that kingdom of heaven! how much he will lack if he does not! And he is beginning to-day to feel the lack.

There is a kingdom of heart culture, pure, sweet, of great reward, to be found more particularly in the sheltered and secluded life of the home. How hard it is for a busy man of affairs to-day to enter that kingdom! how much he will lack if he does not! And he is beginning to-day to feel that lack, and to say to himself as he sees how this mad and maddening search of the modern world for gold, this fierce and feverish rush, is making the sweet, quiet, old-fashioned home-life impossible any more, is breaking it up, and turning it out-of-doors into the street, "I wonder after all if it pays."

There is a heaven of soul culture, of spiritual grace and beauty, of spiritual strength and refinement and delicacy of spiritual perception,

to which new vistas open, new hopes arise, new faiths appear, new glories are made to shine, brighter than the pride of life, sweeter than the lust of the flesh, and of a more enduring brilliancy than all the material splendors revealed to the natural eye. There is a heaven in the soul here, the assurance of a heaven for the soul hereafter; a heaven of trust and confidence in, and a heaven of peace with, God; how hard it is for the man engrossed in material pursuits to enter that kingdom of heaven! How much he will lack if he does not enter it! And he is beginning to-day, it seems to me, to feel that lack a little, beginning to say to himself, "Whatever may be said against particular doctrines or theories or the utterances of the churches, they do stand for and point to something good and true," without which, despite everything else he has done, or acquired or may acquire, he will miss the thing he so much wants and has been trying so hard to find.

Now let me sum what has been said. The true and proper attitude of Christian life, of all life, all human life, what is it? Standing on the earth, dwelling on the earth, taking part in, moving about here and there in the great world-struggle for treasures, for pleasures? Yes, it is that, and for the sake of ourselves, as well as for

the sake of the world, let us not try to get out of it, nor make the great mistake and repeat the historic blunder of supposing that, in order to be good Christians and to grow in the Christian life, we must somehow manage to extricate and withdraw ourselves from this common secular life. No; it is in the midst of this common life of the world that the Christian life is to grow, the Christian character to flourish, and the Christian influences to be exerted. The ladder must rest on the earth.

And yet there are many and great temptations and snares and dangers in this worldly life, nor can it give the thing we need to make ourselves complete. Treasures there are, and pleasures and hopes and inspirations and high transfiguring faiths, not born of man, but of God; a heaven of joy and peace which, in the race for riches, no matter how fast or successfully we run, we are not able to reach. The Christian life must stand upon the earth, in the midst of earthly affairs, interests, duties, ambitions, pleasures, and yet must somehow find a pathway clear and open to things above the earth, to joys that do not perish, to hopes that do not die, to faiths that do not fail, to riches that do not rust, to great and eternal realities lying beyond the world.

It is difficult, I know, to live in this way without serving God and Mammon both, which Christ says we cannot do; it is difficult to live in this world and yet at the same time to enter and live in some other world. To escape the difficulty some have become "gainless lovers of God," others have become "godless lovers of gain." Neither course is right. We must stand on the earth, and yet must touch and enter a heaven above the earth. And to be enabled to do it successfully we must follow closely the guidance of One who has said of himself, "No man cometh down from heaven but the Son of Man which is in heaven," whose life did rest like a ladder on this world and the next, and along which the angels are seen ascending and descending as upon the Son of Man.

That is the Christian life, standing on the earth, going here and there, from business to society, from the club room to the counting room and the drawing room, moving across the earth, sailing across the waters, going here and there, engaging in this and that, and yet ever hearing the comforting, guiding, inspiring voice of the great All-Father God, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whithersoever thou goest."

FAITH AND MACHINERY.

And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.—EXODUS iv. 2.

THESE words are associated with one of the most remarkable and noteworthy events in the history of mankind, namely, the deliverance of the children of Israel from their house of bondage in Egypt. The Lord appeared unto Moses as he kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the mountain of Horeb, and said, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring the children of Israel forth"; and Moses said unto God, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, or that I should bring the children of Israel forth?" "How shall I do it?" he seems to ask, "and what shall I do it with? What weapons shall I employ? where shall I find the equipment sufficient for such an arduous task? I have no sword; no army. I am not a soldier; I am only a shepherd, and when I go and tell them that thou hast sent me, they will not believe me or hearken unto my voice." And the Lord said

unto Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" and Moses said, "A rod." That was enough—the only weapon required, the staff with which he kept the sheep in the wilderness, the thing he had already in his possession, and all that was needed was to use it with faith in God.

I have selected this incident as my text this morning for the purpose of trying to show you what kind of equipment God requires for doing his work in the world; my subject is, "Faith in God in its relation to faith in machinery," using the word "machinery," as denoting all kinds of tools, mental, moral, and social, as well as mechanical.

It is not uncommon to hear people say what good things they would like to do and indeed would do if only they had the means to do them with; if, for instance, they were rich, or richer, had more social influence, occupied more prominent places among their fellow-men, or were in some way differently circumstanced and situated from what they actually are. This or that is good, they admit, is very good and important, a thing that ought to be done, a change that ought to be made, a great deliverance that ought to be wrought, or a great reformation that ought to be effected, but they themselves, they

say, are not fitted for it; they have not the means, the weapons, the tools, to work with, the wisdom, the learning, the strength—are not the persons to do it.

Well, that may be true. Different persons have, of course, different qualifications, different opportunities, and different talents, and some persons can work at a given task much more effectively than others. And yet, while that is true, is it not also true—a truth which in the Bible is especially taught—that what men have or are, no matter how poor and weak and inadequate it seems to be, can, when used with faith in God, accomplish more than they think? Is not that the very thing, the principle, which the Bible is meant to illustrate? which makes the Bible so different—or one of the things which make the Bible so different from all other books; which has made the religion of the Bible such a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind? What you need, it has said to men, with a voice different from all other voices, to do great work for God in the world,—and this makes it a voice for all people,—is not some greater instrument than what you have already, some greater gift of genius, some greater natural endowment or circumstantial equipment,—do

not wait for that. What you have is enough,—the shepherd rod of a Moses, the trumpet horn of a Joshua, the scarlet thread of a Rahab, the hammer and nail of a Jael, the sling and stone of a David, the barley loaves and fishes of the lad in the gospel story, the one little talent which you possess of wisdom, skill, experience, sympathy, beauty, power. Do not despise and neglect it because it is poor and weak, or wrap it up and bury it and be afraid to exert it, but with faith in God, go use it, looking to and trusting in God to multiply and bless it. You cannot tell beforehand what he may do with it, what great results he can accomplish by it; therefore take it and go; that shepherd's rod, that sling and stone, the one little talent which you possess, the thing you have in hand, with faith in God, go use it.

This, I say, is the lesson which the Bible especially teaches, the principle which it illustrates, the great truth for which the Bible especially stands, that what men need to do great work for God is not great machinery, is not great tools and instruments, is not great natural power, or circumstantial equipment—or not primarily that, but first of all and most of all faith in God; faith in what he has given, which

means faith in him who gave it. If it be great, so much the better, of course; but if little, the rod and staff, the sling and stone—go use it, and God will make it effective and strong. See how it was in the days of the early Church. What was it that made it so powerful? What was the equipment of the men who were so active in it, and whose activity planted it, even before that age, that generation, had passed, all over the face of the civilized earth. They did not have much learning, as we count learning in our time, and certainly not much money, no great facilities for getting about, no printed books nor Bibles,—not as we have them now,—and no Bible Societies, no Missionary Boards and Women's Auxiliaries and charitable organizations and Christian schools and colleges, no churches, no cathedrals, nothing much—but faith in God. The power to work miracles? Yes, so it seems, to a very limited extent, and for a very limited time, and with a very limited result accomplished by it. But read the story as you find it in the New Testament books and the other literature of the time, and see if it be not true that the power which they exerted was, not chiefly the power of miracles, or the power of great machinery, weapons, tools, instruments,

but the power of a faith in God that vitalized the talent, equipment, which they had. And yet what a mighty work they wrought, what a great deliverance they effected; how they changed the face of the earth, and turned it upside down!

Then look at the Church at the present time. With a scholarship never so ripe, with a membership never so numerous, with a treasury never so full, with a social organization never so widely ramified, with a machinery never so ample, with ways and means and tools and instruments never so great and many; and yet, despite all these excellent tools and this great machinery, what little progress is made to-day by the Church in delivering the children of God from their houses of bondage all over the face of the earth! Why? Because, it seems to me, that we to-day have too much faith in machinery. We are making an idol of it, and putting our trust in it instead of God. Is there some great work to be done, or it may be some little work? Some social need to be supplied or some distress relieved? Instead of casting ourselves on God and strengthening ourselves in him, or trying to find some man of God to do it, with that personal courage, force, daring, which faith

in God gives—Go to, we say; let us get together and form a new society, with constitution and by-laws and officers, and let us appoint committees and subcommittees; let us make some new machinery with ropes and pulleys, and wheels within wheels, so admirably adjusted and fitted to one another that they will almost go automatically. And so we have more social mechanism, more social apparatus, and another society is added to the hundred thousand societies already in existence in Christendom, and we stand off and point with satisfaction to them, or rather we are buried beneath them, with personal life, liberty, force, almost crushed and broken, and we have just enough strength left to look up and say, “These be thy gods, O Israel.”

Well, of course we must have our social machinery; we must have our benevolent and religious societies and organizations, though some of them, I think, might well be spared and dispensed with; and yet, however important and necessary they may be in doing the work of God, there is one thing more important, and that is a living faith in God. That is the equipment which first of all he requires, and which, when we have it, will make our present resources,

ways and means and instruments, sufficient for and equal to the performance of our tasks. And this, it seems to me, is the message of God to his people here and now, as to that man in Horeb who was to be the leader of his people then: "Go bring my children forth," all over the face of the earth; wherever you hear their cry of distress and see their need for help, go bring my children forth from their houses of bondage to-day, lift them up to manhood, make them free, give them hope and liberty in Jesus Christ. You need no new machinery, no other than what you have. The tools, the instruments, the weapons, which you already possess — "What is that in thine hand?" go, take it, use it, and bring my children forth from their houses of bondage.

Now, having treated the subject in this general way, let me make for a few moments a special application of it, and speak of one house of bondage in particular here in New York City, to which I referred last Sunday, namely, the tenement house. That it is a house of bondage, moral and spiritual, I tried then to show you; and what a large space it occupies in our population and how many people are in it! Down in Crosby Street, for instance, there is a tene-

ment house which has 191 adults and 91 children living in it, and in the house immediately adjoining there were found by actual count 89 children, making a total of 180 children in two contiguous houses. Now, how is it possible in the midst of such an environment—but I cannot go into that matter again, I tried to cover the ground last Sunday. I stated the problem a week ago, but did not try to solve it, nor am I going to attempt anything so ambitious now. The point I wish to make is simply this, that while the tenement house is here in our midst, and here to stay, I think, though not, I hope, to stay precisely as it is, the Christian people of New York can, with the resources which they already possess, if only they have enough faith in God to use them, do much to redeem the life in that house of bondage. How? The lack of a practical helpfulness proceeds oftentimes, not from the lack of benevolence but from the lack of information, and there is many a man in New York City at present who goes on his way week after week, upon his beaten path, his business course, his round of social, professional duties and engagements, largely indifferent to the poor and doing but little to help them, not because his heart is hard

and he cannot feel for the poor and would not be willing to help them, but simply because he does not see and know them, where and what they are, or how they live and exist.

A few years since a little pamphlet, called "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," was published, of which you have all heard and which some of you doubtless have read, in which the author portrayed from personal observation the sad conditions of life in a London tenement house. This, I remember, is one illustration he gives :

Down in the cellar two families live. In a little room, near by, are a father and mother and six children, two of whom are ill with scarlet fever. In still another room is a woman in an advanced stage of consumption, with a drunken husband and five children, one of whom has just gone out to gather some sticks to boil five potatoes that will constitute the family meal for the day. In still another room is a poor woman dying with the dropsy, scarcely able to breathe, yet sitting behind a washtub upon a broken chair, trying as best she can to keep things clean and tidy. And so, throughout the house from cellar to garret, are men, women, and children, huddled and crowded together, enduring the cold,

or the hunger, or the excessive heat, sharing the same burdens and sorrows, without hope (for there is no hope among such people), and waiting, without a single ray of comfort till God should close their staring eyes with the merciful film of death. It was not a romance or a novel; it was a picture from real life, and there were other pictures like it. And the result of it was that Christian men and women in London, who had not known or realized the misery which existed at their very doors, were moved to go and visit the poor and see and learn about them for themselves. And as a result of that personal knowledge again, more has been done since, in the last few years, to mitigate the hard conditions of the outcast poor in London than all that had been done during many years before. They saw it, they knew it, and then they helped it.

Well, there are places in New York City, Christian friends, almost, if not altogether, as sad and dreary as that. Would you be of service to the people living in them? "What is that in thine hand?" The power to go and see them. It is not far, thirty minutes will take you there, to look upon them with your own eyes—not somebody's else; to come into

contact and touch with them, and if you do you will have no rest and peace ; you will lie awake at nights, until you find some way to serve and help them.

But perhaps you will not go. That is another matter. I am only saying what you can do if you will. "What is that in thine hand?" Take it and use it with faith in God, with the courage that faith in God gives ; with faith in God, go use it, and some good result will follow.

But then you may say, Is not that after all impracticable? Circumstanced and situated as we are we cannot go among the poor, the very worst and lowest poor, and if we did we would not know what to do or say to them. Possibly so. Very likely. The pastor of an English parish, who employed a number of theological students to visit among the poor, was asked upon one occasion what was the result of the experiment, and how it worked? "Well," he replied with some hesitation, "it was good for the students." Certainly it is not every person who has the talent, shall I call it? the gift, the tact, to work among the poor, even if he had the time, and his circumstances permitted. But it is not of personal work among them that I am speaking now, but personal knowledge of them, and

that I am sure the Christian Church must have or all its machinery will amount to nothing. All it does without that knowledge will be a waste, a reckless waste, of time and money. That personal knowledge the Christian Church must somehow acquire in order to accomplish much or do much practical good among them. That personal knowledge—why, you know how it is, business men—that personal knowledge like nothing else will show what ought to be done; will awaken interest, will excite sympathy, will create a large generosity, will touch the heart, will enlighten the mind, inform the intelligence, strengthen the will, and find at last way or ways to do some wise and practical work.

When some case of appealing distress is brought to your personal notice and you look upon it with your own eyes, and see its pain and anguish, and hear its cry for help, and feel it in your heart; is there a man, a Christian man or woman anywhere, who would not do what he could to help and assist it? That cry comes up from children of God, children of God, made in his image, from the houses of bondage in New York City to-day. O God, let us not be so wrapped up in our affluence and prosperity that we fail to hear it. Make us hear that cry, that

pleading, bitter cry ; it has reason to be bitter at times, for it seems as though it were forsaken by heaven and earth and no man pitied or cared—make us hear that cry, and then we will try to help it and will know what ought to be done.

Yes, my friends, when the two halves of New York City, each of which is now living in ignorance, or comparative ignorance, of the other, are somehow brought more closely together, then neither half will continue to live precisely as it is living.

We want to solve this problem, we want to help the degraded poor, but we know not what to do, we say. “What is that in thine hand?” The power to obtain a personal knowledge of the situation. Let us go and use it with faith in God and much good will follow. We will re-enforce with a large and glad and willing generosity the efforts of those who are working among the poor, or who by personal residence among them, like the settlement of young college women downtown, are trying by their culture and their refinement to create (which is one of the great difficulties) a better aspiration in the poor themselves. We will try to provide public parks and playgrounds for the children. We will do what we can to prevent fifty little children from being

crowded into one room in a public schoolhouse which was intended only for twenty or at most twenty-five. We will be willing that the poor should have such refining influences as come from museums and art galleries, such wholesome recreation as is to be obtained from cheap public amusements, or such healthful benefit as is to be had from summer excursions and outings. We will see to it that the downtown churches, working in the thick of the battle, shall not be deserted without first providing endowment for them and seeing that they have equipment sufficient for their task. We will know just what part of the social machinery is cumbersome and vain and wasteful and ought not to be helped, and what part is doing practical service and ought to be assisted.

Yes, after all, there is much that can be done, even with such resources as we already possess. Let us not say, Oh, this great problem! it is so hard to solve. Let us not say there is nothing we can do, until we do what we can. There is enough power in this one congregation to redeem the whole tenement house life of New York City, and to us, as to Moses long ago, the word of God comes, "Go bring my children forth," from their houses of bondage to-day.

It is a vast undertaking, you say. How shall we do it, or who are we, O God, to bring thy children forth? And again he says, "What is that in thine hand?" Go take it and use it; with faith in God, go use it.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.

IN commenting recently upon that wonderful prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which they have taught us, I called your attention to the truth contained in the two opening sentences ; namely, the hiding of the Christian's power, our Father in the heavens, and the manifestation of that power, in Christian worship on earth.

Worship, however, is not its only manifestation. There is an impulse in it toward work, and I desire to speak to you this morning about that additional impulse created by the consciousness of the all-embracing Fatherhood, and which is so succinctly expressed in the language of the text. Or, putting it in topical form, I will ask you to consider the coming of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God—what is it? The phrase was not original with Jesus. He found it, when he came, current among the people, upon their lips, their byword, the thing they everywhere.

talked about, as people to-day talk about money and business and trade and the fashions. It colored their thought and pervaded their speech ; it was their life, their religion ; and a prayer that did not include a petition for the coming of the kingdom of God was not, we are told, regarded as a prayer at all. While, however, the phrase was not original with Jesus, he put a new meaning into it, and made it something quite different from what it had been before. To the Jew the kingdom of God was nothing more nor less than the kingdom of the Jew, whose coming would be for him, would minister to his national pride, would establish him upon the earth—his thoughts, his opinions, his supremacy as a Jew. Now, Jesus meant by the phrase something very much more. To him the kingdom of God was, as its name implies, not the kingdom of man at all, whether Jew or Gentile, but the kingdom of God.

And here, let me observe before proceeding further with the explanation of the phrase, is a wholesome caution for us. Like the Jew in the time of Christ, we also profess to be interested, and I presume are, to some extent at least, in the coming of the kingdom of God. We pray for it, we work for it—a little—and we give our

money for it ; and yet, after all, it may not be the kingdom of God for which we work and pray, but the kingdom of ourselves, our thoughts, our opinions, our theological doctrines, our ecclesiastical polities. The Churchman wants it to come—yes, very much ; but he wants it to come along the line of the Prayer Book and the apostolic succession, and to have these three orders of the ministry in it : bishops, priests, and deacons.

The Romanist wants it to come, and to express itself through the medium of papal infallibility, and unless he can see it coming in that way he does not see it coming in the world at all.

The Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Baptist—they also have their thoroughfares, their well-constructed roads, along which they want the kingdom of God to come.

Now, some of these ways may be right, may be much better than others, and I do not mean at all to imply that because a person is a zealous Romanist or a devoted Churchman or an uncompromising Presbyterian he is not unselfishly and sincerely interested in the coming of the kingdom of God in the larger sense. He may be ; and yet it is well to remember that nothing is more common, more easy, than self-deception,

and that religious zeal, as Carlyle tells us in his essay on Voltaire, is often but a little love of truth associated with a great love of making proselytes. So it was with the Jew, so it has been with Christians since, so it may be with us. How shall we ascertain whether it is or not? There is one infallible test. Does our religion, whatever we call it, separate us or have a tendency to separate us from our fellow-men and to make us, in a measure, unsympathetic with them? If it does, then we may be sure, however sound our faith, however true our creed, however great our zeal, that it is not God we are trying to exalt, but ourselves in the name of God.

For think a moment. God stands for Fatherhood, and Fatherhood stands for love—a great, strong, protecting, inextinguishable love. Love does not divide; it unites; it draws people together; it is a bond of union than which there is none more intimate, more sacred, or of more enduring character; stronger than death, mightier than the grave, waters cannot quench, floods cannot drown, flames cannot consume it. And if our religion does not have the effect to touch and quicken the heart with that deepest, purest, and most expansive of passions, and to

send us out in sympathy strong and great toward our fellow-men of every shade and grade, of every name and creed, call it what we please—Protestant, Romanist—it is not the religion of Christ.

The religion of Christ, my friends, is, after all, a misnomer. Christ had no religion, in the common and ordinary sense of the term; and established no religion. The word religion is never mentioned by him. Christianity is not in its highest and sublimest sense a religion, and it would clear our minds of many perplexities and much confusion of thought if we ceased to regard it as such. Jesus Christ simply introduced, or tried to introduce, a new kingdom into the world. There were other kingdoms then, as there are now, in existence—the kingdom of the Jew, the Roman, the Barbarian, the Greek; Christ would introduce another which should include them all, binding together the subjects of many into the sweet fellowship and sympathy of one—namely, a kingdom of love. He calls it the kingdom of God on earth, for God is love. He calls it the kingdom of heaven on earth, for heaven is love. He calls it the kingdom of truth on earth, for truth in its deepest and purest analysis, and wherever found in the universe, in this world or in others, in the rocks or

in the stars or in the microcosmic depths of the human heart and soul, is but the expression of the great All-Father's love.

That, my Presbyterian friend, is what all your profound theology should mean. That, my Episcopal friend, is what all your beautiful Church polity and Apostolic order should mean. That, my Romanist friend, is what all the vast and complicated machinery of your admirable hierarchical system should mean. If it does mean that ; if, like nothing else, it makes your heart burn and glow with that great embracing, transfiguring passion of love—love for God and man—then for you it is right and good : stand by it and hold it fast.

If, upon the other hand, it has the effect to alienate you from your fellow-men, from those who do not hold your views, who do not share your theological or ecclesiastical opinions, then, no matter how great your zeal, you may be sure, that like the Jew in the time of Christ, you are self-deceived—it is your own kingdom you seek, and not the kingdom of God.

And now, having tried to explain what I think Jesus meant by the phrase, let me go on for a little while to speak of the coming of the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ introduced it into the world, but he did not establish it, and his life went out in failure, or seemed at least to do so, and the purpose that inspired him was not a successful purpose. And yet full well he knew that it must at last prevail, and that, lifted up from the earth in the sight of the world as the pure expression of perfect love, he would and must draw all men to himself. Has he not, in fact, been doing so more and more? Look back over the Christian ages. What is it that we see? Strife and contention and bigotry, persecution and warfare and bloodshed, on the part of those who bear the Christian name! Yes, all that we see and deplore, and we will not try to cover it up and excuse it; and yet, despite all that and beneath all that, there is something else that we see. That man is but a poor and prejudiced reader of history who cannot and does not see it, who does not see the advancing triumph, slowly, but step by step, of a kingdom of love on the earth, which, like the mighty ocean tide, held in check for a time and apparently overcome by the storm, in obedience, nevertheless to an attracting power that is greater and more than the storm, goes rolling steadily on, with the flotsam and jetsam of many a wreck, to

be sure, yet rising higher and higher and conquering more and more.

Hatred and strife we see. Yes, for human nature is passionate and weak, and cannot be all at once and easily controlled; but love we also see, like sunlight shining through the clouds or painting its beautiful bow of promise in the arching heavens above them. Bigotry, yes, but benevolence. Resentment, yes, but forgiveness. The infliction of wrong, yes, but the patient endurance of wrong. And homes are blessed and men and women in them, and hospitals are established, and slaves are liberated, and the weak and the poor are assisted, and the suffering are relieved, and works of mercy abound. Yes, despite all else, it is the coming of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of love, that we see, and which Jesus Christ declares will ultimately hush the storms of life, will ultimately still the tempests and prevail over all.

Why? Simply because it is the kingdom of love, whose law, whose spirit, whose method, whose motive power is love. Love—what fear can dismay it, what obstacle can stop it? Love—it is the omnipotence of the universe liberated and set free in the heart of man. Love—it is the great alchemist, by which the

hardest task becomes the sweetest joy. The Christian pulpit speaks at times, and delivers its message to us, tries to make us see what our duty is toward our fellow-men. But duty is a harsh and ugly word, and while we listen and assent, perhaps, and confess that it is our duty, it does not move us much, and, if it be pressed too hard, we are irritated and vexed.

But Jesus Christ speaks and says: "I do not want your duty; I simply want you to see, as I see, the sublime vision, rolling across the heavens and sweeping across the earth, of the great Father's love. Then I know you will try, you cannot help trying, to build his kingdom up."

Love—it is the great despoiler that takes away our money, then gives it back again in more precious and indestructible form. "There was an old man who had an abundance of gold, and the sound of the gold was pleasant to his ears, and his eyes delighted in its brightness. By day he thought of gold, and his dreams were of gold by night, and his hands were full of gold, and he rejoiced in the multitude of his chests. But he was faint with hunger and his trembling limbs shivered beneath his rags, and there came a little child to the old man and said, 'Father,

father, I have found a secret ; we are rich ; we shall not be poor and miserable any more : gold will buy all things.' And the old man was wroth and said, ' Would you take from me my gold ? ' "

Like the man of the parable, we of this age have been surrounding ourselves with our precious material treasures which, although when we get them we often find so disappointing, so powerless to feed the hungry soul and warm the shivering heart, we nevertheless so dearly prize and carefully hoard and guard ; and when the little Christ child comes and tells his secret to us and says, " Give them away, give them away, and then they are yours forever," we become wroth and angry, and say to him in reply, " Would you take away our gold ? "

Yet, my friends, is it not a true message ? In our little limited experience have we not found it so ? It is only when Love, the great despoiler, comes and takes away our money that we really have it, and that our hearts and souls are warmed and nourished by it. We lay it by and hold it fast and will not let it go, and Love comes and opens the door, and all the treasures fly forth, not only in blessing to others but in blessing to ourselves. Father, mother, husband, wife,

child, friend—someone who stands for love—has some need, some want, can be made happy by us, and we take our dear and precious money, our beautiful alabaster box, the sweetest, dearest thing we have, and pour it freely out. Then we receive it back again an hundredfold in deepest, sweetest, purest joy into our hearts.

Now, that is the power, that alone is the power—and that is enough—which Jesus Christ reveals, which he brings to bear on the human heart. This is the weapon which he puts into our hand to fight with. Without it we can accomplish but little. Service is a hardship, duty is a joyless task, and the work of the Christian Church in this world, despite all its admirable machinery, will halt and stumble and falter and drag and not be done. But the kingdom of love appears, the bright and beautiful vision which Jesus Christ reveals in the heavens around us we see. Its glory touches the heart, opens it wide, wider, and awakens a new, strong, and consuming passion within us. Have we power of speech and song? This one thing we do—"Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom come"—and we press on toward the mark. Have we talent, scholarship, learning, health, strength, position in life, the strong and manifold power that lies poten-

tial in money—"Thy kingdom come" is our prayer, our great consuming desire. O God of love, our Father, take us and use us more and more, and make thy kingdom come!

Or we have been laid aside and there is nothing we can do; some heavy burden of sorrow is ours, we are crippled or broken by sickness or by age, or are circumscribed by a contracted sphere from which we cannot escape—then, O God, thy will be done! Teach us how to be patient in our little narrow place, to suffer and to wait.

My friends, as I read the Gospel story and try to understand it, that is what our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world for; not to establish another among the innumerable religions—call it that if you please, and for convenience' sake; but there is a better word: to establish a new kingdom on the earth, namely, a kingdom of love, whose doctrine is love, whose polity is love, whose motive power is love, whose king is the King of love, and who puts into our hands, not the flag of sect or church or partisan theology but the great banner of love, and bids us go into all the world and conquer in that name.

Have we seen that vision which Jesus saw

sweeping through the heavens, and which he declared would ultimately prevail over all the earth? Then we have seen the sublimest thing which this universe contains; we have seen the vision of God; we have learned the highest lesson which God himself can teach, "that life, with all its yields of joy and woe and hope and fear, is just the chance of the prize of winning love."

Then, when we can truly say, "Our Father in the heavens," we can also say, "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in the skies."

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE THEATRE.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—ROMANS
xii. 21.

I SAID to you a few Sundays since, on the feast of the Epiphany, that the truth which we commemorate at the Epiphany season is this: that Jesus Christ is the moral and spiritual light of the world. Last Sunday I tried to show you that he is a light not for a part, but for the whole of the world. And I desire to-day to bring out and emphasize another side or aspect of this same thought, and to direct your attention to the fact that Jesus Christ is the light of the whole world—not simply in the sense that his Gospel is intended for all nations, but in the additional sense that it is equally intended for all the parts of any particular nation. I wish to show you that it is diffusive as well as expansive; that here in the society of Christendom as well as in the society beyond the borders of Christendom, there is an aggressive work to be done, and that it is our duty, as the disciples of Jesus Christ, to try to overcome the evil im-

mediately about us—the lingering elements of pagan life in our midst—with the positive and aggressive good of the Christian religion.

The subject in other words which I propose to consider is this: the relation between the Christian believer and the unchristianized features of the society in which he is placed. I propose to consider it first, in a general way, and then with reference to that particular feature of our modern society spoken of or known as the theatre.

Christian people are sometimes much perplexed to know what course to pursue, with reference to certain customs and institutions which have come to be a part of the existing social *régime*, and which, although not essentially sinful, are yet so often productive of sinful results and excesses. I do not know anything more difficult and embarrassing to the conscientious Christian, who wants to perform all his duties in a Christian manner, and to carry his Christianity out into all the relations of life, than questions of just this sort. They are questions, too, which are constantly arising, and which no one of us is able to escape. “Shall I do this, or shall I not do it? Intrinsically, perhaps, there is nothing wrong in it, and it

might be so done and conducted as to be fruitful of good; and yet I know that it is in fact the occasion at times, if not to me, to others at least, of very serious harm. What then is my duty about it, and how shall I act in regard to it?"

Now if everything that is bad in this world had no good mixed up with it, but were altogether and irredeemably and unmistakably bad, and were so marked and labeled, it would not be hard to discover at least on what path we should walk; and although we would still be tempted at times to yield to what is wrong, it would be a temptation addressed directly to the lower, baser, and the more ignoble part of our nature. We would know it as such, and the consciousness of that fact would have the effect to weaken the temptation and to deprive it of much of its power. But with reference to the great majority of things in which from day to day we are called upon to engage, that is not the case. They are not altogether bad, nor altogether good. Their character is mixed and composite. Some persons do them innocently. Others do them wickedly. Looking at them from one point of view we see how proper they are. Looking at them from the opposite point of view we see how hurtful they are. And hence it is that we find

among men, and among good men too, such conflicting judgments concerning them—hurtful, harmless; wicked, innocent; right, wrong; good, bad. Which of these testimonies shall we accept? Which verdict shall we believe? It is the old story over again of the two sides of the shield. They are both hurtful and harmless; they are both wicked and innocent; they are both good and bad; and each of these verdicts, if we are candid and fair, and are not hopelessly committed to some prepossession and prejudice upon the subject, we soon discover and are ready to admit to be true. This, however, as I have already said, instead of being the end of the perplexity, is but the beginning of it; and the question is still on our hands: What course shall we, as a Christian people, pursue with reference to all those matters of a mixed and composite character which we find to be a part of the existing social economy, and in which we, from time to time, as members of that economy, are called upon to engage?

Now in reply to this question there are three possible answers—three possible policies to be pursued. There is first the policy of indifference. “Things are what they are. We found them here when we came. We did not originate,

are not responsible for them ; nor is it likely that we can change them much. Let us be careful, therefore, to be pure and upright in our personal and domestic relations, and as for these great and urgent social matters, manners, institutions, and customs about us, let us just drift with the tide." That is the policy of indifference into which some Christians so easily drop.

Second, there is the policy of abstinence. There is so much that is damaging to the moral and spiritual nature in these social pursuits, they have the effect in so many instances to harden the heart and the conscience, to enhance the attractions of vice, and undermine the foundations of virtue and pure and virtuous living, men are so often broken, crippled, ruined for life in their character by them, that in spite of the possibilities which they contain for good when they are properly done, it is best on the whole to have nothing to do with them. We do not expect by this policy, of course, to be able to destroy them. We do not think that we will stop them. They will still go on, as a part, as a big, vehement, and attractive part, of the social life of the world, while we are keeping our own skirts clean, by a complete avoidance of them, and "laying up treasure in heaven." This is the policy of

abstinence, the Puritanic policy, as it is sometimes called.

There is yet another course, and that is the policy of conscientious and discriminating participation in them—the policy which looks upon the Christian religion as essentially militant and aggressive, and believes that it is the duty therefore of all Christ's disciples, not simply to try to get rid of and escape the evil themselves, but in the name of their Master to buckle on the armor, and go forward and fight, and beat back the evil, to dislodge it from its stronghold, to drive it out of its territory, and to conquer and overcome it with an aggressive good. This, I need scarcely tell you, is the hardest course of all. It requires more courage and strength, makes a man more watchful, puts him more on his guard; just as it requires more courage to engage with an actual enemy upon the field of battle than to run away from the battle or to go through the tactics of a military drill in an armory. And yet, hard as it is, nothing less than this, I think, is the scope of the Christian duty, and by the pursuance of no other course can we hope to perform it. This world and every lawful factor in it belong to Jesus Christ. It is our duty, therefore, as his disciples, not simply to be satisfied with a

personal avoidance of evil, but to go forward and meet it, and though it be through wounds, and fatal wounds to some, to overcome it with good.

And now, having made these general remarks upon the subject, which are capable of endless applications, and which you can make for yourselves, I desire to give you this morning a specific illustration of them.

Ought Christian people to go to the theatre? That they do go, many of them, I am well aware. And yet there is a feeling upon their part, more or less active and strong, that there is something in the going that is just a little inconsistent with the Christian character. And this feeling shows itself in the fact that while the members of the congregation go, they do not think it just the thing to have the minister go—at least some of them do not. And if you ask them why, they will tell you, in all probability, that he, by reason of his position in the community and in the Church, should be more careful about his example. An answer which of course condemns their own conduct, and which is but admitting, as any fair and logical mind can see, that going to the theatre is not quite right. For if it *is* quite right, why should anybody be careful about his example? If it is not quite right, it is wrong, and

they are doing a wrong thing in going ; and they should be sufficiently logical to see it, and sufficiently straightforward to acknowledge it. Ah, no, my friends, let us not be willing to drop into such shallow special pleading and casuistry, such "playing of fast and loose" with conscience ; let us try for a few moments to look at this practical subject in a truer, broader, and more rational way.

What is the theatre? what is its history? how has it come to be here? I need not tell you that it is an old institution ; that every nation has had it ; that it has been a part of every civilization. Some friends of the drama have traced it back to the time of Moses. This, of course, is an uncertain pedigree. And yet fragments of a Hebrew play have come down to us, founded upon a great and notable event in their history—the Exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. The thing which strikes us most, however, in connection with the rise of the drama is this : that although we do not know precisely when it began, yet in every instance where it does appear for the first time in history, it is associated with religion. This was the case in Greece. This was the case in western continental Europe. This was the case

in England. The drama, in fact, as another has told us, was the chief school of morals and religion in those primitive times—and to an unlettered people, who had no books to read, and who could not have read them if they had.

By means of histrionic representation the stories of the Grecian mythology and of the Biblical record and literature were made to appear in graphic and appealing form, and were imprinted deeply, strongly, and ineradicably upon the popular heart. Gregory, the Archbishop of Constantinople, was himself a playwright of no mean quality, and hoped, as Mr. Richard Grant White tells us, to banish the pagan drama from the Greek stage and substitute plays founded upon subjects taken from the Hebrew or the Christian Scriptures.

The first plays that were performed in England were the so-called "Miracle Plays," long lists of which have descended to our time, containing the names of many, and from which we can form some notion of what they were like. There was a play called "The Creation," another representing "The Fall of Man," "The Death of Abel," "The Flood of Noah," "The Procession of the Prophets," "The Birth of Christ," "The Adoration of the Shepherds,"

“The Flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt,” “The Slaughter of the Innocents,” “The Adoration and the Offering of the Magi,” “The Baptism of Christ,” “The Temptation of Christ,” “The Betrayal of Christ,” “The Death, the Burial, and the Resurrection of Christ,” and almost every other notable incident in the history of our Lord.

The first performers in these plays were clergymen. The first theatres were Christian churches. From the churches, after a while, they passed into the yards of churches. Then they got upon wheels and were moved about from place to place in the country. A distinct and special class of professional actors was created. Suitable and permanent buildings were erected. Other scenes began to be represented besides the stories of Scripture. Forms of virtue and vice were introduced on the stage, and the “Miracle Plays” were merged in time into the “Moral Plays.” Thus gradually was the theatre brought down into the real, human life of the immediate time. Satire came, and wit and humor and merriment and laughter and comedy made their appearance, to lash with their ridicule the forms of vice, and to enforce the lessons of virtue and morality.

But human life is deeper and something more than a laugh. It has its storms of passion, its blighted hopes and ambitions, its wrecked and ruined affections, its sin, its heart-breaking sorrow, its deep, bitter remorse; and tragedy followed in the wake of comedy, until all human life was touched with histrionic portraiture. The drama became both a literature and an art—breaking forth into rich, magnificent, and beautiful bloom in the Elizabethan age—and has been ever since a deeply rooted and corporate part of the Anglo-Saxon civilization.

Such, in brief, in too brief compass, is the history of the rise and progress of the drama. Reviewing that history, looking back thoughtfully over it, we cannot fail to notice and to be impressed with the fact that the drama is not simply a superficial attachment to our social economy; that it did not come by a process of statutory enactment; that it is not the product of any particular age. Like the British constitution itself it has gradually grown out of the habits, the customs, the manners, the institutions, the morals, the virtues and vices, and the very life of the people. Therefore, like the British constitution, like the common law, it has come to stay, and to be an organic and integral part of

the Anglo-Saxon civilization. And if this be true, that it has come to stay, that it is a permanent and abiding factor of our civilization, what is the duty of Christian people toward it?

That there is much evil, much that is low, coarse, base, and disgusting in the drama of the present time no good man will question. But remember, my friends, that this social world of ours, with all of its abiding forces and factors, belongs to Jesus Christ. Evil has no right in it. It is an intruder here. The world belongs to Christ. And it is our duty, therefore, as the representatives of Christ, not simply to avoid and escape the evil ourselves—by running away from the field of battle and taking refuge in flight—but to go forward, and fight, and conquer the evil, and overcome it with good.

But how, practically, may this purifying work be performed? I answer, first, by exercising a high conscientiousness in the matter. Everything that touches and deals with the human passions—like music, like oratory, like poetry, like art, like the drama—may be and has been abused. But instead of denouncing these things, let us distinguish carefully, with an uncompromising conscientiousness, between the legitimate use and the unlawful abuse, giving

our support and sanction to the one and our strongest condemnation to the other. This, I know, is a difficult course to pursue. But it is a difficulty we cannot avoid. It meets us all the way through life, in every sphere and relation in which we are called to act. Difficult as it is, therefore, let us try to perform here the same discriminating task that we are called upon to perform everywhere else. And instead of resorting to the miserable subterfuge of drawing a line between the pew and the pulpit—one section of the Christian Church going to the theatre carelessly, thoughtlessly, as fancy moves and opportunity offers, the other section of the Christian Church never going at all, because it should be more careful about its example, and “It is not quite right”—let us, as Christian men and women, learn to distinguish constantly, carefully, conscientiously, between the right and the wrong, between the good and the bad. This will not completely reform the drama to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the day after. But it will have the effect to reform it in the end.

The second method I would suggest is akin to the first, although of slower action and of more gradual efficacy, and that is: the cultivation of a purity and refinement of moral

sentiment, a strength and vigor of intellectual culture, that cannot be contented with, and will not condescend to anything that is vulgar and cheap in quality or coarse and unworthy in its intellectual tone. "The social civilization of a people," says the Earl of Lytton, "is always and infallibly indicated by the intellectual character of its popular amusements; and of such amusements the stage is by far the most important." And if our modern stage be not of a very high character it must be because the culture of our modern society is not of a very high order.

Our one and great ambition up to the present time—I speak of the people at large—our one and great ambition up to the present time has simply been to make and to amass more money. For this we have striven and toiled, so engrossed with the desperate passion, so wasted and worn with the task, that we have left ourselves but little leisure for the growth and the development of the other parts of our nature. We have had no time for intellectual culture. We have had no time for literary pursuits. We have had no time for scholarly growth and study. We have had no time for anything, except with feverish haste, and waste of the nervous energy, to try to make more money. And then, when the need of

recreation has come, we have just dropped for a few hours into and taken up with anything that happened to be at hand.

As the nation gets older, as it becomes more highly developed, as the people grow in moral and intellectual stature, their popular amusements will correspondingly grow and become of a better character. The drama will then become again what it has been in the past, to use again the language of the Earl of Lytton, "not the resort and the amusement simply of the vicious and the vulgar, but the great and effective instrument by means of which the lofty ideals, the heroic types of human life, the great and strong movements of the human soul, will be plainly and prominently depicted before the responsive and educated imagination of the people." In the meanwhile, let us try by the cultivation of a pure moral sentiment, and a high intellectual standard, to do our part, gradually, slowly, indirectly it is true, yet none the less effectively, towards making the drama what it ought to be.

Now, if anybody should infer from what has been said this morning that I desire to give more laxity and license to the Christian life, it will certainly not be the impression which I have sought

to produce. My aim has been to show you, rather, that the Christian life is not simply the singing of hymns and the saying of prayers on Sunday, but that it is coterminous with the life of all society; that its duty is not exhausted simply by a personal avoidance of evil, but that it has a militant and an aggressive work to perform, and that into every sphere, every relation of the social economy, its aim should be to push and drive out, and to keep on pushing and driving out, the evil, until at last it has overcome it with good.

HIDING FROM GOD.

And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?—GENESIS iii, 8, 9.

IN commenting upon these words there are two remarks which I wish to make by way of introduction. The first is this, that human life in the Bible, although in its superficial accidents of time, place, circumstance, and other conventional adjuncts it differs more or less from human life to-day, is nevertheless in its fundamental tendencies and dispositions the same. The second remark is that the relation of God to human life in the Bible, while in some respects as there described it appears and is unique, is chiefly so in appearance, and is virtually like the relation which he is sustaining to it at the present time.

My purpose is to illustrate this morning in a particular way these two general propositions—to show you that now, as formerly, as ever, men are wont to hide themselves from God among the trees of the garden where he has placed them ;

and second, that in their hiding from him, his searching, quickening voice is heard, saying to each from time to time, "Where art thou?"

First, consider the hiding. Looking at the matter theoretically—apart, that is, from what experience and observation teach—one would naturally suppose that the thought of the great, good God, who has made this world and put men in it to enjoy it, would be a welcome thought, and that in their enjoyment of it, or in wandering through and among the trees and eating the fruit of the garden, they would be moved instinctively with gratitude toward the Giver, and would find it a pleasant thing to keep him in their minds. Such, however, is not the way in which men act or in which they feel toward God. On the contrary, they try to forget him, to put him out of their minds, or to think of him only when by reason of some calamity, sickness, or other disaster, or by the approach of death, perhaps, they are compelled to think of him. Their notion seems to be that God is only for emergencies, like that of the good hostess, Mrs. Quickley, in Shakspeare's "Henry V.," when describing the death of Falstaff: "So he cried out and said, God, God, God, three or four times. Now I to comfort him bid him that he

should not think of God. I hoped there was no need yet to trouble himself about that.”

Her idea was that if, as she hoped and believed, or at least would have Falstaff believe, he was not going to die, it was quite unnecessary and premature to turn his mind toward God and religion ; bad as the case seemed, it was not as bad as that, she hoped, that he had to think about God.

So it is with many persons now—who think of God and religion only when they can think of nothing else, when their hold on this world has been loosened a little, and they are about to take a journey into some other world of which they have had no experience, and about which in consequence they have some apprehension, as one always has when facing the unknown. Then, like Falstaff, they cast themselves on God and cry out for his help, and send perhaps for his minister to come and administer the sacrament and show them how to die and cross the borderline into the world beyond. As long, however, as death and disaster seem remote, they are immersed in this world ; God is forgotten by them—or at least they try to forget him—among the beautiful trees of the garden in the midst of which he has placed them ; and why ?

Ah, men and women, how true to human nature, in every age, from the beginning till now, is this wonderful Bible of ours.

Why? For the same reason that Adam and Eve did in the old Genesis story ; they have eaten of the fruit of the tree of which God commanded they should not eat. They have done and are doing still what, as they know very well, despite all their attempts at self-justification, they ought not to do. They have an evil conscience, the sense of guilt is upon them, they are not living right, and they know it—yes, they know it—and the thought of God troubles them, makes them afraid. They try to get away from it, to cover it up, to crowd it out, to forget it, and so instead of wandering through the garden with God, they wander through it without him, or try at least to do so ; and what is the result? They are not at peace, as many of you are not, and are trying to find a peace in the garden itself, which the garden itself, however big and beautiful, does not and cannot give.

Is not that true, my friends? Look and see. See how hard men are trying to find peace to-day, and how great the garden is, how extensive, how diversified, how full of bloom and beauty in which they are trying to find it.

Our political economists are telling us—and we are listening with complacency to their words—how exceptionally great and prosperous the nineteenth century is, in productive plant and machinery, in mineral resources, in agricultural fruitage, in commercial exchanges, in mechanical skill, in facility of intercourse, in rapidity of communication, railroad, telegraph, telephone—our whole industrial system, how great, how prosperous it is. It is true. Never was a century like it. The world of human interest, the garden in which men toiled and digged in former days, was comparatively little and barren. To-day it is wealthy and fruitful, and cultivated, and easy to get about in! So that if people do not like, or for any reason get tired of, one place—Bar Harbor, or Lenox, or Newport, or the Pacific coast, or Europe, or Paris, or Constantinople—they can easily go to another. Or, if they do not go in person, they can, in the flash of a moment, send their messages there, and the ends of the world are brought into communion with them. And the products of the earth, of all the earth, gathered in every clime and country, are made to go by car and boat, by wheel and keel, across the land and water, in all directions, by them.

Never was the garden so big, nor were the trees in it so beautiful and fruitful, nor men so successful in gathering the fruit of the trees.

Yet, instead of finding peace in it, that is about the only thing which they are not finding, and which they seem to be getting farther and farther away from. Peace! why, the word is a satire on our civilization. Never was there a time when there was so little of it in the hearts of men, of all estates and classes, the rich man and the poor, the idle man and the busy, the professional man and the mechanic, the toiler, the thinker, the bread-winner of every class of either sex, successful or unsuccessful, as there is to-day. It is not a military age; militarism, we are told, is past, and in the sense that fighting on the field of battle is not so frequent as formerly,—though the standing armies are bigger,—nor so much resorted to in the adjustment of difficulties, the statement perhaps is true. Militarism is past, yet none the less it is an age of warfare—bitter, relentless, perpetual, universal, and the demon of unrest is at its heart.

Look at the great host of the workmen, as by courtesy they call themselves, the men, that is, engaged in manual labor, the *demos*, the people, the mass, moving on, dissatisfied, toward some-

thing—they know not what, and cannot formulate—but something, nevertheless, which they think they ought to have, and which in one way or another, by fair means or foul, they are determined to get! Is there peace there, in that part of the garden?

Look at the great captains of industry—the men who have been successful, who have gathered the spoils, and are rich! Their one feverish ambition, inflaming them more and more, and which like the rod of Moses is devouring everything else, is to find new fields of conquest and to gather further spoils. Is there peace there? Why, it is difficult to say in which of the two classes of the nineteenth century industrial life, the top or the bottom, the rich or the poor, there is the greater unrest.

Leaving the dust of toil and the vulgar noise of the street, look at some of the cultivated spots in the garden. Look at the so-called fashionable world, which, despite its kaleidoscopic brilliancy of movement and conventional activity, has so little natural charm and originality in it—which lack of originality I presume Goethe had in mind when he satirically described good society as “that condition of life which furnishes no material for poetry,” and which led Mr. Adding-

ton Symonds to say, "How hardly shall they that wear evening clothes and ball dresses enter the kingdom of art,"—Is peace dullness: is it the synonym for inanity?

Look at the political world, where the feeling "I am as good as you and better" is the active and turbulent force; where wisdom is determined not by weighing heads but by counting them, no matter how little is in them; in which the verdict of yesterday is sure to be changed to-morrow because there are more heads and perhaps as ignorant coming up to be counted, as if the pacification of human society were to be found in popular elections and *plebiscites*:—Is peace there?

Or still again look at the philosophical world, at the leaders and captains of "modern thought," who, in studying the phenomena of the universe, the heavens with their telescope, and the earth with their geological hammer, and human life upon it with their materialistic analysis, find so often nothing but matter and force, no spirit, no God—oh, my friends, with the burdens of life upon us and the miseries of life around us and the sharp cries of distress and pain from so many quarters coming into our ears, and a strange dark journey awaiting us: Is there peace there?

So if we should go throughout the whole garden of modern life, the conclusion would be more vividly impressed upon us that while men are finding in it almost everything else to-day, they are not finding peace. Why? Because it is not there. No, men and women, it is not there. Peace does not come from without; it comes from within; from communion with a life which does not change—which is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It comes from God, from the consciousness on the part of men that they belong to and are the children of God; that despite their sin, their disobedience, their unworthiness, He who made the garden and put them in the midst is their friend, and holds them fast and loves them with a strong, eternal love. That gives peace, and that alone gives it. And so we come to the other side of that old human story, in the garden of Eden, that the great God of the universe, who knows better than we wherein our peace consists, is forever searching for us in our hiding from him, and saying to each from time to time, as to Adam and Eve, "Where art thou?"

In how many different ways do we hear his voice! Adam and Eve heard it in the Genesis story, and we also hear it.

We hear it at times in the very quiet and stillness of the garden—when wandering in the summer, as some of us have been recently doing, along the ocean beach, or through the quiet wood, or under the evening sky—far away from the haunts of men and the clatter and the noise of the city; a longing deep and pure is awakened in us that we know not how to express. Yes, we hear it then, and a sweet quickening influence as from some more beautiful world beyond the earth and fairer than the firmament over it seems to come and touch our hearts, and “thus give us note that through the place we see a place is signified we never saw,” but to which nevertheless we belong. We are lifted up instinctively to the thought and feel the presence of God and seem to hear his voice.

Or we hear it at other times, not in the silence, but in the disturbing and affrighting noises of the garden—the fierce strife of the tempest, the mighty roar of the winds, the tumult of the war of the elements, when the trees are swept by the wind, and the bolts of the lightning fall “as if God’s messenger, through the close wood-screen, plunged and replunged his weapon, at a venture, feeling for guilty thee and me; then breaks the thunder like a whole sea overhead.” The search-

ing God has found us. Trembling in our hiding-place, which is a hiding-place no longer, we seem to hear his voice saying to us, "Oh, man, oh, woman, where art thou?"

Or we hear it, not in the world without, but in the world within; in our affectional nature; in our human love, which when purest and best always seems to have a touch of the Infinite in it, as though it were God himself whom we were trying to reach; or as though it were his voice speaking through the broken accents of our poor earthly affections and saying, "Give me thy heart!"

Or in our moral nature we hear it, in those admonitions of conscience from which we cannot escape, though we try, and which, notwithstanding our efforts, still have dominion over us; or when through that strange and subtle law of association—the sight of a place or a person, the sudden and unexpected happening of an event, a word, a sound, a fragrance, the breath of a flower, the note of a bird—the old past life comes rolling back; and the memory of some forgotten sin, some base betrayal of manhood, some cowardly desertion of principle, some guilty indulgence, revives. Then it is that we seem to be lifted up with fear and trembling to the thought

of a Holy God, and to hear his voice, saying, "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

We hear it again, when we have learned from experience that a life of self-indulgence does not give the satisfaction which we thought it would. We hear it when we meet with reverses and the blight has come into our garden, and the bitterness of death is upon us. We hear it in that sadness, that strange, dreamy sadness, which seems to be associated with success in this world even more than with failure; or when, with the consciousness of our moral defects and blemishes, our insincere, tortuous, selfish, disingenuous conduct, we are suddenly brought face to face with some pure and noble character, some brave and generous action, and wish that we might have done or might have been like that. In all these different ways does the thought of God break in upon us in our hiding from him, and we are made to hear his voice saying, "Oh, soul of man, soul of man, where art thou?"

But sweeter and more appealing than all is the voice of God speaking to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Hearing his voice in the world without or in the world within, the sound of it makes us afraid. We know that we are not

clean and pure. We have broken his laws, and sinned, and eaten time and again of the fruit of the forbidden tree; and although we cannot escape him, we would do so if we could. But hearing his voice in Jesus Christ saying to us, "I love you, I forgive you; no matter what you have been and done, or what you have failed to do, I love you with a love which nothing can change and from which nothing can sever—neither life with all its risks, nor death with all its uncertainties, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers; nor things present nor things to come—from which nothing can sever": that gives peace. It gave it once to a man of the first century, troubled and tried on every hand, and who felt himself to be the chief of sinners, and it can give it now to a man of the nineteenth century.

May you and I, my friends, hear that voice of God! The garden in which we are living is big and beautiful and fruitful. Let us get out of it all that we can; let us try to make it bigger and more fruitful; but let us not try—for we cannot do it—to hide ourselves from God in it, or to find in the garden itself a peace which the garden itself, however big and beautiful, does not and cannot give. We have tried the worldly method;

let us go back and try the old method of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in all our seeking, let us seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and in all our wandering through the garden let us wander through it with God.

MASTERSHIP.

The Master is come.—ST. JOHN xi. 28.

THERE is in this world a genuine mastership which everybody respects and gladly acknowledges. There is also a spurious and counterfeit mastership, a false simulation of the real, which secures no lasting homage and fails to accomplish the purpose at which it aims. This morning I shall try to point out the difference, in my judgment, between them, or, more precisely and particularly, shall address myself to the consideration of the question, How do our masters come? What are the conditions of their coming, and the marks of their supremacy?

First, I observe, the master comes by birth. God sends him. The God who has made men's faces to differ so that no two of them are alike, however closely twinned, has also endowed their natures with diverse germs of power, which circumstances may strengthen or awaken, but cannot create. The greatness or the smallness of every person in mental and moral stature and in the scope of his personal influence, is decided for him at the outset as strictly as it is decided for a

fruit, to use Mr. John Ruskin's simile, whether it shall be an apricot or a pear.

The subsequent influence of external surroundings will determine whether the growing apricot shall fall as a shriveled green bead, blighted by the breath of the fatal east wind, and contradicting its early promise, or whether it shall expand into a tender joy and beauty, exhaling a perfume delicately rich and clad in the sweet brightness of a golden velvet vesture. But the apricot, whether shriveled or ripened, is only and always an apricot, and the pear and the acorn and the pine cone, and their counterparts among men and women.

That people, therefore, differ from one another is not so much due, as in this age of extravagant faith in the power of environment we are apt to think, to the manifold character of their circumstances as to the manifold wisdom of God. No one can exercise a masterly prerogative and power in this world except he has first received it as a birth endowment from God.

Nor does it matter much where or in what place he is born,—the crowded metropolis, the isolated farmhouse, the inland town, the city by the sea, a stable, a manger, a cattle trough,—the great thing is he is born, and if circumstances

give the opportunity and the other conditions are realized, of which I will presently speak, he will in due time be heard from.

That is the first condition—the master comes by birth, God sends him.

The second is by baptism, and when I say by baptism, I use the word as it is used in connection with Jesus Christ, which signified in his case not the acquiring of new power, but the awakening of his human consciousness to power already possessed. When, therefore, I say that baptism is the second condition of mastership, I mean the coming to the consciousness of what one is and has, and of what he can do with it. Otherwise, although he may have it, he will have it as though he had it not.

You remember the story which Thackeray tells in his "Vanity Fair," of the great, strong, stalwart fellow, who is cuffed and kicked and tormented and shamefully treated by every boy in the school, and does not dare to resent it. Upon one occasion, however, driven to bay and exasperated beyond all endurance, he turns and faces his foe and fights and, to his own surprise and that of everybody else, conquers. From that day on, having been baptized or born again into the consciousness of the strength he possessed,

the coward is a hero, the champion of the school, a soldier in the army, an officer in the regiment, a veteran in the service. He finds his true career in this world, and moves with distinction in it, only when he has first found and taken possession of himself.

The incident is fiction and yet it is real life. Are there not many like him whose faculties, after slumbering in undisturbed repose, have suddenly been awakened by some new need or emergency, some new responsibility, some public calamity perhaps, like the breaking out of a war; and who except for that would never have known what they were and what they could do, and never would have done it? Except for that they would have remained unknown to themselves and the world—clerks in little village stores, like the one in Illinois; teachers more or less obscure in military academies, like the one in Louisiana; lieutenants in the army, occupying obscure military posts, like the one in Oregon or Texas, or quiet country gentlemen living upon their farms, like the one which is now the shrine of the American people, on the banks of the Potomac, in Fairfax County, Virginia.*

*This sermon was preached on the 22d of February, and the references here are to Generals Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and Washington.

The occasion did not make these men. God made them, for the same occasion confronted others also, but the occasion came and awakened them and made them see and feel and take possession of themselves—revealed them to themselves, and they then revealed themselves to the world. As it is in affairs, so is it also in letters. The Trojan war did not make a Homer, but it awakened him, made him see who and what he was, as he had never seen before, and then the world in the immortal Iliad saw !

The exile from Florence did not make a Dante, but it made him conscious as nothing else before had done of the genius hidden within him, which conscious possession of his genius enabled him to produce that Divine Comedy “that startled Europe from her somnambulism of a thousand years.”

The Bedford Jail did not make a John Bunyan, but it made him see and know as he had never known before who John Bunyan was, and, coming thus to the consciousness of his deeper, stronger self, he produced the wonderful story which has cheered and comforted so many Christian hearts in their pilgrim progress toward the Celestial land.

Yes, in letters as in affairs, in every line of

conduct, in every department of thought, it is not from the men who have power merely, but from the men who know they have it, that the greatest achievements have come. By some fact or incident they have been made to perceive it, to know it, to feel it, to use it. Their confidence in what they could do has given them courage to do it, or at least to attempt it. They were not intimidated as other men by its perils and risks. They have crossed the trackless waters, explored the unknown continents, led the way into a darkest Africa or out of a darkest England, and their faith in themselves has given to others faith.

It is true that often, very often, men have been mistaken, have had altogether too much confidence in themselves, and so have egregiously failed. But is it not equally true, on the other hand, that men have often failed to do what they might have done because they have not had enough confidence in themselves? They have never done much good in the world simply because they never knew how much good they could do. They have not perceived or realized the power that God has given them. They are not up to themselves and the measure of their opportunity, like a man who has made a fortune

but does not know how to use it, and does not see the great and potential blessing in it.

These then, it seems to me, are the conditions of mastership: First, the possession in fact of some born gift or a capacity; and second its possession in consciousness. The person must be born with power, and then born again, or baptized, and awakened into the knowledge of that power.

But this is not all. For after a person has found himself, who he is and what he can do, he must then sink, lose, obliterate himself in some great work or cause that takes him outside of himself, and this is the third condition—burial, or death.

Some great cause must come, some great duty appear, which touches and kindles his heart and lifts him out of himself; which more than himself he loves; and to which with a consuming passion he must devote himself. There is no personal mastership or greatness in this world, nor ever will be, without it. Some great and strong enthusiasm must come and take possession of the force, the talent, the genius, that has been awakened in him—patriotism, truth, righteousness, the welfare of his country, the good of his fellow-men, or the spread of the

Christian Gospel, and the establishment on the earth of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Then he may be strong and know it, and yet know it all the while as though he knew it not—no vanity, not the slightest, no arrogance in his knowledge. With St. Paul he may honestly feel how far short he comes and how unworthy he is, because, like St. Paul, he is not measuring himself with other men in this world—that were a petty and contemptible task—but with the great work, the great cause or calling which is forever before him beckoning him on and on, to which with genuine consecration he has given and devoted himself, in which he has buried himself.

And yet he is not buried or does not stay buried, for from that grave he rises with the glory and greatness of the cause itself shining forever upon him. He becomes identified with it; he seems to be to his fellow-men the incarnation of it, and thereafter, when they think of it, they always think of him who has embodied it to them, and all the ideal virtues which it represents are a halo around his brow, and all the great blessings for which it forever stands are a chrism upon his head.

The measure of their love for it is their love for him, and the enthusiasm which it inspires is

kindled by his name. This is the king's highway, on which the greatest of the earth have walked. The history of the world is simply the history of their influence and of what they have done. Other men and women have seemed to take some part in it and have taken some part in it, but it was these masters, these great ones, who inspired them, lifted them up, sent them on, and helped them to do their work.

“ A cork float danced upon the tide we saw
This morning, blending bright with briny dews.
There was no disengaging soaked from sound,
Earth product from the sister element ;
But when we turn the tide will turn, I think,
And bare on beach will lie exposed the buoy.
A very proper time to try with foot and rule,
And even finger, which was buoying wave,
Which merely buoyant substance ; power to lift
And power to be sent skyward.”

Like that of the little cork float is the power of the many, the power to be lifted, to be taught, to be guided, to be sent. The power of the few is to lift the multitude and to send them skyward.

“How quickly and readily,” says Emerson, “do we enter into their labors and take possession of them.” “Every ship that comes to America got its chart from Columbus ; every novel is a debtor to Homer ; every carpenter who shaves with a foreplane borrows the genius

of some forgotten inventor ; life is girt all round with a zodiac of sciences, the contributions of men who have perished to add their point of light to our sky.”

This, then, is the way the masters come. First by birth endowment. God sends them. Then the baptismal awakening and consciousness of themselves. Then the effacement, burial of themselves in their consecration to some great calling of God. Birth, Baptism, Burial.

The American people have recently been reminded of some great names * which suggest the conditions of a masterly character to which I have referred. God gave them power, rare power ; the occasion came and awakened it, and then—it is no rhetorical exaggeration to say—with a rare sacrifice they merged and buried themselves in their country’s cause, and the glory of this nation hereafter among the nations of the world will be their glory, too.

I have in my mind this morning one pre-eminent Master—the master of us all—who, by his influence in this world, has proved himself to be such. The story of his wonderful birth is not incredible to me. It seems to fit and be congruous with his still more wonderful character.

* Generals Grant and Sherman.

The story of his wonderful baptism—the heavens opening and a voice giving divine commission to him as the eternal Son of the Father—is not strange to me, and if I had been standing then on the banks of the Jordan, knowing what I now know of the wonderful power of Jesus Christ, I would have expected to hear such a voice.

The story of his wonderful death—his meek and quiet submission, although, as he says, and I believe, he might have summoned legions of angels to his defense; the mocking, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the cry from the Cross, “It is finished,” the darkness over the land, the veil of the temple rent in twain—it is what I would expect, it is the kind of death that I would expect one so supremely great to die, who had come to give himself for the world, and who, in consequence, has been ever since the world’s Master.

Yes, the Master is come, and calleth for thee. Do you hear? Will you heed? Like the member of the Bethany household, to whom the words were first addressed, will you arise quickly and go to him?

WALKING WITH GOD TO-DAY.

And Enoch walked with God, and he was not : for God took him.—GENESIS v. 24.

THIS verse appears in the earliest extant genealogical table. It is called the book of the generations or descendants of Adam. A very great longevity is attributed to these descendants ; each of them is stated to have lived many hundreds of years—one of them nearly a thousand. That they actually did live as long as that, some of you might find it a little hard to believe. Nor is it, in my judgment, important that you should believe it. It would not do you any good nor help you if you did ; and yet the Bible is meant to help you. How does it help you here, and what is the lesson taught ? If you will read the chapter you will find that it is a record of many very long lives—Jared, and Seth, and Enos, and others—which, although so long, ended at last in death ; and of one relatively very much shorter life, Enoch's, scarcely more than one-third as long, which did not end in death. And this is the reason given : “ Enoch

walked with God” ; and this is the lesson taught, that the life which walks on earth with God, although in comparison with others it may seem to be much shorter, does in fact outlive them all, and is longer, for that is life, indeed, a life that has no death in it, a life that does not die. It is of that deathless life that walks on earth with God that I desire this morning to speak.

Walking with God : the phrase to-day has an obsolete sound, and the thing itself seems strange ; and as we hear it spoken our minds go back to the past, and we think of apostles and prophets and martyrs and the old-time saints and hermits and recluses and anchorites, when the world was not so big, and its affairs were not so numerous, and its interests were not so absorbing. Then indeed it was possible for men to go off somewhere by themselves and search and study the Scriptures, and read their books of devotion, and watch and pray and meditate all day long and reflect on things eternal. Then indeed it was possible for men to walk with God, and they did walk with God, and if we had been living then, we too might have walked with God.

But we are living now, and the situation is

different, is altogether different; and here in New York City, for instance, with all its push and rush and drive, and all its social demands and all its business exactions, its numerous affairs and cares, that have to be constantly looked after, and which, if not constantly looked after, will surely go wrong and astray, and perhaps get hurt and wrecked, and we too get hurt and wrecked—here in our New York City life, how can we walk with God? Is it not simply out of the question? Say our prayers all day? Why, we have scarcely time to say our prayers hurriedly and perfunctorily for a few moments in the morning before we rush down-town upon the rapidest transit that we can find, and throw ourselves again into the maelstrom there.

Now this may all be wrong, unwise, unhealthy, undesirable; we may wish that it were not so; but it *is* so, and how are we going to change it? Well, we cannot change it; and if we are to walk with God to-day, we must learn to do so under those conditions which the life of to-day imposes, for we cannot get out of the present and we cannot reproduce the past. And not by trying to go apart from temporal duties and things,—that is impossible,—but while dwelling in them, we must manage somehow to be quick-

ened and helped and guided and gladdened by things that are eternal.

And so we may be, and not by going apart, but here and now where we are, in the very thick of affairs, with all their crowding and pressure, with all their racket and noise—we may hear the voice of God, and find and feel and have him, and walk in communion with him. How?

A good many people seem to have the notion, and I suspect some of you have, that in order to get where God is they must do so by making a journey of some sort, by a process of locomotion, by going to somewhere else than where they are at present. "God is not here," they say; "God is there, or there; or, if he is here, he is not so much here as he is there"; not so much down-town in the office of the lawyer or the banker, or the counting room of the merchant, or the floor of the Stock Exchange, as he is up-town in one of the churches on Sunday.

And as long as they feel that way, of course they do not try very hard—perhaps do not try at all—to find him in the office, or the shop, or the bank, or the counting room, or on the floor of the Stock Exchange; for what is the use of trying to find him when he is not there, or is not much there? There is no use; and as a result

of this localizing of God and going on journeys to meet him, there has come to be a localizing, or what I may call a provincializing, of religion, as though it were something that did not appeal to the real life of the world, but something to be done and practiced outside of it, or more particularly outside of it, at particular times and seasons, when we get sick or when we are in distress or trouble, or when we think that we are going to die—a local thing, a sectional thing, a provincial thing, to be taken up and used when the occasion comes, and then laid down and carefully put aside until the occasion comes back again.

And looking at religion in this provincial way, men speak of it with a provincial speech; as when we hear them say, and we not infrequently do: "Business is business, and religion is religion; they belong to different spheres, have different rules of conduct and different standards of judgment, and they must not be confounded; for business is business, and religion is religion." Well, the man who talks that way may know something of what business is, but he has not the faintest conception of what religion is. For religion does not mean to walk *without* God on the world's great noisy thoroughfares six days

out of seven, and then for a few hours on the seventh to walk *with* God.

No ; what religion tells us is this : that God is everywhere, equally everywhere ; just as much in the office, the bank, the store, the shop, the counting room, the drawing room, the ballroom ; just as much on the floor of the Stock Exchange as he is in St. Bartholomew's Church or in any other church. And why ? Because *you* are there, and where you are, God is ; the place in which you dwell is consecrated by you, or by the God who is in you. It is helpful, indeed, most helpful, to turn aside at times to some particular place—the closet of prayer, the church—and there to think about God ; and the place or the building devoted to that is a sacred place and a consecrated building ; but you must be careful not to consider it consecrated in such manner that when you go away from it you go away from God.

No, no. God goes where you go ; where you journey, he journeys ; where you walk, he walks ; where you are, he is ; “in thyself is God,” is the teaching of the Christian Scriptures—“Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into the heavens to bring him down from above ; who shall descend into the deep to bring him up

from beneath ; in thy mouth, in thy speech, in thy heart, in thyself is God." Keep your heart pure, keep your thought pure, keep your speech pure ; when you go to the public banquet, when you go to the private dinner, when you linger around the table after the ladies have withdrawn, and engage in friendly and familiar talk and tell your stories there, keep your thought pure, keep your speech pure, let no unclean communication, suggestion, or insinuation come out of your mouth. There is the place to walk with God, not here ; there at the dinner table is the place to walk with God, and that is the way to do it.

Or when you have withdrawn, you women, and are talking about your friends and gossiping about your neighbors, and are tempted to tell little scandalous stories about them, refrain and chasten your tongue, have a care to your speech, put charity into your heart ; that is the place and way for you to walk with God.

And so throughout all life, my friends, throughout the whole range of conduct ; as you meet one another in trade, in society, in managing your affairs, ordering your households, projecting your plans, making your big business deals, and trying to enlarge the scope of

your calling and to make it a more profitable and a more fruitful thing—but I need not specify ; everywhere there is a voice divine within you ; you can hear it if you will—be true to it and let it speak. There is a light divine within you—be true to it and let it shine. There is a life divine within you—be true to it and let it win, though you lose something else, however dear, that you want to have and keep. That is religion, that is to walk with God.

Did you think it was something else, something different from that ? that it was a rapturous, beatific, ecstatic sort of thing, possible for people who lived in the olden time when the world was not so big, and possible for some people now perhaps, who, like clergymen and others, are supposed to live a little apart from the real life of the world—but, situated as you are, hardly possible for you without making a radical change in your circumstances which you are not able to make ? No, no. The path on which to walk with God is just that plain, practical, prosaic, commonplace path on which you are walking every day. And walking there with purity, with truth, with honor, with high character, you are walking with God just as much as any apostle or prophet or martyr ever did,

or any Scriptural hero or any traditional saint.

I look forward to the last great day, and it seems to me I can see one coming up to the gates of the beautiful city. It is not an angel or a seraph with shining robe and a crown on his head and a golden harp in his hand, making sweet and rapturous music as he passes along. It is not a saint out of the calendar, with a halo around his brow, who looks as though he had just come out of the oratory after long prayers and fastings and vigils. It is the image and form of a man, who looks as though he had just come out of the shop or the office or the counting room at the end of the task of the day—and the dust of toil is on his clothes, and the marks of work are on his hands, and the lines of care are on his face ; but he seems to hold up his head as though he had not wronged or defrauded or slandered his neighbor, and there is a look in his eye which seems to say : “ I have been square and honest and true with my fellow-men ” ; and I ask, Who is this man, and why is he here ? and I seem to hear a voice which says : “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and let him come in and enter, for this man has walked with God.”

Yes, that is to walk with God. It is just to cast ourselves upon God and to try to be loyal and true, wherever we are, to the light divine within us, to the life divine within us, and to let it win and shine. Hard? Oh, yes; it is very hard, and sometimes costs us very much; but all high living is hard, and it is just as feasible and possible to-day as it ever was in the past.

Now, let me say, as briefly as possible, just two or three things about this life that walks on earth with God.

And, first, it witnesses to its own reality, and proves itself by itself and needs no other proof. How do we know that the physical life is a reality? Because we are living the physical life, because we are physically alive. How do we know that the mental life is a reality? Because we are living somewhat the mental life, because we are mentally alive.

There may be somewhere in the universe some other form of life than the one which we are living, but if there is we do not and cannot know it, and if we should hear it spoken of and described, it would be but a name or a word, mystic, nebulous, without any meaning. There may be in the universe somewhere such a thing as angelic life, angel life, but we do not know what it is and

cannot know what it is. Why? Because we are not angelically alive, we are not angels; and if we are to know that the angel life is real, it can only be by having the angel life living in ourselves. That is the way to know, and the best, if not the only, way to know that the God life is real. The man who does not live it much is the man who does not believe in it much. It is to him but a name; God is to him but a name, full of sound, and perhaps fury, but signifying nothing. But to the man who does live it, who tries in the midst of common work and task, business engagements and social fellowships and private conversations, to be obedient and true to what is purest, noblest, and best within him—not best at the moment, it may be, but ideally best—to him God is very real, and the life of God in the soul is real, and he believes it because he lives it, and he needs no proof to confirm it, no argument to make it sure; it witnesses to its own reality. It witnesses also to its deathless reality. “If a man die, shall he live again?”

Thousands of years ago that question was asked, and who since, by argument or by demonstration, has answered it, or who has come back from beyond the grave to give the answer to it? And yet for you and for me that is fast becom-

ing the greatest and the intensest of all questions, which, as we see our friends go away and realize that we ourselves will presently have to follow, breaks forth at times into a bitter cry that almost breaks the heart. Yet where is the answer found? Science says, It is not in me. Scholarship says, It is not in me. Philosophy says, It is not in me ; I may suggest an answer, may make it seem most probable that human life goes on and is not conquered by death, but conquers and overcomes it; but fully, clearly, assuredly the answer is not in me.

But why look to philosophy, why summon scholarship to help? In ourselves is the answer. Living or trying to live day after day, hour after hour, in obedience to what is purest and best and divinest within us, the assurance strengthens, grows, till it becomes more certain than any fact in history, than any truth in philosophy, than any law of nature, as certain as ourselves, that it is an indestructible life ; that, whether long or short, God has it, holds it, keeps it, and that it can no more die than God himself can die.

Then it is no longer hard, but easy, to believe in the declarations of the Bible and the testimony of Jesus Christ, for the testimony of Christ is

confirmed in us. Then our human existence here, this rapidly flowing current, seems not like a dark river of death rushing out and exhausting itself in loss, but like a river of life, coming as from under the throne of God, deep and wide and broad, going down out of sight for a little while and buried in the earth, but appearing, rising again as a purified stream, and flowing on and on with larger scope and volume upon the other side. Then do the apparent inequities and perplexities and strangenesses of human life seem more clear, and in the midst of trial and loss and sacrifice we will cast ourselves upon the God within us and wait for some diviner light, some diviner life to come. To some, as we see things, it seems to come too soon. And we can ill afford to lose them.

We can think of such a one this morning,* for he did help us; he helped us very much, and we would have kept him with us; but in the prime of his manhood, in the very joy and flush and vigor of his work, one morning he was not; he walked with God, and God took him, and God has him. He had him here, and he has him there, and keeps him and holds him there; for it would put us to permanent moral and intellectual

* Preached the Sunday after the death of Phillips Brooks.

confusion to believe that such a life can go out. God keeps him there in the fullness of his deathless personality, and as a quickening and living influence he also keeps him here to help us, while we linger behind, to walk on earth with God

THE MORAL CONFLICT; AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

There was war in heaven.—REV. xii. 7.

THESE words, as I understand them, do not refer to the future—their reference is to the present. The war of which they speak is a war here and now, and the heaven of which they speak is a heaven here and now. For what is heaven in the Bible use of the term? Not primarily a place, but a state or condition of being; or, if it be a place, it is a place where God is supposed to live and dwell, and God may live in us here and does live in us here. He lives in us here and now, however, not fully and continuously, as we hope he will hereafter, but partially and imperfectly, with fitful gleams and flashes. His life in us now is associated with struggle; it involves effort and fight. There is war in it, and yet just so far as his life is in us it is heaven, and the declaration of the text I take to mean that the effort or fight which we make here and now to keep and assert the life of God within us, or to keep and assert it in the world at large, is

heaven's fight, God's fight, God's war. Let us make that thought our theme.

And first let us note the fact, commonplace enough, that all the moral and spiritual progress, and all the mental progress, which men have reached in this world, they have reached through warfare, and that conflict always has been and is now the condition, the inexorable condition of growth. Man, I suppose, might have been made to grow in wisdom and in goodness without conflict, or he might have been made in these respects full-grown at the outset—wholly wise and wholly good, and we wonder sometimes why he was not, but he was not, and he has had to struggle and to fight every inch of his way. Browning, you remember, describes his status thus :

Lower than God who knows all and can all ;
 Higher than beasts which know and can so far
 As each beast's limit, perfect to an end,
 Nor conscious that they know, nor craving more ;
 While man knows partly but conceives besides,
 Creeps ever on from fancy to the fact.
 And in this striving, this converting air,
 Into a solid he may grasp and use,
 Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone—
 Not God's, not the beasts' ; he is , they are.
 Man *partly* is, and *wholly*, hopes to be.

That is not only fine poetry, it is hard fact, as

you and I have found out, and however else or otherwise we might have been made and placed, we have been in reality so made and placed and circumstanced in this world that conflict is the condition, the inexorable condition, of growth.

But why engage in the conflict? why, when it is so hard, should we make this effort to grow in moral and spiritual stature, to make ourselves good and better, to make others good and better, to make the world and ourselves stronger, purer, wiser, freer from the moral entanglements and the moral enslavements of sin? Why, I say, when it is so hard, should we make the effort to grow, and without abatement keep on making the effort? If we could only reach that desirable consummation, that fullness of moral stature, by making a little effort and doing a little work and giving a little thought and time and attention to it, by a word or a wish or a resolve; then I presume we would all be ready enough to attempt it. But the effort it requires is hard, and the work it imposes is hard, and the task it prescribes is long and slow and militant—a struggle, a fight, a conflict; and this continuous conflict, this perpetual fighting to make ourselves good and better, and to make others good and better, becomes wearisome and we get tired of it;

and why should not you and I just make up our mind to accept the world as it is and to accept ourselves as we are? We are pretty good, fairly good, respectably good; we might be worse; and the world after all is not so bad; it too might be worse, and this continuous struggling, striving, fighting—why should we not stop it?

Well, I will tell you why, and why, when we once vividly realize what it is and what it signifies, we do not want to stop it. It is God's fight; and by that I do not mean that it is the fight that God has commanded us to fight and in that sense his fight—no, not that. Neither do I mean that in some providential way or ways, by various providential methods or means, he is fighting for us, fighting on our side, and in this manner helping us—no, not that, though that too may be true. What I mean is this, that God is fighting *in* us, not for us merely, but *in* us; that every moral progress which we make in this world is God's progress; that every moral victory which we win in this world is God's victory; that when, for instance, for some immediate advantage and gain, or for some momentary relief or easement in an embarrassing situation, we are tempted to tell a lie, or to act a lie, as you and I are tempted every day, we yet resist

the temptation and do not lie, it is the God in us that does not lie—it is God's victory in us. When we are tempted to say a harsh and stinging word, to utter some unkind and uncharitable speech, with a little bit of venom and spitefulness in it, in regard to some neighbor or friend, we resist the temptation and do not do it, it is the God in us that does not do it—it is God's victory in us.

So throughout the whole range of moral action, work, behavior, character, conduct, the holding of our tongues, the keeping of our tempers, the curbing of our passions—patience, purity, courage, self-denial, self-restraint—bearing with patience and fortitude the burdens we have to bear, performing with diligence and rectitude the duties we have to perform, it is something more than patience, courage, purity, duty attempted and done—the name for it all is God, the life, the glory, the victory, the manifestation of God.

In the heaven up there or out yonder, or somewhere in the universe, in which you and I hope some day to dwell, God is revealed fully—knows all, can all. There is no moral growth, no moral progress in him. But here he is being revealed and being revealed through us, and the

moral growth and progress which we make in this world, and the moral and spiritual stature which is reached by us in this world, is the moral and spiritual stature which is reached by God in this world.

Is not that what the doctrine of the incarnation teaches or ought to teach, not simply that in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ is God, but that in *flesh and blood* is God ; in him fully, without moral limit, without moral obscuration, and yet in us too, in flesh and blood, in all flesh and blood—that that indeed is the treasure which these bodies hold—God, which day after day we may look and search for and dig and delve and toil for, and in these bodies find.

Now as long as we do not know that that is the treasure which these bodies hold, that that is what the moral life which we have within us means, that that is what it is, we are like a man who possesses but possesses ignorantly a valuable piece of land. There is gold in it but he does not know that there is gold in it, or does not know gold when he sees it. He knows it when he sees it refined and purified and assayed and separated from the baser metals with which it is associated, but he does not know it in the

quartz or in the sand, and he thinks that what is really gold is simply muddy rock or yellow dust and dirt; and why should he spend his time and strength in digging up this yellow dirt and dust? But an expert comes and tells him that that yellow dirt is gold, of the finest sort and quality, that the land he owns is full of it, that it is a treasure-mine and that he may be very rich. Then how he goes to work, and with what zeal and industry and patient endurance he works! And the labor which was so hard and difficult before, if not indeed so useless, engages all his energy now and becomes a labor of love.

So, my friends, do we go on from day to day with feeble, scattering purpose, with halting, broken aim, digging, delving, toiling away at the moral life within us; but it is a long and hard task, and we get tired and discouraged, and seem so often to accomplish nothing, and it hardly seems worth while. But Jesus Christ comes and shows us what it is—that moral life within us; shows us what it means; that that moral life which we have within us is God—the God who made and governs the worlds; that that is the treasure, greatest, richest, sacredest, treasure, of the universe, God, which these bodies hold. At present it is mingled with other

properties there, with baser things and qualities, as the gold is mingled with the dirt or embedded in the quartz. And yet the treasure is there, and in everything we do, in every word we utter, in every emotion or passion that sways the soul, in all speech, action, work, behavior, we may, if we try, find it; and seeing and knowing what it is we are encouraged to try.

The task is still hard, and we have to struggle and fight, and so often to fight alone with no one else to see, in our little secret obscurities, in our little secret dwelling-places, with no one else to know how hard it is, no one else to help and cheer us on and applaud us. Yet we see now and know what that treasure is which we are fighting for; and the evil desire ungranted and the evil word unspoken and the self-indulgence restrained and the passionate speech suppressed and the lust of the flesh denied, the cause good and right, that seems so hopeless, helped—it is God; it is the gold, men and women, separated from, purified, refined, coming out of the dirt, or out of the hard and rocky quartz, and making us very rich. That is the treasure which we have within us. Let us see and call it that. Then we shall know what our conduct means, and what our conduct is. Then we shall know what it is

we are doing or what we are failing to do ; that when we give expression to the moral life within us we are giving expression to the God within us ; that when we reveal and body forth that moral life in our flesh and blood, that when in doubt and darkness and perplexity we yet believe and trust in and cast ourselves upon that moral life within us, we are believing and trusting in and casting ourselves on God ; that when we disregard it, and are careless and heedless about it, when we think it of little worth, when we neglect it and throw it away, we are thinking God of little worth, we are throwing away the greatest treasure which this universe can give us, and has given us—we are throwing God away.

Yes, let us so understand it. That effort we make to have the moral life appear is the effort we make to have God, the King in his beauty, appear in our flesh and blood, or rather it is God in us, fighting to make himself appear.

And now, for two or three minutes, let us look at the subject in a somewhat different light. We have looked at it chiefly so far with reference to ourselves ; let us look at it now with reference to the world at large. For not only in us Christian people here this morning is God's war going

on, but everywhere, all over the world, God's war is going on. For everywhere, all over the world, we see the moral life, not very much, it may be, not very strong in some, and yet we see it in all, no matter how degraded, sunken, fallen, low, some moral life we see, and we see it fighting in all. For there is no man, however bad, who does not try sometimes to be good and to do right. And that moral life which we everywhere see is God's life, and that moral fight which is everywhere going on is God's fight. Everywhere, all over the earth, God's war is going on.

Then when you and I engage in that war and conflict, what is it that we do? We are not simply responding to the appeal of man—we are responding rather to the appeal of God in man. The man perhaps does not make any appeal, does not ask our assistance, does not want our assistance, does not send a message to us and say in so many words, Come over here and help me; but God is saying in the man, Come and help *me*. And the less the man himself appeals, the more does God in the man appeal and ask our help. We seem to hear his voice speaking to us and saying, 'The passions of this man are so fierce and strong, his ignorances and his weaknesses are so many and great, that I am shut

up as in a prison, and cannot get out and appear and take possession of him ; come help me to open wide and break in sunder these prison doors, and be no longer enslaved but to become victorious in him.

To try to help those who are trying to help themselves—that is not only an easy but a welcome and pleasant task. We love to help those who are trying to help themselves. But ah, that poor creature in whom God is so fast imprisoned, that vagabond, that tramp, that fraud, that unworthy fellow, in whom the moral resolutions are so weak and the animal passions so strong, whether we find him at some Rescue Mission—a poor forlorn creature who wanders shivering in out of the cold to get a little warmth and cheer and see what he can work us for, or whether we find him as a cruel savage among the red men of Western America, or the black men of Central Africa, that is the man whom you and I are to help. Yes, that is the man we must help, and just because the moral life is so weak so feeble in him, and we seem to hear the voice of God in the man, saying with strong and urgent appeal, I am so fast imprisoned here that I cannot get out ; come and help me. It is the God in him appealing to the God in us.

But then I know what you will say—I have heard men say it a hundred times : After all it is such discouraging work, it is such a disheartening task. We do try to make such persons better, and for a little while we seem to accomplish something, we seem to touch or kindle some little spark or flame of the moral life within them, but it goes out and does not stay kindled, and they are sober and true and honest and pure for twenty-four hours ; then they fall back and go astray again. It is not always so, although very often it is, but what then ? why, for twenty-four hours God has won a victory in this world. Isn't that something ? Isn't it much ? And who knows what inspirations those twenty-four hours have produced, that may linger on and on and echo in that soul, and at last perhaps reclaim and bring it back again.

Cannot you remember, some of you older men and women, what a thrill of exultation went through your hearts when the news came from the seat of war in Virginia or Tennessee that a victory had been won. You knew and the soldiers knew that the war was not over, but it was a victory if only for a day, if only for twenty-four hours, and then the soldiers went at it again and fought for another victory.

So in that moral life, that moral fight which is going on in the world—here in New York City and there in distant China, in darkest, remotest Central Africa, it is something, it is much, if only for a day, for twenty-four hours, God wins a victory; and then we will go at it again and fight for another victory.

And we will not be discouraged if sometimes we are defeated, for it is God fighting in us—the God in us helping the God in them to fight. It is God's fight, it is God's war, and God will win in the end. As St. John from his vision-place looked down upon this earth, at the righteousness which was there, at the goodness which was there, at the moral life, the life of God, which was there, he saw that in that heaven there was war and would be war. But he also saw as in a vision that that war would end in peace and victory. And he heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ. Rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell therein." Who of us can tell what that heaven will be, where there is no war, that ultimate triumph and issue of the moral life within us? but, surely, men and women, something very wonderful and

very great it must be. Let us cast ourselves now on this moral life that is fighting and struggling in us, let us cast ourselves on the God in us ; then some day we shall know what that heaven is in which there is no war.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood ; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.—1 CHRONICLES XXIX. 2.

THESE words were spoken by David the King, and refer to the building of the temple, a structure whose completion he would not live to see, and yet he knew that it ought to, and would in time be built—God in some way had assured him of it. In the light of that knowledge therefore, that assured and confident hope, he devoted himself to accumulating the material which the building of the temple would need, which would in some way enter into its process of erection—the gold for the things to be made of gold, the silver for the things to be made of silver, the marble for the things to be made of marble, the wood, the iron, the stone for the various things and uses to be made of them. That, he felt, was his work in the world and the task he had to perform, and to that task he addressed himself with a very commendable zeal. But was it only his ;

is it not also ours? I am very strongly of the opinion that something like it is ; and because I think so I will ask you this morning to think about it.

First, let us consider what that temple stood for, or what it was to stand for and what it was meant to be. In an architectural sense it was meant to be, and when finished it was, a very imposing structure, and perhaps no architectural pile, or at least no sacred pile, erected since, has surpassed it, unless it be the one which when this was destroyed was built in its place. And none in all probability will ever be erected—no mosque, no basilica, no cathedral, not even the cathedral of St. John the Divine—of more imposing character, of more beautiful and attractive appearance. And standing on some neighboring height, as the Mount of Olives, for instance, when the sun arose and cast his chrism of glory over it—its spacious courts and corridors, its broad expanse of roof, covered with burnished pikes, it looked, as one enthusiastic writer has described it, like “a mountain of snow fretted with golden pinnacles,” or as illuminated with tongues of fire. It certainly was architecturally a very magnificent structure, of which the patriotic Jew might well indeed be proud.

And yet it was not this, its physical beauty and splendor, that made it so dear to his heart. That temple was to him and to all the Jewish people the dwelling-place of God—of the God who had been with them when they were in the desert; who had brought them forth from Egypt and led them at last in safety into the promised land; the God who had fought their battles, and won their victories for them, and who had been from the very beginning in all their history. This was to be his dwelling-place, his palace on the earth, his seat, his throne, from which he would give his orders and issue his decrees, and mold and shape the national life and try to make it more and more the embodiment of himself.

This was what that temple meant and signified to David and to all the Jewish people. And they who helped to build it were not helping merely to put up in their midst a vast monumental pile, whose noble and admirable form would appeal so effectively and so pleasingly to their civic and national pride—they felt that they were helping to build on earth a home for God, and that all the offerings which they made were offerings made to God.

And what those people in that old time tried

to do in their way, you and I and all of us should try to do in ours. Their task should still be ours, their ambition ours, and the purpose that touched and quickened their hearts and set their souls on fire, should also touch and quicken us and set our hearts ablaze. And that temple which we are building or trying to build—what is it? Not primarily an ecclesiastical or a religious structure in the technical sense of the term, as it was in the case of the Jews; our task is not simply to cover the land and the face of the earth with chapels and churches and cathedrals,—that of course is important,—but the task we have to do is something far greater than that. We are not merely to build houses of worship for God. We are to build factories, and warehouses, and produce exchanges, and railroads, and shops, and banks, for God. Or rather we are to see and feel that these and the activities which they represent, our industrial works and employments in connection with them, our social and professional engagements, our buying and selling of goods, our practicing of medicine, our arguing of cases in court, our going out to parties and balls and evening receptions, our meeting together in club-houses—to see and to feel that the whole of our

complex and growing civilization, our diversified social life with all its varied equipment, is not *our* temple merely—to contribute to our comfort and to minister to our pride: but something very much more. We should recognize the fact that our manifold civilization is chiefly the temple of God—that the purpose of God is in it, that the purpose of God pervades it, that it is indeed or ought to be the growing temple of God, and that it is our task or ought to be, to try to make it such and to contribute, each in his way, some needed material for it—the gold for the things to be made of gold, the silver for the things of silver, the marble, the wood, the iron, and the stone for the things to be made of them. But what does that mean? you ask, and in simpler and plainer speech what are these things of wood and iron and stone and silver and gold which we are to contribute to this great temple of God? Let us see.

Here we are this morning, representing different kinds of employments, different trades and professions, and we are placed in different spheres. Some of us are in professional life—students, artists, physicians, lawyers, and clergymen. Some of us, on the other hand, are in commercial life—bankers, brokers, manufacturers,

and merchants. Now in connection with all these different forms of activity there are different duties to be done, and different obstacles to be met, and therefore, in and through them all, different kinds of temptation to encounter. Theoretically and in the abstract these temptations may be the same, but practically and in the concrete they are not the same. They move along different lines, they approach us from different quarters, they charge and assault us at different points of attack. They do not come to me in the same manner precisely in which they come to you, or to put it the other way, they do not come to you in the same manner in which they come to me. But they do come to both of us. Yours may be of the finer, mine of the baser sort; yours perhaps of the spirit, mine perhaps of the flesh, and the moral exhibit made by you in overcoming yours, and the moral exhibit made by me in overcoming mine, may be as gold and silver to wood and iron and stone.

So too with the responsibilities that come to us. Those which are met and carried by you are not the same as those which are met and carried by me. Yours may be far greater and of much more importance than mine; and the greatness

and the value of yours with reference to the value of mine may be as the value of gold to the value of wood and stone. And yet, whatever their value, and however they present themselves, they come to all of us. In our different ways and places you and I have to meet them and bear them, and to work them out and discharge them. And not by doing what others are doing or what they have to do, but by doing what *we* have to do—that is the thing—by doing what *we* have to do, and by doing it faithfully and well, or trying so to do it, we contribute something—not much, it may be, but something—not as of gold and silver, but as of wood and iron and stone, toward that great temple of God which is going up on the earth, toward making this world his house, his home, the palace in which he dwells.

And not only is it our varied personal influence, of different temptations conquered, and different duties done, and different responsibilities discharged—not only is it our varied personal influence which we contribute to the temple of God, although in the task of making this world his dwelling-place that is a most helpful contribution, but there is something more. These different places and spheres yield different

material results of different worths and values, as of gold and silver and wood and iron and stone. And yet, whatever their worths, they are not chiefly ours, but first and chiefly God's. And never, I am convinced—not only because Jesus Christ has said so, but because experience has proved it so—will we hold them right, will we use them right, and never will we fully enjoy them until we learn to hold and use them, not as treasures chiefly which we have gathered for ourselves, but as the material which God has variously distributed and apportioned out and placed in our possession, that we may make contribution of it in some appropriate way, in some needed way, toward the building up more and more of his temple on the earth.

That, it seems to me, is what you and I are here for. That is why we are placed in different stations and spheres, with different duties and opportunities and temptations and responsibilities; that each of us may contribute some kind of material, yet all of it needed, the wood as well as the gold, toward that great temple of God, toward making human life on earth, and all human life on earth, the dwelling-place of God.

We ask ourselves sometimes—who has not

asked himself?—as we look into the deep mysteries of the skies, Are the other worlds inhabited? Those suns and planets innumerable that across the plains of heaven, “we know not whence, we know not whither, in long, continuous procession stray”—are they too peopled with intelligent beings? Possibly they are; it has always seemed to me that probably they are, and that those who inhabit them are not living without God, but in subjection to him—that there in the heavens about us the temple of God is complete. But here is a world, which in its moral and spiritual life, its aims, its purposes, its practical everyday ambitions, seems to have wandered away from God, and is not yet his dwelling-place, as it ought to be, and as perhaps the worlds about us are. Does it mean this, does it have any reference to this, when our Lord is spoken of as the shepherd leaving the ninety-and-nine and going to seek the one that is lost and gone astray? Is there a reference here to our world in its relation to the other worlds?

But whether or not it be true that this is the only one of all the worlds about us where the temple of God is not yet completely built, certainly we cannot be wrong in thinking that if God has a purpose about this world at all, it is

to make it his dwelling-place, and that it is our joy and should also be our task to help to make it such. That, it seems to me, is what you and I are here for. That, it seems to me, should be our life in this world. And what largeness does it give to our conception of life, our trade, our business, our calling, our profession, whatever it may be, to look at it in this manner; and how little, how petty, how narrow does it become—the biggest work and the biggest business—if we do not so regard it!

We try to make it bigger by spreading it out more, with more to do and manage and attend to and look after and think about, with more activities and things in it, but alas! we only succeed so often in making it, not bigger and larger, but only more wearisome and fussy. The difference between one person and another in a little business or a big business seems to me oftentimes to be just this: that while one of them does a few little things the other does a good many little things. One of them writes three letters a day and the other writes thirty, but after all it is only letter-writing. One of them goes to two committee-meetings and the other goes to eight, but yet after all it is only a committee-meeting. One woman goes to five

afternoon receptions and another rushes breathlessly and hurriedly about and tries to go to fifteen, and yet it is only an afternoon reception, pleasurable enough, enjoyable enough, yet not in itself the biggest and sublimest kind of occupation.

But ah, my friends, put God into it; try to feel that the work you are doing in the world—the letter-writing and the committee-meeting and the visiting and the receiving—is the work which God himself has given you to do. Then everything is big and sublime—the letter-writing and the committee-meeting and the social visiting; and you have the consciousness that you are contributing some needed material to that great temple of God which is going up in this world, that you are helping him to build it.

It gives a greater enlargement to life: it also gives it a greater value. Don't we often have the feeling, the sad and depressing feeling, that in spite of all our efforts to make ourselves of some kind of importance we are after all but of little worth and value to the world, and that it would go on just as well without us? And so from the world's point of view it would, and if we are living only for what the world can do for us or what it will think about us or what it is

thinking about us now, we are flattering ourselves with a vain and delusive hope. For the world is far too busy to-day to think very much about us, and will be hereafter too busy to think very long about us. And the people will hurry down-town in the morning and back again in the evening and the streets will be noisy and crowded just the same as now—how strange it seems!—and someone else will be in our place and we will have vanished and gone.

No, no. No one else can take our place now or hereafter. In the thought of the world, in the business of the world, yes—but not in the business of God. Commissioned by him, sent by him to do some special work which no one else can do, to contribute some special thing which no one else can contribute, yet all of it needed—the wood, the iron, the stone, as the silver and the gold, we are building the temple of God, and helping more and more to make the earth his home.

Enlargement, value, and unity will it give to human life, to all our rent and torn and divided human life, when each man learns to take it and receive it and live it as from God. Some will work in one way and some will work in another, some as in wood and iron and stone,

and some as in silver and gold. But they will not be jealous of one another or fight and strike and pull down and interfere with one another. Hand in hand and together they will fly toward the east and gather the spoil of the west, for they will all be workers, each in his place, for God, as sent and commissioned by him to try to build his temple up and make this world his dwelling-place. Not in our time will that temple be built completely, but it will be built some day, and we can help to build it. And not only so, but if the angels in heaven can somehow see and rejoice over penitent sinners here, may not we perhaps somewhere in the universe, we know not where, but somewhere, see the structure finished which we have helped to build, and mingle our voices with the shoutings of those who cry, Grace, grace unto it, when the headstone shall be brought forth at last and the world in which we are living now shall have become the temple of God!

PREFERRING OUR OWN WAY TO GOD'S.

And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!—GENESIS xvii. 18.

SOMEHOW, we know not how nor is it very important to know, the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said that he would make him the father of many nations. That was both a welcome and a credible announcement, for it is always pleasant to be told, nor is it so hard to believe, that one's posterity may become distinguished and great. But there was another part of the announcement which was not so welcome nor so credible, and that was the declaration that the numerous descendants promised him would not come from Ishmael, who was then his only child and quite a well-grown lad, but through another son who was not then born. That was the part of the announcement which he could not receive and credit, or not for a while at least, and as the story tells us, he fell on his face and laughed an incredulous laugh and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him who is one hundred years old? And Abra-

ham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee, and that he, the son I have, might be indeed my heir, and that through him thy word, thy promise might be fulfilled ! Here we have our subject—the disposition of the human heart, now as then and always, not to ignore God altogether, but to try to substitute for the way of God some other way of its own, which, if not better, seems at least more practical and more easy.

Let us look at that for a little while. First let us look at it in connection with religion. We sometimes hear it said and sometimes perhaps say it ourselves, that there is a great religious indifference to-day, that a great many people are not interested in religion, that they do not care about it, and do not very much or very often think about it. That, in my judgment, is a great mistake. People do think about religion, they cannot help thinking about it, they cannot keep it out of their thoughts, and as life goes on and experience deepens and ramifies, they ask religious questions concerning themselves and others—their friends, their neighbors, their children, those they have loved and lost. Where are they ? Where have they gone ? What has become of them ? Why were

they taken away? Will we ever see them again, and when, and how, and under what conditions?

People ask these questions, and these are religious questions.

Or looking out on the world and lifting up their eyes to the starry heavens above them, or turning in their gaze and seeing and feeling the majesty of the moral law within them, they find themselves asking questions concerning God as the Author of the starry heavens above and the Source of the moral law within—who he is, what he is ; if you please, whether he is at all. Such questions people do ask and must ask, and these are religious questions. So that if people think at all, they must think about religion, they must at times move in thought along religious lines. No ; people are not uninterested in religion to-day—it is the one great theme above all others in which they are interested, as they always have been in the past and will be in the future. It is not so much a tendency toward religious indifference which we see upon the part of people at present—religion as a permanent factor in the thought of the world will always take care of itself—but a tendency rather to substitute for the way of God in religion some other lower, cheaper, easier way of their own.

The thing, for instance, at which religion chiefly aims is conduct, not toward the forming of creed, but toward the forming of character; not toward the putting of thoughts and theories into the mind, but toward the putting of purities and charities into the heart, and cleanness into the speech, and nobleness into the purpose, and self-denial and truthfulness and virtue and holiness into the soul, and righteousness into the life. That is the thing at which religion aims, or at which chiefly the Christian religion aims.

But that is hard and the other thing is not hard, or is not at least as hard. It is not nearly as hard to be orthodox as it is to be good. It is not nearly as hard to fight for a theory as it is to embody a principle. It is not as hard to hold a right and true opinion as it is to be true and to do right. And therefore we try to take the way that is not so hard, and in that manner to satisfy the religious instinct in us. And instead of offering up and presenting ourselves unto God, we offer our creeds to God, our orthodoxy, our churchmanship, our soundness in the faith. We offer our creeds to God as a substitute for ourselves. That is so often our way of trying to become religious—our easy, cheap, more appealing way, our Ishmael, which

we try to substitute for the harder way of God, and like Abraham, as Mr. Matthew Arnold says, quoting the words of the text, we seem to say in our hearts, Oh, see our churchmanship, our orthodoxy, our zeal for the faith—let Ishmael live before Thee!

That is the tendency we see and which in our hearts we feel; not a tendency toward religious indifference,—people are not indifferent to religion, they cannot be,—but a tendency rather to substitute creed for character, theory for practice, dogma and doctrine for conduct and life, and for that hard way of God in religion to put this easier and more appealing way of their own.

There are other manifestations of this tendency in connection with religion. Religion, for instance, is a personal thing; it speaks to *you* and to *me* with a Thou-art-the-man directness, and its voice is heard in Jesus Christ, saying, Take up thy cross, and come thou and follow me. We recognize the reasonableness and the nobleness and the rightness of that command, and yet how we try to evade it, we men particularly. We say that religion is good, that Christianity is good, that we ought to support and encourage it and try to establish and maintain on the earth the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Therefore—what?

We will ourselves become members of that kingdom? We will ourselves try to obey and follow Jesus Christ? No, no. But we will take a pew in Church, where the service is attractive and the music good, and we will go there, or we will at least make provision to have our families go. We will send our children to Sunday school, and when they are old enough and sufficiently instructed we shall be pleased to have them presented for confirmation, and, as we call it, to become members of the Church. That is our cheaper, easier way of paying our tribute to Jesus Christ; that is our vicarious way of honoring Jesus Christ; that is our way of saying, Let Ishmael live before thee!

But, my friends, that is not what God requires, that is not the thing he demands; not simply that we should try to make our children follow Jesus Christ—that of course, but something else and more; that we ourselves should follow Jesus Christ. It is not a vicarious allegiance that he wants, but a personal allegiance, a personal obedience, a personal discipleship, and nothing that we offer in the way of tribute to him, no, not even the offering of Jesus Christ dying for our sins on the Cross, can take the place of that.

Let us go on and look at the subject for a few moments, not in connection with religion only, but in some of its other aspects. God is teaching and training human life to-day not by means of religion only, in the technical sense of the term, but by a process which, for want of a more convenient and better word, we may call a spiritual process. By this I mean that he is creating good desires and good resolves within us, awakening aspirations toward something better and more than what at present we are; giving us heavenly visions, putting ideals before us, which we feel to be so admirable, and which, if we only could, we would like so much to obey, and in accordance with which, if we only could, we would like so much to live. Surely we ought to know what that means.

There is no man, I think, however low and clownish, who does not have at times some bright ideals in life, which more or less inspire him, and which if he only could he would be so glad to reach. And why is it—not that he does not reach them—but that so often he does not try? Because he knows that he is weak and wayward and capricious and full of strong passions which he cannot control, and which so often lead him astray? Yes, sometimes it is that, but some-

times there is another reason. Although he believes that his ideal is good and true, and that he ought to try to reach it, he also believes that situated and circumstanced as he is in this world it is not practical to try. It is good, but it will not go; it is true, but it will not work; it is right, but it cannot be done; and when despite all this you urge him still to try he does not heed you much, and like Abraham, perhaps he laughs an incredulous laugh and says in his heart, What an unpractical man you are!

Ah, my friends, it is the way of all of us, too much, I fear, too much. We have our lofty principles, our high and generous aims,—life would not be worth anything without them,—and we love to think about them and dream about them and dwell upon them, and to say to ourselves, how good, how admirable they are! and that if we could, we would like so much to practice them. And perhaps in the shelter and seclusion of our own home we do practice them a little and then, then, oh, God forgive us, we go out among men and into the midst of affairs and we temporize and compromise and sacrifice. The high ideals are laid aside, principle becomes expediency, and a worldly policy our guide. And so again we substitute this easy, cheaper,

lower—or as we love to call it, this practical—way of our own for the harder way of God.

Yes, it is the harder way ; and it is apt to become still harder as we get older, and as the years increase the ideals melt away ; and we often come to regard them as sentimental dreams ; and we laugh when we think that once, when we did not know what life is, when we did not know what the world is, what business is, what society is, we used to dream those dreams. But now we know, we are practical men, and we dream them no more.

In one of the popular tales of Servia there is a story told of a young man who came to the goddess Fate and asked what was the right and noble way to live, for he wanted to live that way, he wanted an ideal in life.

“I will tell thee,” said the goddess ; “go and find and adopt some life that is weaker and poorer than thine, and live henceforth for it, and all thou makest give to it and call it not thine own ; then shalt thou be truly rich.”

And the young man did as the goddess said, and his wealth increased and he prospered, but he had his ideal through it all and he was a happy man. But at last one day he was tired of this, and like Abraham he laughed when he

thought of what the goddess had said and of how foolish he had been, and then he said to himself, "Why, all these treasures are mine, for I indeed have earned them. Fields and flocks and houses, they all belong to me; henceforth I will keep them and use them for myself." He prospered and became successful and then he lost his ideal, and became a practical man, which so often means a hard, covetous, worldly-minded man.

I wonder if that is not the story of some of us. We had high aims at first in life. Can we not remember them, and how we used to dream of the many good things we would do, the benevolent, the philanthropic and humanitarian work; and if money came and we prospered we would use that money for others, or a good deal of it at least? We would not simply enrich ourselves, but would try to enrich the world and make it better and gladder. We thought of the good we would do and we did it—for a while, and we were true to our aims. But after a while as we prospered and made money and became successful, our high ideals and aims seemed to go away, and we came to regard them as sentimental and doctrinaire and foolish, and we laugh now as we think how foolish we used to be, and like the young man in the fable we have

learned to take a different view of our money, a closer, more worldly view, or, as we love to flatter our hearts by saying, a more practical view. And again for that hard way of God we substitute this cheap and more appealing way of our own, and the early generous impulse becomes a covetous passion.

Yes, it is hard to keep the high ideals before us, and to walk in the way of God. It is the danger, subtle and strong, which confronts our spiritual life and which we have to fight. The tendency to substitute for the way of God the easy way of our own; that is our subject. It needs a word more to make it complete.

We have seen God's way of training the world by a religious process; we have seen his way of training the world by a spiritual process; he also trains the world by a providential process, and neither is that way ours. We ask for strength and he sends us weakness; we ask for health—for health to be able to do our work—and he sends us sickness; we set our heart on some dear thing that we want to do, on some dear life that we want to keep, and he takes it away. In many a home this morning, as you and I sit here, a cloud is gathering, and a fear, a horrible fear, is coming, and a strong and earnest cry

is going up and saying, Oh, my God, do not take him away, let him live, let him live before thee and before me ! And God does not seem to hear or seem to heed that cry. Oh, no, my friends, it cannot be that, it cannot be that ; that indeed would be too hard to bear. I believe it to be this, on every hand I learn it, from every side I see it : we have one way, God has another way, and God's way is not ours. In a way of his own he is training us and leading us on and on to something better and more than we could find for ourselves. Though he defeats our purposes he does not defeat us ; and all our hopes and dreams, and all the bright ideals toward which we now aspire will be at last in his way and not in ours fulfilled.

THE TRUE VISION AND THE FALSE SEER.

I shall see him, but not now : I shall behold him, but not nigh : there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.—NUMBERS XXIV. 17.

THESE words were spoken by the prophet Balaam. It will perhaps enable us to understand them better if we try to recall briefly the circumstances of their utterance. With that faith in the power of incantation which is a characteristic of semi-barbarous people, Balak the king of Moab had asked the prophet to come and curse the children of Israel, that so, he says, "I may prevail against them and drive them out of the land." The prophet, however, after laying the matter before the Lord, had refused to obey the summons and had said that he would not go. Whereupon the king sent another deputation to him, saying, "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming, for I will promote thee to very great honor and do whatsoever thou dost desire. Come, therefore, I pray thee, and curse this people for me." But again the prophet refused

and said to the servants of the king, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." And yet, notwithstanding this very noble sentiment, and despite his previous refusals, he did at last go.

The story of the Book of Numbers does not tell us in so many words that he was induced to go by the tempting offer of the king's bribe, but in the New Testament references to the story it is indicated very clearly that that was the reason. At all events, after saying so stoutly that he ought not to go and that he would not go, he went, and was conducted by the king to some commanding height where he could see all the people of Israel spread out in their prosperity on the plains below. And standing there, as the poet Keble has portrayed him, on the top of the rocks of Zophim, his wild hair streaming in the Eastern breeze, his tranced yet open gaze fixed on the desert haze,

As one who deep in heaven some airy pageant sees,
 he utters the words of the text, and looks forward to the time, not in his day but later, when
 "a Star shall come out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of

Sheth." The prophecy indeed was a true one, but as we have observed the man himself who uttered it was not a true man; and this suggests the subject to which I ask your attention—the true vision and the false seer of it.

The first thing I wish to say in considering the subject is this: that God gives to all men true and helpful visions, which, if they were obedient thereto, would have the effect in a measure to ennoble and transfigure their lives. I say he gives them to all—not only to us in Christendom but to those outside of Christendom, who live in what is called the heathen or pagan world. Balaam was a prophet in the pagan world; he did not live in Israel, but beyond the borders of Israel, and yet notwithstanding the fact that he dwelt in the pagan world his prophecy was a good one and his vision right and true. Have there been no other prophets in the pagan world, are there none such there to-day, to whom God has given some vision of what is right, some vision of what is good, some vision of himself? Are all the religious systems and practices and beliefs which at present we find there, the work of imposture and fraud, the embodiment only of evil, and wholly corrupt and false? Some people seem to think so, and if what they think be true,

it is not only one of the saddest truths which the human mind can bring itself to contemplate, but also one of the most difficult to reconcile with our faith in the goodness of God. Think of it: that to all these men and women, the great majority of the human race, in all these numerous countries for all these thousands of years, God has sent no message, has spoken no quickening word, has given no helpful vision, has left them alone and forsaken them as though he cared not for them; I cannot and do not believe it.

I believe, on the contrary, that they are his children too; that he has been mindful of them as he has been mindful of us; that he has sent to them a vision as he has sent to us a vision; that he has given to them a religion as he has given to us a religion; and that while their forms of religion are mingled with much that is foolish, false, idolatrous, wrong, there is also much that is true, and good, and noble, in them. To that extent they have been, to that extent they are, the word, the voice, the religion—yes, the religion, of God, giving some true knowledge and some true vision of him. Their knowledge of God is not so large as ours nor their vision of him so bright; theirs is the light of the lamp, theirs is the light of the candle, ours is the light

of the sun—a richer, larger, fuller, more abundant light.

Yet let us not be too quick to boast, let us not be too complacent. And this brings me to the next thing that I want to say in the treatment of the subject, that while the vision itself may be large and bright, the seers of it may be false; or that while the vision itself may be little and poor, the seers of it may be true. Do you want an illustration of this? You have not far to go.

I refer you to a correspondence that has recently been going on between two great nations, one called a Pagan and the other a Christian nation, one of them China and the other the United States. Read that correspondence, and except for the proper names employed, you would surely receive the impression that China was the Christian country and the United States the Pagan. In the one case, the case of China, you would see an appeal to conscience, the honor of plighted faith, the sanction of sacred treaty. In the other case, the case of the United States, you would see not only an utter disregard and setting aside of treaty, but the following of it up with a law so barbarous, so inhuman, that it should bring the blush to the cheek of

American manhood and make it tingle with shame.

Look at the two countries, China and the United States, and these two things you observe: first, looking at China, a little knowledge of right, a little vision of God, and the seers of the vision true: second, looking at the United States, a larger knowledge of right, a larger vision of God, and the seers of the vision false.

With what kind of consistency, with what kind of sincerity or hopefulness of good result, can we go to the people of China or any other land, to give them in their twilight our more abundant light, our brighter and better vision, when we ourselves are false to the vision which we see?

But you may tell me that that is the way of political life, and what in political life we must always expect to find. Possibly so; perhaps it is too much to expect the average politician to be true to the heavenly vision. Then let us leave political life and look at some other life.

Some time ago a stockbroking case was brought before the highest Court of England for settlement. A member of the Stock Exchange was put upon the witness stand and examined. In the course of his examination he declared that

it was considered to be quite a legitimate principle in business for a person who holds a worthless stock and knows it to be worthless, to sell it out to someone else, if he can, who does not know it be worthless. The Lord Chief Justice of England, in commenting on the testimony, made this terse remark, that if what the witness said was true, then the Stock Exchange of England had apparently failed to master the simplest elementary principles of common honesty. But it may not have been true,—I hope it was not,—and what the witness said may not have fairly reflected the ordinary methods of proceeding in practical business affairs. I am not an expert in such matters, and you know better than I. But what I do say is this, that not only in your world, but in mine, and in the world of all of us to-day, there are apt to be two moralities, two standards of moral obedience, one for use in private, the other for use in public; one for use at home, the other for use on the street; one for use in the personal or in the domestic life, the other for use in the professional or in the business life. What I do say is this, that the high ideal principle in which at heart we believe is apt to be compromised a little and brought down to what we call practical expe-

diency. For you, for me, for all of us, it is hard to be true to our visions, our bright ideal visions, and, which although we practice and embody them so little, we value and esteem so much. We all have those visions, God sends them at times to all of us, none of us are without them, and how fair they are ; how good, how beautiful do they appear !

Standing like the prophet Balaam upon some mountain-top, a glorious outlook comes, a heavenly vision dawns, a sceptre of power appears nobler and better than the power which at present we try to exert. Or in our vast horizon field some star of dominion rises—a dominion larger and more and brighter than silver and gold, a moral and spiritual dominion, a moral and spiritual ambition ; and as we look, we dream of all the good things which we hope some day to do—yes, some day, but not to-day ; we shall do them, but not now ; we shall behold them, but not nigh. For alas, as we stand on our mountain-top dreaming of the good things which we hope to do, the world is standing with us as Balak stood with Balaam, or the voices and the bribes of the world are sounding in our heart—its promises of very great honor, its offers of silver and gold. And the good things of which we

dream and which we hope to do, we shall do them, but not now ; we shall behold them, but not nigh ; and the glorious outlook vanishes and the heavenly vision fades, and coming down from our mountain-top and mingling with the world, the dreams of the good things pass and go and the dreams of avarice stay.

Ah, men and women, you who are hoping to do some good things in the future, now is the time to do them, now while you have the liberty, now while you have the wish, now while you see and know what the vision is ; now is the time to be true to it and the time to obey the vision ! For the vision when it comes again, if it does come, may not be so bright, and the wish to obey may not be so strong. A good impulse resisted is always in a measure weakened, and the voice with which it speaks, unheeded becomes unheard, and like an echo fainter and fainter grows, till in the distance it dies away. How often has it happened that a man in his earlier life, before his moral vision became blurred and broken, has thought of some noble work which he would like so much to perform, of some beneficent cause which he would like so much to help, to which indeed he would like to give his influence, his time, his

money, himself. And he says to himself, I will give it, or he says to himself, I will do it, but not now—some day in the future I will do it, and hereafter I will give it. And he is always never quite ready, and the hereafter is always hereafter, and the vision goes and the impulse goes, and the man goes, and the money—which when he had it was the promise and the potency of so many useful beneficences—goes, and in spite of all his careful testamentary planning and codiciling, he can never be quite sure how and where it goes.

Whatever the many good things that may be said of such a person when he is gone, the comprehensive epitaph that best describes his life and what it was on earth, seems to me to be this: A true vision, and a disobedient seer of it.

So it was with Balaam; so it has been with many another man.

But let us go to the story for another lesson. First, when the message came from the king he would not and did not go; and the second time when the message came, he would not and did not go. But it is very evident that in the meanwhile he has been thinking about it a good deal, and the protest with which he declines the second time is altogether too vigorous, is altogether too

strong. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold I cannot and would not go." The prophet protests too much, the vehemence of his protest indicates a weakening in his moral purpose. It is the language of one who is beginning to be dazzled by, and to yield to temptation. And we would know now, even if we did not have the rest of the story to tell us, that the bargain in his soul has been already closed, that Balak's gold has bought him, and that he would go—as he did.

Does it not have a parallel in human life to-day? A man has a vision of right, the noblest right and the best. The spirit of God has touched and quickened and illumined his heart, and he takes his stand on principle, on high and honorable principle, and whatever may be the consequence, whatever may be the loss, he will maintain that stand. Then some day, some crucial day, some critical day in his life the great temptation comes to him, as it comes to every man, and like Balak to Balaam it seems to say, "I will promote thee to very great honor, I will give thee thy heart's desire, if thou wilt do this thing." "No, I will not listen to it, I will not listen," he says; and yet he does listen, just listen—that is all—but still he is very firm—at

least he imagines he is, and he says in his firmness, "No, I cannot possibly do it; if Balak or anyone else would give me his house full of silver and gold I could not think of doing it for a moment. Could I?" He is weakening a little. "There can be no harm, however, in just thinking about it; just thinking about it, and of all the good things that would come to me, if I were willing to do it, as of course I am not willing"; and he goes on just thinking about it. He is beginning to yield a little. And the rest of his story, is it not told in the Book of Numbers and in that 24th chapter thereof, from which I have taken my text? And the lesson of the story is this, when we see what is good, what is right, let us do it at once; when we see clearly what is wrong, what is bad, let us not think about it.

And one lesson more. We have our bright ideal visions, not only of life in this world but of life in some other world—the world where there is no strife, no sin, no sorrow, no death. We have these bright and beautiful visions, and we enjoy them. We love to hear them preached about, and we love to sing about them—of the "Green Hill far away," "the Beautiful Home beyond," of the "Land of pure delight where saints immortal reign," of the "Sweet and

blessed Country, the home of God's elect, the Sweet and blessed Country, that eager hearts expect."

Yes, we have these dreams, these visions, and we enjoy them; and as they come and float before and touch and quicken our hearts and stir and move our souls, and we think of that heavenly world and wonder what it will be, like Balaam we say or sigh, "Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like his."

Ah, if we would die the death of the righteous we must live the life of the righteous. We go into another as we go through this, and the office of religion is not simply to teach us how to enjoy the heavenly vision, but to teach us how to be obedient and true to the heavenly vision. Then indeed will the joy be a joy that does not go; then indeed will the light be a light that does not fade. Sundays, Mondays, all the days it will sing and shine, becoming brighter and brighter through all the days on earth, till the vision of hope and faith merges and blends at last into the fuller vision of sight.

The whole subject, may I say in conclusion, it seems to me has special application to young men. The visions of early life as a rule are high and bright and pure. Every young person who is

worth anything, or who will ever amount to anything, has such visions. He may not care to talk about them to his elders or his companions, but nevertheless, if he is worth anything, he has them, and in his soul he dreams them. Well, my friends, go on dreaming those dreams. Whatever your line in life may be, political life, business life, social life, go on dreaming those dreams. Let not the world rob you of them, for those dreams of the soul are the visions of God, and the man who has them is clothed with the power of God, is inspired by the spirit of God, becomes more and more the incarnation of God, and is to his generation, the age in which he lives, the revelation of God.

SIN, AND ITS DELIVERER.

And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth and was dead ; and have the keys of hell.—REVELATION i. 17, 18.

THE Book of Revelation is hard and to a great extent unintelligible reading. Its sublime utterances shine out upon the pages of the Bible like the stars in the midnight sky. There the stars are, as everyone can see, and doubtless they are there for a wise and good purpose, but what that purpose is we have not yet managed fully to ascertain. There are some things about the stars, however, not many, but a few, which we do understand, and there are some things about the Book of Revelation which seem to be tolerably clear. It is a book which describes, like Dante's *Inferno*, with weird speech and eccentric simile, the sufferings caused by sin, its moral and spiritual deaths, its blighting plagues and judgments. And these are so appalling even to contemplate, that, to give the writer courage to enter upon the task of narration, he is made to see in vision the form and to hear the voice of

One who has conquered all things, even death and the grave, who can and does deliver from the prison-house of sin and has the keys of hell. Let me ask you to-day to think with me a little while about this pervading purpose of the Apocalypse of St. John, which, when translated into our common speech, is to make us see what sin is and how in Jesus Christ we are delivered from it.

First, the effect of sin. There is, I think, no greater ethical distinction between the present and the past than the different estimates placed in the two periods of time upon the significance of sin. To-day we are a little disposed to make light of it, to condone it, to find in various ways palliation for it, to regard it not so much as a moral evil for which the offender is himself responsible, but rather as a misfortune of which he is the victim, perhaps the innocent and helpless victim. We regard him as the product of heredity, or the creature of environment, or the embodiment simply of some wild, eccentric tendency in our social life, which, in the gradual development of our social life from chaos into cosmos, has not yet been orbéd into order, has not found as yet its true and proper place. And so for various reasons we have come to have in

our modern life not that vivid sense of sin, its hideousness, its shamefulness, its misery, its guiltiness, which the people of other and earlier ages had, and which, as we read their literature and study their story, we find to be one of the prominent and characteristic features of it.

Look at the classical writings of the old Greeks, for example. See how through them all this tragic thread of suffering for moral evil runs. The doom of the man who sins, how sure it is, how inexorable! even when, as in the case of an *Œdipus*, he does not know that he has committed a sin, or as in the case of an *Orestes*, whom the avenging furies pursue to madness, despite the mitigating circumstances of the sin. Consciously or unconsciously the sin has been committed, the moral wrong been done, and the penalty must be paid, satisfaction given, and expiation had. This is the thought that runs through all the poetry of the Greeks, which has made it so sublime, and given such greatness to it; not the delicacy of its artistic feeling merely, not the fineness of its æsthetic perception merely, not simply the loftiness and the elegance of its intellectual tone, but the dark shadow of sin that is on it, the sense of sin that pervades it, the cry of the human soul in its

wrestling with sin, in its tragic endeavor to escape the expiation which cannot be escaped, and which the commission of sin imposes and requires.

As with the noblest literature of the old pagan past, so has it been with the noblest poetry of the Christian past. I have said that the Apocalypse of St. John is like the *Inferno* of Dante. And what is the *Inferno* of Dante, that greatest of epic poems? What has made it so great? Why has it touched so profoundly and had such a powerful hold on the heart and life of the world? The genius of Dante; yes, but something more; the genius of Dante trying to tell in the weird and fantastic language of the theology of the day the story of man as a sinner, showing how awful is sin, what depths of hell are in it, how sure and great is the suffering to which its commission leads. And hence it was that the voice of the old Florentine singer awakened all Europe, aroused it from its lethargy, and appealed so strongly to it.

And as with the poem of Dante, so with that other great Christian poem which is only second to Dante—the poem of Milton, which is not simply the story of sin in human life, but the story of sin in the universe: not simply the epic

of man as a sinner, but of larger compass, of wider scope—the epic of sin itself. This is its greatness, its sublimity, not its dignified movements and stately measures merely, its similes, its allegories, its fine poetic creations, but the deep, awful, tragic sense of sin which is in the poet's soul, and which he has imparted to his song.

So, if time permitted and this were not a sermon which I am trying to preach, with a practical purpose in view, many other instances might be cited, from the literature of the past—from the “Ethics,” of a Seneca, and the writings of an Aurelius, and the “Faust” of a Goethe, and the “Macbeth” of a Shakspeare, and even so recent a past as the “Manfred” of a Byron—all of them going to show how different is the sense of sin in our modern life and literature, and how much less is the significance which we attribute to it. It does not seem to be such a large and active factor in our modern thought, does not seem to enter so strongly into the consciousness of the modern world, and even if we had in our modern society the genius of the old Greek tragedian, or of the Florentine singer, we would not have and could not have their poems and their songs. Some other theme would

inspire them, some other topic touch and awaken the genius in them, for the sense of sin in the modern world would not be sufficiently strong and active to evoke it. And yet in that book, to which the modern world, despite its enlightenment, still looks for its highest instruction in all matters affecting its spiritual destiny; with what severest language, graphic, startling terms of speech is human sin described! And the burden of all its literature, its epic, its psalmody, its history, the burden of its story is this, that sin is death, is hell, and that righteousness only is life. That is the refrain that we hear throughout the New Testament story also, not only in the Apocalypse of St. John, and in the Epistles of St. Paul, but in the gracious utterances of Jesus Christ himself, who, while speaking to men with a love that had never been witnessed in the history of the world before and has never been since, has nevertheless depicted as no one else has done the misery and the awfulness of sin.

And so important did it seem to Jesus Christ that men should be delivered from the power of sin, that almost everything else was of little consequence in comparison with it. It is not necessary, he seemed to say to men, that

you should live a few years more or less, that you should have fine houses and comfortable clothes, that you should have more worldly goods and possessions. These things are important and valuable; get them if you can; but they are not necessary. There is only one necessity—seek first the kingdom of God. It is better to enter into the kingdom of God, halt, maimed, blind, than having all your bodily members—two hands, two feet, two eyes—to be cast into hell fire. What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and then lose himself, his soul, his life? How we like to skip these words in the gospel story as we read it; and yet the words are there, coming from the lips of the gentle and gracious Christ, who went from place to place, from synagogue to seashore, from desert plain to mountain-top, saying to the wondering crowds, that followed him everywhere, “Go and sin no more. Go and sin no more.” And when he saw that they did not heed his words, but went rushing madly on to their own destruction and doom, he felt in his sympathetic soul such a sense of the misery of their sin that his whole frame shook with agony till the blood burst out of the pores.

Ah, my friends, despite the fact that the mod-

ern world is disposed to make light of sin, and condone it, and to say foolish things about it, that teaching of Jesus Christ is true and experience has proved it true; not merely that sin will hereafter issue in a moral state and condition which Jesus Christ and the Bible describe as hell—that of course is something which we cannot now experience—but that sin itself here and now is hell, and that the man who sins is in hell. He may not know it, and he may enjoy it. But, to use the simile of another, is corruption any the less corruption because the worm loves it? Is hell any the less hell because we take pleasure in it? But the pleasure does not last; and sooner or later we find that sin indeed is a scourge, an anguish, a pain, a remorse, a scorpion sting, a serpent coil, a scourging fire, and that Jesus Christ has not too strongly described it. Yes, *we* find it—for I am not speaking of the sins of the Jews in the time of Jesus Christ, nor am I speaking of the sins of the men down at the Rescue Mission, but of your sins and mine,—ah, we have them,—which sooner or later force us to cry with the sinner of long ago, “Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and hell?” Who? Jesus Christ: the hell of sin has a door, and Christ holds the key.

This brings me to the purpose which I have had in view from the outset. I have said that the Apocalypse of St. John is like the "Inferno" of Dante. There is yet another point of comparison. Every part of the "Divine Comedy," as some of you perhaps remember, ends with the word "stars"; for these, as one of his critics has said, are the blessed abodes of peace to which the heart of the poet is forever aspiring, and which send their beams of hope down to the darkest dungeons which he is describing, and give the promise of deliverance to those imprisoned there. So does St. John in his still more wonderful poem, in setting forth so strongly the sufferings caused by sin, give us the vision of one who has the keys of hell, who can unlock the door here, there, anywhere, in this world or the next, and set the prisoners free. Surely just that is what Jesus Christ has done in the past. Let men call him what they please—man, or God, or both—he has opened the prison door and set the prisoners free.

How has he done it? Why, in the same way precisely—that you do it, or can do it. Someone has done you a wrong, cherishes in his heart a feeling of hatred against you. How can you overcome that feeling and get it out of

his heart? Punish, crush, scourge, denounce, hate him in return, and while by the manifestation of your superior strength you may prevent him from doing any further injury to you, yet in his heart he will hate you more and more, and be glad of a chance to hurt you. But go and to the uttermost, with nothing reserved, forgive him, make him through your love for him love you in return, and the hatred—there is none; we look for it, and it is gone, it has vanished like smoke, and the man who has sinned against you sins against you no more.

Oh, you say, that is too hard, you cannot do it. No, perhaps not, but Jesus Christ can and does, and makes men feel that the God whom he reveals, no matter how great the sin, how dark, how awful, even though it be the piercing and the wounding and the killing of the Son of Man himself—that the God whom he reveals is a God who forgives to the uttermost, and loves, and loves, and forever loves. That is the secret of Jesus Christ, by which he has as with a key unlocked the doors of the prison house and set the prisoners free. He has simply brought to bear upon the hearts of men in the past—perhaps you and I do not know much about it, perhaps we have not felt it—this

great and strong power, this almighty power; yes, almighty power of love. And touched and moved and quickened by it, by the power of one who loves them and whom they love in return, they have risen above and conquered their sins, and the prisoners have been set free.

What Jesus Christ has done in the past he can do to-day. Are we under the dominion—not perhaps of gross, licentious sins which the world denounces, and which for fear of the denouncing we avoid, but are we under the dominion of a pride, an envy, a jealousy, some hurtful passion, some worldly and self-seeking ambition, from which we cannot escape? Are there frailties and infirmities and impurities in our life, our thought, our speech, our conduct, our character which we have been trying for years, but trying in vain, to conquer? Is there a vision of right, of duty, of a higher and better life, of a kingdom of heaven before us, which we are not able to enter, but from which, defeated, foiled, baffled, we are forever falling back into a life so low, so sordid, so unsatisfactory that it makes us feel at times as though it were hell itself? It is hell; and as long as we are under the dominion of sin we are in hell.

But let us go and learn upon the authority of

Jesus Christ—what better authority can we have?—that the great and mighty power which is working so mysteriously in the universe about us, and “still weaving its eternal secret visible and invisible around our lives,” is not the power of law, accident, fate, caprice, but the power of an infinite love. And then the fire of love will extinguish the fire of hell and the heart will be touched and purified with a new and nobler passion, and the prison doors will be opened and we, the prisoners, will be free.

Is there someone here this morning, whose conscience smarts with the sense of some great sin he has done, some great wrong committed, the memory of which burns at times like a fire, and which makes him feel that he is unworthy to-day to come and kneel at this chancel rail? Oh, my friend, remember that it is the God of Jesus Christ to whom you come; the God of him who, when men spat in his face and mocked him and pierced his side and broke his heart, said with inextinguishable love, “Father, forgive them”; and he did forgive, and he does forgive, and he is forgiving you. Let the old memory trouble you no longer. Come with bended form and bowed knee and heart to receive the assurance of his love—then go and sin no more.

What Jesus Christ has done in the past and what he does to-day, I for one believe he will hereafter do. Wherever men sin, there is hell, whether it be in New York City or in some other city; whether it be in this world or in some other world. Wherever men cease from sin, in this world or some other world, they are delivered from hell. And Jesus Christ has revealed the power which can make men cease from sin, and will, I believe, at last make all men cease from sin. He holds the keys of hell here, there, everywhere; and I for a moment do not doubt that he will unlock the doors of all hells and set the prisoners free.

You may remind me that Jesus Christ has said that it is an everlasting fire, a fire that is not quenched. Yes, so it is. Does it follow that because the fire burns forever somebody is in it forever? As long as the creatures of God are free—which will be, I presume, forever—they will be free to sin, and with this everlasting possibility of sin in the universe, there will be an everlasting fire in it, ready to break out and burn in the hearts of those who choose to sin. But the perfect love of God can make men cease from sin, and will, I believe, finally make all men cease from sin, and choose not to sin, to sin no

more, and the everlasting prison house will have no prisoners in it. Love, love at last will conquer all and conquer everywhere.

I began my sermon by instituting a comparison between the Apocalypse and the "Divine Comedy": let me so close it. It was a Virgil, you remember, the man of letters, the scholar, who conducted a Dante through the miseries of the "Inferno" and the "Purgatorio" and enabled him to look upon them. But the man of letters can go no farther. It was a *Beatrice*, the symbol of pure and perfect love, who led him through the gates and among the circles of Paradise. Learning, knowledge, high scholarship, culture, are good, but they have not the adequate power to redeem from sin—they simply show us sin. Love alone can redeem from sin. Jesus Christ is love, his gospel stands for love; a love that will at last burst the bars of every prison house in the universe and set the prisoners free. He holds in his right hand the keys of hell, and he will unlock the door.

CONSCIENCE.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day.—GENESIS xxxii. 24.

THESE words belong to a very eventful incident in the career of Jacob; let us see what it was. Twenty years before the date of it he had sinned against and defrauded his brother Esau of his birthright; and now, after the lapse of so long a time, he is returning rich and prosperous to his native land with the expectation of meeting that defrauded brother. And while in his solitude upon the margin of the brook Jabbok—for he had sent all his companions on—he is meditating with some apprehension upon the possible results of that interview, he seems to become aware, as the twilight gathers and deepens and the darkness settles upon him, of the presence of some antagonist both mysterious and powerful, whose grappling form he can feel but is not able to see, and whose name he does not know. It is a long and desperate encounter, lasting throughout the night. Finally, however, his antagonist prevails against him, and by throwing

his body out of joint gets the victory over him, not, however, with the usual result of making him weaker by the defeat, but greater and more—by conquering he blesses him and by subduing him makes him strong. Then when the struggle is over and the night is gone and the day breaks, Jacob perceives that the person who has been wrestling with him is not human, but divine; and he calls the place Peniel, “for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

It is a curious story and perhaps in part legendary, but no matter. It is both human and true, and I want to show you this morning how true and human it is.

“Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him.” You remember the incident related of one of the celebrated court preachers of France in the last century, that when on one occasion he was expounding in the royal presence the seventh chapter of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, in which the writer so graphically describes his conflict with himself, as though it were a conflict between two men within him, “The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do,” he was suddenly interrupted in the midst of his discourse by

the king exclaiming, "I know those two men—I know them."

Yes, and so we do, intimately. How often does it seem as though our human life were not one, but two; as though in addition to the personality in us which is visible and which through speech and conduct shows itself to the world, there were some other second personality in us which is invisible, and which the world does not see, cannot see, which we ourselves cannot see, which nevertheless we feel, and feel at times so vividly as wrestling with us, fighting against us, trying so hard to defeat and get the victory over us? What is it? Conscience? The moral sense? Yes, but what is conscience? It is ourselves fighting with, struggling against, pleading with ourselves—ourselves trying to vanquish and overcome ourselves, as though, I say, we were two selves, or there were two selves within us, contending with one another, listening to one another, carrying on a dialogue and talking to one another. One self speaks to the other self, and the other self replies. One self says, "I want to," and the other self says, "I must not." One self says, "I will," and the other self says, "I cannot"; and so the debate goes on and the controversy and the conflict as between two

selves within us. Conscience? Yes, it is conscience, but again I ask, what is conscience? Books almost innumerable have been written by men to tell us what conscience is. The scientist has tried to dissect it, and the moralist to explain it, and the philosopher to define it, and the poet and the dramatist with suitable speech and action, have tried so hard to portray it upon the theatre boards and to make it live and move and cry, and embody itself before us. In what ponderous volumes of Scotch and German metaphysic and mediæval casuistry and Greek and Roman tragedy have the attempts been made to describe it and to show us in what it consists! And yet nowhere, it seems to me, do we find a better description of it, or a description half so good, as in that old story of Jacob which the book of Genesis gives, and which St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, describing his conflict with himself, seems to have had in mind.

After a score of years—it is a long time in a man's career—Jacob is returning to the scene of his old forgotten sin, and it all comes back and revives, and seems to rise out of its grave again, and Jacob is alone with his sin. Everything else has left him, faded, vanished, gone—

not merely his friends and companions and the consciousness of them, but the consciousness of his greatness, the consciousness of his wealth, the consciousness of the high and eminent degree of prosperity to which he had attained; it has all faded and gone and Jacob is alone with his sin. And there wrestles with him throughout the night—not conscience does he call it; it seems like something alive, like something personal, like the wrestling with him of a man, and he seems to hear it speak to him as with a personal voice, and he seems to feel it touch him, and lay its hand upon him and press its body against him as with personal pressure and touch. And then when the struggle is over and the night has gone and the day breaks, he is made to see and know that it was something personal; that it was in truth the personal God who had been wrestling with him. And that is conscience; that is what conscience is, and why so often it seems at times like some other part of ourself. It is some other part of ourself—it is the God part of ourself, it is God wrestling with us. That is the name for it, and nowhere else in all literature, I think, in Byron or Shakspeare or Dante, as in that old story of Jacob, is it so clearly, so vividly

shown—like a picture—to be the wrestling with us of God.

And that wrestling of God with men still goes on in the world. There are times indeed when they do not seem to feel it very much, as Jacob did not—long times, covering perhaps a period of many years. Like Jacob they are busy with worldly affairs and interests and ambitions and aspirations, with trying to become rich and prosperous and to get on in the world; and that wrestling with them of God, except for an occasional twinge or wrench, they do not feel it much.

But there are other times, and they are sure to come, when they do feel it, when through the suggestive happening of some unexpected incident, the suggestive association of some old place or scene—a sight, a sound, a memory, an anniversary, or when through the working in them of some deep, mysterious force, which they are not able to explain, there is borne in upon their souls the consciousness of sin or of sinfulness—the overwhelming consciousness of it, and it seems so absorbingly real. They had not thought much about it before, they had not minded it much, and moving from day to day among their fellow-men and comparing

themselves with them, it had seemed to be enough that they were no worse than they. But now they are not conscious of their fellow-men—they are conscious of sin, and that consciousness of sin or of sinfulness, their own personal sinfulness, as in the case of Jacob, has the effect to efface the consciousness of everything else. Everything else disappears and seems to drop out of sight and they are alone with sin, their sin; and God seems to come and grapple and wrestle with them, and will not let them go.

Ah, yes, that old story of Jacob in the book of Genesis, how true it is, how human, how old and yet how new! God still wrestles with man. I should not be surprised if he were wrestling with some of you. And it seems like a part of yourself, doesn't it? struggling with yourself. And it is a part of yourself—it is the God part of yourself, pleading with, struggling with, trying to get the victory over the other part of yourself. And some day I think you will see it, that that old story of Jacob in the book of Genesis is your story too; that that wrestling with you of conscience, that wrestling with you of duty, in the voice which says, I ought to, the voice that says, It is right, though perhaps in this bewildering night time when things are so confused you do

not see it clearly, you will hereafter see, when the night has gone and the day breaks, has been the wrestling with you of God.

But let me go on to the concluding part of the story and call your attention to that other mysterious way, through circumstance as well as through conscience, or through circumstance re-enforcing conscience, in which God wrestles with us and tries to bring us at last into submission to him.

“Jacob was left alone and there wrestled a man with him.” So at the time it seemed. “And when he perceived that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and Jacob’s thigh was out of joint.” Is not that too a modern as well as an ancient story? For no matter how men may interpret the fact, the fact itself is obvious enough, is at times sad and painful enough, that some great mysterious force is working in, upon, and through our human life, dissolving its ties and relationships and severing and breaking its dearest bonds and its most sacred unions, and throwing it out of joint. There are hospitals in our cities and scattered over the land, which a generous humanity has provided for broken and wounded bodies—bodies which have been broken by disease

or which accident has thrown out of joint. But ah, where are the hospitals that can hold and shelter the hearts that have been broken and wounded and crippled and thrown out of joint! All over the city, all over the land, all over the earth we find them; hearts, homes, lives which in some way, by a living trouble, by a dead trouble, by a loss, by a disappointment, by a failure, by a want, by a withholding pressure, by a disturbing touch, have been wrenched away from what was best, brightest, dearest in life, and crippled and thrown out of joint.

The fact, I say, is obvious enough, so obvious, so commonplace that it calls for no comment, but it cannot be ignored. And what, my friends, is the explanation and the meaning of it all? Is there no explanation at all? Must we just go on stolidly, stoically, and at times a little bit cynically, doing the best we know and getting the best we can, and not doing or getting much except a little more embittered, and a little more hardened, as the journey of life proceeds? Or may it not mean—looking at it in the light of Jesus Christ, does it not mean—this: that all life on earth, no matter how circumstanced and related, is out of joint until it is joined to the

living God, and that through these many displacements, dislodgments, discomfitures, he is trying to bring it, to bind it more closely to himself, to develop more and more what is godlike in it?

And whatever loss does that, no matter how sharp and painful and irreparable it may appear at the time, will prove in the end, when the struggle is over and the night is gone and the day breaks, to have been our best, greatest, and most enduring gain.

Yes, the story of Jacob is our story too, and God through conscience and through circumstance wrestles with human life and will not let it go—not to hurt and weaken and make it less, but to make it greater and more—by conquering it to bless it, by subduing it to make it strong. At last the conflict of Jacob was over, as our conflict will be over. He said “Let me go, for the day breaketh.” Was it Jacob or was it God who said it? It was the God in him who said it; the God part of himself, wrestling with and conquering the other part of himself, the same God who works and wrestles now in us; the same divine, imperishable God life, which will some day say to this earthly house and tabernacle. “My work in you is done, my wrestling with

you is over, let me go, let me go, for the day breaketh—the day of cloudless beauty, the day where there is no night, the day in which there is no conflict, and no loss ; its morning light has come at last—let me go, for the day breaketh.”

GOING ON JOURNEYS TO FIND CHRIST.

In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.—
ACTS xi. 27.

HISTORY repeats itself, and the history of the Christian Church is no exception to the rule. I want to try to show you this morning that the way in which at the outset it was made to grow, the path in which it moved, is the path in which it has always moved, in which it is moving now ; that in the words of the text we have that path described, “from Jerusalem unto Antioch.”

First let me try to show you what I mean by the terms, or what, as I understand it, is the significance of the phrase. Jerusalem was the place where the religion of Jesus Christ began, and its earliest disciples were Jews, nor did they suppose that in accepting it they became for a moment anything else than Jews. They accepted it because they were Jews, because it was the fulfillment of their Jewish hopes and beliefs. And therefore we find that after they had accepted it, they still retained for a considerable time their Jewish rites, symbols, sacri-

fices, ceremonies, such as worshiping in the synagogue, the observance of the seventh day, the practice of circumcision ; and as Dr. Matheson observes in his monograph on St. Paul, they had no more thought of separating themselves from that old Jewish Church than John Wesley had of separating himself from the Church of England. And singularly enough, he adds, the name by which they were called was just that name of "Methodists," or as it is translated in the Book of the Acts "Men of the Way," which means the same thing. They were, in other words, simply a sect or party, not outside of but in the Jewish Church ; very active but also very Jewish ; and who continued to look upon that religion of Jesus as something which was meant particularly if not exclusively for them.

The time came, however, when they discovered that that religion of Jesus was something larger and more than they had supposed it to be, and it happened in this manner :

Some of their number, it seems, went upon a journey ; from Jerusalem to Antioch, the capital of Syria, which was not far from Jerusalem measured geographically, but socially and politically it was far, very far, and very different from Jerusalem. And yet to their great surprise

they found that the people of Antioch, although they were not Jews, were just as ready to respond to that religion of Jesus as they themselves had been. Then they began to perceive that that religion of Jesus was not only the fulfillment of the hopes entertained by them but of the hopes entertained by others; that it was the fulfillment of all humanity's hopes; that it somehow seemed to touch and quicken and find interpretation in the experience of all mankind, in the universal experience; and that the more it came into contact with the universal experience, the higher and deeper and more did the religion of Jesus become. New meanings dawned within it, new beauties flashed across it, new vistas opened before it, new powers issued from it—the higher and deeper and more did the religion of Jesus appear. And it is a significant circumstance that those who hitherto had been confining that religion to the Jewish race and people, preaching the Word to none save Jews only, and who were simply a sect or party in the Jewish Church, came now into something like a just and true conception of what that religion was, of what it was meant to be, and were called Christians first at Antioch.

That is what I mean by the phrase “from

Jerusalem to Antioch"—the path in which the religion of Jesus at the outset moved, the path in which ever since it has continued to move.

Look at your own personal experience of that religion. Is not your conception of it to-day something larger and more than when you first accepted it? than when by confirmation—or if not brought up in the Episcopal Church, in some other manner—you determined to make it the rule by which you would try to live. You thought that you understood it fairly well. You had your little questions to ask, and it answered them; you had your little difficulties to remove and explain, and it explained them. Your knowledge of it then, as far as it went, was good and true and you did right to act upon it. And yet, as you now look back, what a limited knowledge it was and how much greater now does the scope of religion appear! How much more is in it than then you thought was in it; how much more in the Bible; how much more in Christ; how much more in the life that tries to follow Christ, and how, like some unfolding panoramic vision, has it been disclosing new forms of beauty to you and causing you to perceive new thoughts, new meanings in it! And how has it come to pass

that the Christ whom you see to-day, while all that he was when first you apprehended him, is also so much more? Because you have gone on journeys from Jerusalems to Antiochs, not physical journeys, but mental and moral journeys; you have traveled further in conduct and wandered farther in thought and met with new temptations, hardships, cares, triumphs—not new indeed to those who had traveled that path before, yet which at the time you started seemed so strange and new to you.

Yes, you have gone on journeys, God sent you upon them, and from some old Jerusalem home, so dear and sacred to you, some easy and pleasant place in which you had been living and in which you wanted to live, like those early disciples you have been driven away. Some new and foreign Antioch, so different from the old Jerusalem, has become your dwelling place, and there, after a while in that strange and new experience, like those early disciples again, you have learned to see new things in Christ, and to find new treasures in him. He has taught you something at Antioch, something about himself, something larger and more, which as you dwelt at Jerusalem he was not able to teach you, or rather which, while dwelling there, you were not

able to learn. But now you have learned it, and it cannot be eradicated, and no man can take it from you; and although indeed at the outset you received the name of Christ and resolved to follow him and did follow him, yet now you feel so strongly that you scarcely knew him then, and that you deserved to be called a Christian first, not at Jerusalem, but at Antioch. You know now what Christianity means, as then you did not know; you have gone through its struggles and you have come out into its peace; you have gone through the darkness which it sometimes sends, and you have come out into its light; you have fought its battles, and you have won its victories; you know what it is now, and no man can take it from you.

This is the way, it seems to me, in which we learn of Christ: by going forth on journeys to different fields of adventure, to different phases of experience, into the bright days and the dark days, the long days and the lonely days, into all the days, each one of which to some extent is a new and different day; and thus, by looking at Christ from different points of view, we have come to know him better and more.

Ah, my friends, I love to think—I do think—that that is what the journey of life is for, from

childhood to youth, to middle age, to old age, that strange and mysterious journey which you and I are taking, with so many strange and mysterious happenings in it which we cannot explain or prevent—that that is what it is for. I love to think, and I do think that that is why God has sent us upon it; not to avoid all the rough things, nor to meet with only smooth; not to gather fortunes and successes and to have a good time and prosper; but that by going from Jerusalems to Antiochs, from old experiences to new, from one way of living to another, from the mountain-top to the valley, or out on the open plains, we may find new treasures in Christ; so that when the journey of life is over we may in some real and true sense deserve to be called Christians.

Now, having looked at the matter in connection with our personal experience, let us look at it for a little while in connection with the Christian Church at large. The Christian Church to-day must not dwell at Jerusalem. Let me show you what I mean. There are some persons who seem to think that the Christian religion as such should have nothing whatever to do with politics, with great political questions, with great economic questions, scientific, social, financial, com-

mercial questions—questions so strongly agitating the life of the modern world and stirring it down to its depths. They think and teach that the Christian religion should have nothing to do with these things, but that shutting itself up in some narrow sphere and circle of its own, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and dwelling at Jerusalem and saving men's souls for heaven—it should have nothing to do with the real life of the world.

Ah, no ; the Christian religion must not dwell at Jerusalem, or not exclusively there. It must go forth into the great, busy life of the world, not to discuss political questions and to tell men how they should vote ; not to discuss economic or commercial questions and so become a partisan and a disputant in the controversies of modern life. No, no, not that, not that, but something else and better. Its aim should be to try to make men understand that the Christian religion is wider than some would make it appear ; that it includes within its scope Antioch as well as Jerusalem, business, trade, politics ; that the field of religion is the world, and that every word which a man speaks on any subject, no matter where he speaks it, or on what subject he speaks it, is a religious word,

is a Christian word, and that he is to that extent a religious man, a Christian man, there at Antioch. This is what I mean when I say that the Christian Church should go into the life of the world ; not simply to take religion there, but like those early disciples when they went down from Jerusalem to Antioch, to find religion there, in all the moral efforts and struggles and aspirations of the world. It should recognize and teach that all the moral qualities—purity, patience, truthfulness, gentleness, charity, kindness, honor, honesty, unselfishness—are religious qualities, are Christian qualities, and that the men and women who exhibit them in the common life of the world are religious men and women, are Christian men and women.

Oh, let the Christian Church to-day go and gather up all these people for Jesus Christ ! Let it go and say to the student who is trying to find what is true, to the busy man of affairs who is trying to do what is right, who in the midst of temptations and weaknesses is trying to be pure and strong, “ My brother, you belong to Christ. You may not think as we do, but still you belong to Christ, and the moral and spiritual work which you are trying to do is the work which the spirit of Jesus Christ is trying to do within you.”

Yes, let the Christian Church go and claim all virtue, all truth, all goodness, for Jesus Christ. Let it go and teach that goodness is not two but one, that as far as it goes it is Christian goodness, that it belongs to Christ, and thus gradually let it gather up the whole moral life of the world into Jesus Christ. We often hear it said that the great need at present is the unity of the Christian Church. But it seems to me that there is a greater need than that; not the unity of the Christian Church merely, but the unity of life; not prophets merely who can walk about Zion and build up the walls of Jerusalem, but prophets who can go from Jerusalem to Antioch, who can say to the people there, "The Christ we preach and bring is no stranger to you: he is the Christ within you, and while it is his story we tell, it is your story too." Then, it seems to me, will we as a Christian Church have a larger and nobler conception of what Christianity is; we will understand our Christian doctrines better, and how to hold them better in right and true proportion, for we have gone on journeys with them and ascertained from experience their practical worth and value. We will understand better what the Christian religion is, for we have gone on a journey with it, and have found that

it is not only the fulfillment of our hopes, but the fulfillment of all of humanity's hopes. We will understand better what Jesus Christ is, for we have gone on a journey with him and found that he is not only the light that lightens us, but the true light, the universal light, the light that lightens every man that cometh into the world.

THE MAN AND THE PRIEST.

Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there ;

But prophesy not again any more at Beth-el ; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.

Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son ; but I was an herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit ;

And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.—AMOS vii. 12-15.

THE more one studies the Bible, not through the gloss of tradition, but through the medium of personal experience, the more is he impressed with its wonderfulness and truth. It not only reveals God so admirably, it reveals us so fully, the deep and strong passions which are working in us good, bad, and mixed ; the subtle tendencies in us toward subterfuge and sham and self-deception, or the nobler and worthier qualities which at times we exhibit. It opens us up and portrays us, as Coleridge says—it finds us, brings us out from our hiding places, and makes us see ourselves.

I want to call your attention at present to that little view of ourselves which like a mirror the

words of the text disclose, to show you that the two persons mentioned in the text may be found if we look for them, under different names in human life to-day. Who were they? Let us see.

Amaziah was a priest; Amos was a man; an inspired man, to be sure, and in that sense a prophet, but he was not a prophet by profession, did not belong to one of the regularly appointed schools of the prophets, had not received his training and his commission there. And that, to the priest, was reason enough for refusing to recognize him. He had no rank and title, no official standing, and the man, the mere man, to the priest was obnoxious, was regarded by him as presumptuous, and he plainly told him so, and said, "Go back to Judah, where you belong, you mere man, herdsman, shepherd of Tekoa, gatherer of sycamore fruits—go back to Judah where you belong, and do not come here into Israel meddling with our affairs, entering into the very palace of my master, whose court chaplain I am, and speaking words against him." And like another distinguished statesman-priest of a later day, he drew the magic circle of his office, not around himself, but around the throne, and said, "This is the king's court, this is the king's sanctuary; go, oh, thou seer, into

the land of Judah, and there eat bread and prophesy, but prophesy not here at Bethel in Israel any more.”

Amos did not go, but continued to eat his bread and prophesy in Israel, but with his subsequent ministry there I am not at present concerned. I simply wish you to observe that these two persons represent two different types of character, two different kinds of influence, or rather two different kinds of human tendency, which are not only seen in Israel but throughout all human life, and which now as then are so often seen in conflict. The first is the tendency toward what may be designated as officialism—toward the love of name and rank and title and station in the Church, in the state, in society generally. It is a very strong tendency; and it works more or less in all of us. Even here in America where feudalistic rank has been repudiated and feudalistic nomenclature discarded, and where our ways and methods are supposed to be of a more popular character; where a man is supposed to be measured and judged by the standard of personal worth, even here we feel it. For it is not simply a tendency inherent in the old feudalistic *régime*; it is a tendency inherent and assertive in human nature—this tendency, I mean, to

defer not so much to the influence of *what* people are as the influence of *where* they are and the positions which they occupy and the names by which they are called.

Yes, we have repudiated feudalism in America, but we have not repudiated human nature, and human nature is strong. It is stronger than governmental institutions and legislative decrees and enactments. It will assert itself; and with a strange and curious kind of contradictoriness it will sometimes assert itself more fully and emphatically when the attempt is made to repress it. Now as of old, the prohibited thing is the thing desired; what is denied in one way is sought after in another. So it is in America. I sometimes think there is no country on the face of the earth where men love rank and title more than they do in America. They say that they do not, but their conduct is so often at variance with their speech.

Look, for instance, at the profuse conferring of honorary degrees in America by our schools and colleges and institutions of learning, and some of them, too, not of a very high order. And why is it? It must be because the people of America love, not the rare learning, not the high scholarship, which the degrees repre-

sent, or ought to represent, but simply the mere degrees, terms, titles, names, and the poor and empty honor which they confer. And how poor and empty it is, and how little does it mean! In the Church of England if a man receives the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity it means as a rule that he has done something to deserve it. In America, however, it does not always mean that he has done something to deserve it; it simply means so often that he has come to be about forty years old. But it is not only in the ecclesiastical world that we see it; we see it in the social and political world. What a glamour there is in mere office to an American! What a race of office-seekers we are fast becoming! And why? Not always because we are so anxious to perform, and think we are so capable of performing, the duties appertaining to the office; not always either because of the direct and indirect pecuniary emoluments which the office gives and controls, for the same or greater emoluments might be found as easily in other spheres of conduct; but because the office itself flatters so sweetly, so delicately, the instinct for name and title in us, and gives a kind of social rank and standing to us, not otherwise in America so easily to be had. We do not have that kind of great-

ness thrust upon us by our ancestors in America. We are not born into it, or with it, or not so much at least as in other and older and more feudalistic countries. Nevertheless we are very human in America, and this tendency toward what I call officialism is a very human tendency.

Now I am not deprecating all this ; still less am I denouncing it ; I am not saying that it is all bad and wrong ; I am only saying how prevalent it is even here and now, and in our time and country, as in the time of the priest Amaziah. This tendency of deference toward mere rank and title, how strongly we feel it, how eagerly we covet it, how imperiously we try to use it at times, and how, like the old priest at Bethel, we draw the circle with it, and say to those who have it not, "Begone ; you are not of us !"

It may, I say, be innocent enough, it may do no harm either to us or to others, if we properly guard and fend it ; if it does not make us ignore those deeper and sacred ties which bind us all together ; if it does not make us forget that while we may desire legitimately enough to be priests, high priests in society, in the Church, in that accredited hierarchical rank which has always existed in the social, political, and ecclesiastical world, and always will exist, our

first and proper aim should not be to be priests, but to be men ; that a high manhood is always more—immeasurably, incomparably more—than the highest kind of priesthood.

And here is the other tendency which we find in human life, and which Amos represents. The instinct for rank, and office, may be a very human instinct, but the other is also human ; and there is no greater word that can be spoken of any man or of any woman than that he has done some manly or she some womanly thing. All the commendatory adjectives of the language are included in that term, and we feel that there is no higher attainment which we can reach in this world than simply to have deserved it. And how the admiration goes freely and spontaneously forth toward one who has deserved it ; who, like the young son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, when Saul would place his armor on him, has put it all aside, and shaking himself free and lifting himself up to the full stature of his manhood, without the sword of the state, without the weapon of the Church, without social sanction and commission, but with simple, manly courage as his only equipment, has gone and faced and discomfited and conquered some formidable Philistine foe.

The story of human life has many such instances in it, nor are they wanting to-day. Every now and then we encounter them, and to our surprise where we least expect to find them. We read about them in the newspapers, or someone tells us about them, we see them, we hear of them—some sweet, courageous, womanly act, some strong and manly deed, some going into danger and peril, some running of risk for others. “What if I do die?” said Sister Dora, when her friends told her not to go down into the infected ward of the hospital to minister to the patients there, “what if I do die? Death is not bad ; it only happens once and it is sure to happen once ; and these poor creatures need me.” When we hear of such things as these, how admirable do they seem, and how much worthier and nobler does this other tendency which we find in human life appear !

Now, it is just this human tendency, it is just this human instinct to which the gospel of Jesus Christ appeals, which it seeks more and more to awaken and strengthen in us. Have I forgotten that this is Advent Sunday and that I ought to be speaking this morning about that great and memorable event, which at the time of its happening, now nearly two

thousand years ago, seemed to be of such little moment, but which has actually proved itself to be the turning point, the point of a new and radical departure in the history of mankind? No, I have not forgotten it, and I am speaking about it, for what did Jesus Christ come into the world to do? Many things indeed, and the purpose of his advent may be described in many ways, and all of them may be true. He came to die for us, to redeem us, to save us from our sins, to guide and help and comfort us, to establish on earth the kingdom of God and to make us members of it. And yet it seems to me it may be all summed up in this: that he came to touch and liberate and consummate the deepest and the truest humanity in us, came to build up manhood, came to make us men. To save our souls? Yes. To make us Christians? Yes. But we save our souls and become Christians not by becoming anything else or less or more than human, but by becoming human, up to the highest pitch and reach of human stature and attainment. The qualities which he develops are most human qualities. The strengths which he creates, the virtues which he produces, are human strengths and virtues, and the greatness to which he would lead us on,

and the glory with which he would crown us, is, after all, but the glory to which with deepest, truest instinct our human hearts aspire.

And how does he do it? Our way, as we have seen, is very often to say to a man, If you want to be good and great, go to the priest; let him make you good, let him make you great—not to the priest in the ecclesiastical world perhaps, but in the political or the social world; go to some high priest who holds the keys of entrance into that coveted world, who can open the door and admit you and give you name and rank and opportunity there. Or we say, go and try to be a priest, to occupy place and position, where you can yourself dispense and distribute privileges, and where by reason of your titular rank and standing you can have power and exert influence and receive homage, and in that manner gratify the human instinct in you.

No, says Jesus Christ, go to God, directly from where you are, and let his spirit inspire you. You build up barriers, he seemed to say to the men of his day, between yourselves and God. You have your outer and your inner courts, and your holy of holies, into which only the priest may occasionally venture to go; and you have kept yourselves at a distance from

God, or you have thought that he was distant and far away from you. But it is not true, he says; there are no barriers between you and God, and you and greatness, and you and manhood. He is around you, near you, in you, in every one of you—the publican, the Magdalen, the outcast, the sinner, even the little child—let the spirit of God inspire you. Let it grow and blossom in you and bring forth fruit within you; let it touch the manhood in you and make it greater and more—not more than human, but more human, and having more human power, because it is a manhood that rests and builds upon and is inspired by the spirit of God.

That, my friends, it seems to me, comprehensively stated, was the purpose of the advent, of the coming of Jesus Christ—not primarily to make and send forth priests of one kind and another, but to make and to send forth men, and to make them great and strong. And his method was to teach that men are great and strong only when they are imbued with the spirit of God, when they receive their inspiration not from below but from above, and when they hear in their hearts that voice of God which all might hear if they would.

That is the power, the power of an inspired

manhood which was needed then, which is needed now, which is always needed in doing the work of the world. We speak of the old prophets as having been inspired. So they were, so they were; it was that that made them prophets; but "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets"; that they too might be inspired, to see large things, to do large works, to outline great opportunities, and to carry out the good impulses that the Spirit of God awakens. For what is a prophet but an inspired man? and God, the living God, has not ceased to inspire men, and his spirit is in the world to-day as it was in the world of old!

May that spirit come and inspire you and me! May it touch, help, guide, strengthen us in our weakness, give us light in our darkness, and hope in the cloudy day! May it come and breathe like sweet music over the many chords of our varied human experience, and so sing and waft us on to that consummation of a high and true manhood, to which our hearts aspire, and which alone will last when everything else is gone; singing and wafting us on to that haven where we would be, where character is the rule, character is the standard, character draws the circle, and where the man is more than the priest!

VISIONS.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.—PROVERBS xxix. 18.

YOU must have noticed in reading the Bible how much there is in it about “visions,” and how often it is taught, by implication at least, if not by direct statement, that men are dependent upon visions. The words of the text therefore are but the positive assertion of what the whole Bible seems to teach: that every human life, in order to fulfill itself and be successful in the best and highest sense, must have some bright, ennobling vision before it, and that “where there is no vision the people perish.”

My subject this morning is this: “The greatest benefactor of the human race is the man who gives the noblest visions to it.”

And first, let me speak of the world’s indebtedness to its visionaries. I know that the word “visionary” has fallen into bad repute, that it is often used as a term of reproach, and that we frequently say of a person who is wanting in practical judgment, in common sense, that he is a “visionary.” And yet, although some per-

sons have false, foolish, and unattainable visions, it should not be forgotten that there is another sense in which to be a "visionary" is a mark of power. Other things being equal, that man will be the best equipped in this world, will have the greatest strength, will exhibit the finest courage, will do the noblest and most enduring work, will be the greatest man, to whom the best and brightest visions come. The men who have reached the higher forms of knowledge, and have given to the world the most ennobling truths, are men to whom the power of seeing visions was given. For knowledge, in its higher forms, is not reached by logic or demonstration. These are mental processes that can carry us up only to a certain point, and if we knew only what we could demonstrate by a mathematical theorem, or prove by a logical syllogism, the field of our knowledge would be a very contracted one.

But as a matter of fact it is not so contracted. The men to whom the noblest and purest thoughts have come, by whom the largest and most enlarging principles have been apprehended, and into whose minds the deepest secrets of the universe have been whispered are men who have gone beyond the limits of the

logical method, or of their own practical experience, or of the practical experience of the world at large, and to whom, as to the prophets of old, the power of "seeing visions" was given.

Professor Tyndall has published an interesting little essay on what he calls "The Scientific Use of the Imagination," the aim of which is to show how necessary the imagination is, even in the study of the physical universe. While the reason, he tells us, by itself and apart from the imagination, can make but little headway, the reason in connection with the imagination is the mightiest agent in the discovery of physical truth. It was by his imagination, operating upon the simple phenomenon which he observed, that Newton was led to unravel the mechanism of the heavens. It was by his imagination that the eye of Galileo, looking through his telescope, saw an infinite space peopled with an infinite number of worlds like our own. It was by his imagination, operating upon the facts published by Malthus in his "Essay on Population," that there was suggested to the mind of Charles Darwin that principle of "natural selection" which he seemed to see, as in a vision, running through all life, extending through all nature, and giving the clew to the

endless diversities of animals and of plants. But what is all that but another, more conventional, and not perhaps so accurate a way of saying that these were men to whom something of the old prophetic power of "seeing visions" was given, in whom, in the best sense of the word, there was something of the visionary—who by their visions were lifted up into larger life, and by their visions have lifted the world after them.

If, then, it be true that the man who is wanting in common sense, and is following after foolish and unattainable visions, and whom we designate as a visionary, is not fit for the duties of this world, it is equally true, I believe it is more true, that that man is not fit for the duties of this world, its highest achievement, its noblest work, the discovery of its greatest truths, the daily carrying out of its highest and noblest principles, to whom no visions come. In the midst of error he sees no vision of truth. In the midst of wrong he sees no vision of right. In the midst of confusion he sees no vision of order. In the midst of sin and sorrow he sees no vision of holiness and peace. He cannot look, poor little man, beyond what has been already done, or what has been already

attained, either by himself or the world at large, to something better still to come, something brighter and more beautiful yet to make its appearance upon this earth, and his life, in consequence, has no high and strong and generous inspiration to it. Such a man is not fit for the duties of this world. His life becomes more and more insipid, dreary, weary, and commonplace as the years go by. He has no courage to sustain him when the dark hour comes. He has nothing to gladden his daily, monotonous routine and make it joyous and bright, nothing to keep him "forging ahead," with an indomitable will, with an invincible courage, in the face of disaster and difficulty, and ambition flags, hope droops, love weakens, faith departs, and enthusiasm dies. I say that such a man is not fit for the duties of this world; the best possibilities of his existence he can never realize; and truly, as the wise man has said, "where there is no vision the people perish."

I cannot imagine anyone, then, to whom we owe a greater debt, who can be of greater assistance to us than the man who in the midst of this hard, practical, sorrowing, sinning, work-a-day world, can give us the bright vision of some other world. I cannot imagine any-

one who can help us more than the man who in the midst of the trite and commonplace truths upon which we have been feeding until we have taken all the nourishment out of them, can come to us with the quickening and inspiring vision of some larger truth, or who in the midst of the darkness and the dreariness, at times, of our human life, can keep the bright, unfading vision before us of some higher and more ennobling life. Such a man will always be the greatest of our benefactors. The world has always needed such a man. It needs such a man to-day.

Now, in my office of Christian preacher, I have no words of disparagement for those men who by other than religious processes, in the usual construction of that term, have given so much brightness, so much enlargement to the scope of human life: poets, philosophers, artists, statesmen, astronomers, scientists, political economists—the great and gifted men in all lines of human pursuit and endeavor, through whom some comfort and beauty and light and wisdom have come into human life, and to whom the power of seeing visions was given. These men, too, are our benefactors. Every man is our benefactor who by any means, to any

extent, can part the clouds above us and let some new glory in upon human life. But among all such benefactors, and easily chief among them stands, and will forever stand, Jesus of Nazareth. Let us look for a few moments at some of the bright and enduring visions which he has given us.

He has given us the noblest vision of righteousness—not righteousness for a particular time or place, but righteousness for everywhere, for always and for all, and which we feel instinctively to be the righteousness of God. Is it not so?

“To the great majority of persons,” said the late Cardinal Newman, “who look out upon this world, all that they find there meets their mind’s eye very much as a landscape addresses itself for the first time to a person who has just gained his bodily vision. It is all confusion; one thing is as far off as another; there is no law, no order, no harmony, no perspective in it.”

Now and then, however, he might have added, persons have appeared on this earthly plane who have been able to see running through all this tangled mass of apparent disorder the great pervading, binding lines of everlasting law.

What some men have done in this respect for jurisprudence, what some have done in this respect for astronomy and for science, towering far above these splendid and ever memorable tasks is the work done for righteousness by Jesus of Nazareth. He took hold of the vast tangled mass of casuistry and Pharisaic tradition, which had become so deeply rooted in the popular mind of his day: he touched it and it shriveled, its meretricious beauty faded, and from the ashes he picked up a few pearls of great price that were worth preserving, and put them upon his own brow to shine there forever. From all the testimony of the past, laying aside and rejecting what was not according to eternal right, he brought out, not only for that day, but for this day, for every day, till the last day comes, great flashing principles, high as heaven, deep as hades, simple as a little child, on which he made all the law and all the prophets to rest. From the massive and cumbersome conventionalism of religious customs and social traditions and precepts of the elders, he brought out those principles of a true righteousness, which lie to-day and will continue to lie at the base of all our benches of justice, all our social relations, all our national development

and prosperity, all our domestic purity, all our individual nobleness, which the world never disputes, never dreams of disputing, however much it may be tempted practically to disobey them, and to which it is forever making its solemn appeal, and carrying up its great case in equity, as into its ultimate court, as into the court of God.

But not only has Jesus of Nazareth given us the purest vision of righteousness, he has also given us the noblest and most appealing vision of love. Is not that the meaning of his Cross and passion? The agony in the Garden, the great drops of bloody sweat, the scourging, the mocking, the Crucifixion itself, the darkness over the land, the great heart-breaking cry sounding out through the darkness—why does it touch our hearts so much? Why has it so profoundly touched the heart of the world? Why has it always been such a power and is it such a power to-day, that the strongest and stoutest manhood has been bowed in submission as a little child before it; that the weakest and timidest womanhood has been emboldened by it; that the Magdalene has been purified; that the drunkard has been reformed, and the mourner comforted?

Oh, who is gifted enough, whose voice is sweet enough to tell the story of the triumph of the

cross of Christ throughout all the ages? Sweeter than the music of the sweetest singer of the world, stronger than the eloquence of the most gifted orator, more than all the dogmatic teaching of the churches, the philosophies of the schools, the laws and statutes of the strongest state, has been the conquering, strengthening, healing, peace-imparting power of the cross of Christ. And why? Because it is the manifestation somehow—explain it as men may—of the love of the eternal God, and has always been felt to be so.

Again, Jesus Christ gives us not only the noblest vision of God, his righteousness and his love, but also the noblest and most helpful vision of ourselves. He does not come telling us what weak, miserable, wretched creatures we are. We know it, and the knowledge does not help us any. He simply shows us, in himself, a more glorious vision of human life, and as we look upon that more glorious vision of human life, its glory passes a little into us. We do in some measure forsake our sins. Their dominion over us is in some measure broken, not because we are looking at our sins and seeing how ugly and how degrading they are, but because we are looking at the vision of Christ and seeing how

glorious he was, in whom there was no sin. We do in some measure learn to be brave and patient under the provocations and the annoyances and the burdens and trials of life, not because we are trying to be brave and patient under them,—we have tried over and over again and have not succeeded,—but because we are looking at that brave and patient One, who, in the midst of trials, discouragements, desertions, denials such as no man ever experienced, has yet exhibited a grandeur and a glory of character in connection with them such as no one else has ever displayed. We have in some measure parted with the fear and dread of death, not because our physical dissolution is any the less revolting to us when we come to think about it; not because the grave and the tomb are any the less loathsome to us; not because to leave behind those we love is any the less distressing to us, but because in looking back over the history of the past we see the bright vision of a victory over death, and take to our hearts the hope that death is but the birth-throe into a more abundant life. And so as we look at that vision its glory passes into and transfigures us.

Yes, and more than that, for not only does it transfigure us, but it somehow seems to trans-

figure all the people about us ; and back of the mask of the sinner and behind the veil of his wretchedness and his sin. Looking through the vision of Christ, we can see the glory of God. All human life has a new significance for us. We read its story over again. We see new meaning, new promise in it. In no case must it be despised. In no case must we despair of it. Jesus Christ has taught us the transcendent value and greatness of human life, even in its feeblest and most degraded forms. Therefore we must care for it, love it, shelter it, do the best things for it, hope the best things from it. And so, in the light of the vision of Christ, moving along the dark pathway of the centuries, the churches have come, and the hospitals have come, and the nurseries have come, and the homes for the poor, sick, aged, crippled, and infirm, and even for the little children, have come—who, except for that vision of Christ and for what it has moved men to do, would have been left alone and would have perished long ago.

Then from this vision of God, his righteousness and his love, and from this vision of man and the glory latent in him, there comes the brightest vision of the future of human life on

the earth. Sometimes as we look out on human life and see the moral disorders that are prevalent there, we think in our hearts that the world at large is making but little progress in truth and goodness—perhaps no progress at all. It seems to be going backward and perilous times are at hand. This is a view of human life that one is apt to take as he gets older, and his thoughts concerning the future are not so roseate in his later as in his earlier days; The “Locksley Hall” of the poet’s younger manhood, so full of promise and cheery hope for the future, is not the “Locksley Hall” of the poet’s age—with so much sadness and so much bitterness and so much misgiving in it. But in the light of the vision of Christ there is no room for misgiving. The earlier poem is the truer; and in response to the cry that goes up, “Watchman, what of the night?” we can always say, “Behold! the morning cometh.” Seeing that, we can go on into the future with unfaltering courage and in spite of everything, with an undismayed hope. We preach whether men hear or whether men forbear, because we know the time is coming when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of the Son of Man; all nations will belong to it, all peoples will be part

of it, all languages will be heard in it. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away." But except for that vision of Christ, we cannot preach, we cannot work, we cannot give, we have no heart for anything, and our thoughts for the future perish.

May God keep that vision before us as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and when the darkness comes and doubts gather and bewilderments multiply, like the disciples on Tabor, may we lift up our eyes and see no man save "Jesus only."

CHRIST GREATER THAN OUR THOUGHT OF HIM.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.—ST. LUKE, xxiv. 21.

It is the third day after the crucifixion of Christ, and the hopes of his disciples have been cast down and their hearts much depressed by the sad event. They had been in a measure prepared for it, it is true, and yet after all they were not prepared. They thought, apparently, that at the last moment and when the crisis came, instead of quietly submitting to his enemies he would in some remarkable way assert himself and escape and get the victory over them. In this, however, they had been disappointed. His views concerning his work, its nature, its method, its scope, were different from theirs; and while they were looking for him to appear through the avoidance of death as the Redeemer of Israel, he was preparing himself to become, by yielding to death, the Redeemer of the world.

And this suggests my topic, that from the beginning of Christian history God has been giving to men a conception of Jesus Christ which was greater and more than they had thought him to be. Let us give our attention for a little while to the consideration of it. It is a fact as indisputable as it is unique that, since Jesus Christ appeared in history, the thoughts of men everywhere have been directed toward him. All their aspirations have sooner or later touched him, and all their inquiries of whatever sort, moral and intellectual, have found their climax in him. It was but natural, therefore, that they should try to express, and in some formal way, what they thought of him, who was always somehow coming into their thought; and however much some persons to-day may be averse to creeds, may deprecate their existence—it was simply inevitable that they should appear, as in fact they have appeared in Christendom from the outset.

It is also a fact that none of these creeds have been final, though men often thought that they were and put them forth as such. But another age has come with another line of inquiry running into and merging itself in another and richer conception of Jesus Christ, and another creed has

appeared. The Apostolic symbol, or the Apostles' creed, as we call it, however it came to be, and which was at first quite enough, was by and by developed into the Nicene Creed, as that again was revised and supplemented and made somewhat larger than it was in its primitive form. And so the work went on, the earlier creed was developed into and swallowed up in the later, receiving new and further interpretation from it. For a long time, I know, this process of [creed-development stopped, but then it was a time when nearly all original thinking and investigation had stopped. During the Middle Ages—the Dark Ages, as we sometimes call them—the Church was almost at a standstill, or was simply going round in its beaten path, threshing its old straw over and over again and finding its moral and spiritual food in its old conventional phrases, that had become conventional husks.

When, however, at the time of the Renaissance, Greece crossed the Alps and came into Western Europe, a new activity came, new and strange questions were started in men's minds, new forces were liberated in society, new hopes, new aspirations dawned, and a new horizon appeared. Then it was, when the minds of men began to move and work again, and to ask new questions and to pro-

ceed in new directions, that new doctrinal statements concerning Jesus Christ and his truth began to appear again. And it is a simple fact of history that, during the short period of thirty years, at the close of the Reformation, more than twenty dogmatic Confessions of Faith were added to the three great creeds which had heretofore sufficed for the whole of the Christian world. And these creeds were put forth by men who did not doubt the old ones, but who said to themselves and said wisely, "The old ones need further finish and statement to make them comprehensive and coördinate with the new and additional facts, forces, thoughts, which the new situation reveals."

And what was the result? Can any man fail to see it, except him whose eyes are so blinded by prejudice that he cannot see any fact which makes against him, be it ever so clear? What was the result of all this theological and ecclesiastical ferment and discussion and controversy at the time of the Reformation? Christian faith was not destroyed or hurt or weakened by it, but strengthened rather, and helped. Jesus Christ became not less to men, but more than ever before; doing more for them, appealing more to them, quickening their zeal, deepening their love,

expanding their vision of him—a richer, larger, dearer Christ than men had thought him to be.

Thus, in looking back with a necessarily short review over the history of Christendom, we find, I say, this fact: that no one period in it has given full and final statement concerning God in Jesus Christ and the truth of God which he revealed: but that from the outset, from the time when he was looked upon by his first disciples as the Redeemer of Israel only, he has been coming to men as something larger and more than the scope of their thought concerning him.

Well, men and women, shall we learn and profit by this lesson of history—we who are living at a time like that of the Renaissance; when new forces have been liberated in society, when new facts have been disclosed by physical science, when new and strange processes of thinking are moving and working in men's minds; shall we profit by this lesson of history? Or must we feel, as some do, that this "modern thought," as it is termed, is hostile to Jesus Christ and the truth he embodied and taught, and that, therefore, it is our duty to fight against and resist it? It seems to me that this, while zealous, would be most unwise.

Old Ludovico Vives, Thomas Carlyle tells us,

relates the story of a countryman who fell afoul his barnyard beast and slew it because, forsooth, it had drunk up the moon ; but it was not the moon which the beast had drunk up, but simply the reflection of the moon in the countryman's own poor water pail. This beast of "modern thought," as some persons would characterize it, has not destroyed Jesus Christ, is not undermining his power over the heart and mind of the world, though sometimes, perhaps, it appears to do so, as did, I presume, the countryman's beast the moon ; it is simply destroying some little piece, or part, some little imperfect fragment, of our reflection of Christ.

Has it not been so in our own past career ? Have there not been some changes in our conception of Christ, and of the truth of God which he taught and revealed ? I submit it to you, do you hold precisely, and in all particulars, the faith that you learned in your childhood ? Have you made no progress in your interpretation of it ; going down to its deeper depths, rising up and scaling its higher heights, and giving wider scope and horizon to it ? Then you have done no thinking, and have been like the Church in the Middle Ages—at a standstill. But that, I am sure, has not been the case. How often have I

heard men say : “ We were brought up to believe thus and so,” and then they have told me stories of what their teachers taught them, or their fathers, good Christian men, made them do ; of how their minister preached and of the sermons they used to hear, and how at times they were frightened by them and kept awake at nights. I am sure that must have been the case with many in this congregation.

Well, would you go back to them now ? Can you go back to them now ? If you did, you would find that they are not there ; that the old teachers and preachers have themselves changed, and that even the most conservative man has modified to some extent—I should say, has grown in his apprehension of the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ. And if it has been so, why should it not be so again ? Why should it not be so now ? Is there any man prepared to say : “ My conception of Christ is perfect and entire, my thought reflects him wholly, my creed reveals him fully ; I know all that can be said about him, and no one to-day or to-morrow can tell me anything more ” ?

And if he cannot say so, why should he not listen to what to-day or to-morrow men may have to tell him ? It may be something new, some-

thing strange and different from what he has held before ; it may modify and change a little his previous way of thinking. But suppose it does. You remember the story that Lecky tells, in one of his books, of the prisoner into whose cell the light came through a little crack in the wall, and who remonstrated bitterly against the destruction of the wall because it would destroy the crack through which the daylight came. Possibly some of us have been looking at this wonderful Jesus Christ, more wonderful than the richest and best thought, through little cracks in the wall erected by prejudice and prepossession and denominational zeal, and if it be the effect of what we call "modern thought" to destroy the wall, the ultimate result will be to make Jesus Christ, the heart of history, the hope of the ages, the light of the world, not something less, but something greater and more.

And that I wish to make the burden of my sermon to-day. I do not wish anyone to go away this morning and say : "The preacher was in sympathy with modern destructive criticism, with all those who are trying to hurt or weaken Christian faith." Ah, no ! If that were the case, I would not only preach no sermon to-day,

but I would preach no sermon ever, and my mouth would be closed. But my aim is just the opposite of that ; my purpose is to make you feel, as I do so strongly, that Jesus Christ is not less, but more, than what we as yet have apprehended him to be ; that he will become, through all this ferment of modern discussion and criticism and controversy a larger, richer, dearer Christ, and a greater Redeemer and a more precious Saviour to us.

No one, it seems to me, who has learned to look at the present in the light of the past, through the medium of an historic judgment, can doubt that for a moment. Such an one does not stand simply on the shifting sands of to-day, but on the rock that is under to-day, and believing in the living God of history, and in his living Christ, he stands securely there. The tempests rage, the winds sweep and blow, the floods lift up their waves—some little piece or fragment that has obscured our outlook of this wonderful Christ may be carried away ; it matters not, I care not, for Christ is more and more, and will become, more and more, the Helper, the Friend, the Redeemer, the Saviour of mankind.

Do we not see some little sign in evidence of it already ? Is there not coming to people to-day

that larger conception of Christ which is born of personal loyalty and love? What is the meaning of that impatience with doctrinal preaching which you and others express?

What is the significance of the fact that the preachers to-day do not and cannot make the doctrines so prominent in preaching? What does it mean? Not that the old doctrines are not good and at times helpful, of great service to us and must be presented and taught, but that love for Jesus Christ and loyalty to Jesus Christ is something better and more. This, therefore, above all else is what the Church to-day is trying to promote: to make the great constituency of its membership, the men and women who are gathered in our congregations and the children in our families and our Sunday schools, lovers of Jesus Christ, the great, strong, and mighty lover of human souls. Then with this love for Christ in their hearts, the creeds will be no obstacle and difficulty in their way. They will look back over the creeds of Christendom, and will be glad and rejoice that men in the past have said such wonderful things about him; will feel that it has not been too strong, that it has not been too much—oh, how can too much ever be said of One whom more than life we love!—

that it has not been enough, that it might have been much more. Creeds and doctrines will not become abstract propositions to them, to be discussed with controversial temper. They will go to the heart of the creeds, will see that they are but a testimony all too feeble of that personal love and loyalty to Christ which they themselves possess. Yes, this larger Christ is coming to men to-day, and the world is beginning to see that however good and true and valuable the creeds may be, the Christ who touches the heart, to whom the heart responds, who makes it aflame with personal love and loyalty to himself, is greater and better than they.

Is it not also being borne in upon the consciousness of the Christian Church to-day that Jesus Christ is not simply the Redeemer of Israel, a choice and favored few, but that he is the Redeemer of the world and the whole world? Is it not beginning more and more to appear that the Christ of the rich and cultivated man is the Christ of the illiterate and the poor; that the Christ of the capitalist and the millionaire is the Christ of the laboring man and the pauper, of the white man and the black, of the copper-colored Mongolian and the red-faced Indian savage? Is it not becoming evident that the

Christ of those who come from pleasant and comfortable homes along our avenues to our Episcopal churches is the Christ of those who have no homes, who are wandering homeless through our streets, or crowded into our tenement houses and finding shelter there—the Christ, not of the few, but the Redeemer of all?

Sometimes we have thought, or some of us have thought, that Christ indeed was to be the Redeemer of America; that the Christian religion was especially adapted to us but not fitted exactly for other nations. But China is opening her doors to-day, Japan is opening her doors, the fields of India are white for the harvest, and the Christ who is the Redeemer of the American nation, we are more and more being driven to see is the Redeemer of the world.

And finally, should not this very day with its sweet and holy associations and inspirations give us this larger conception of Christ? For I have not forgotten that this is All Saints' Day—the day of *all* the tribes and kindreds and nations and tongues, as we heard just now in the Epistle. The saints of all the ages, of all the lands, of all the faiths we commemorate to-day; the saints of our household, and the saints of all the households; of the men and women everywhere

for whom Christ lived and died, and who lived and died for him ; upon whom, as his true and faithful witnesses, he has set his seal, and whom now, their warfare over and their victory won, in some bright and happy world he has gathered around himself. By the inspiration of this festival day we are made to see that the Redeemer of our little Israel is the Redeemer of the world.

This is the refrain which I have wanted you to hear running through the sermon to-day, to make you feel that Jesus Christ throughout all the ages has been becoming more and more to the world. May he become more and more to us, unfolding to our hearts, as the years go quickly by, a larger and richer vision of his own eternal self !

THE GOSPEL OF THE RESURRECTION.

Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.—2 TIMOTHY ii. 8.

THE gospel of the Resurrection which we commemorate to-day was in an especial sense the gospel preached by St. Paul, from which he gathered his courage, his inspiration, his hope, his brightest dreams for the future, and to which, in all his writings, he gave the prominent place. With the preaching of that gospel he began his ministry and closed it. "I delivered unto you first of all," he writes in his earliest letter to the Corinthian Church, "that which I also received, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that he rose again." And when, as Paul the aged, he is about to pass away from the scene of his earthly warfare, in writing to his son, Timothy, in the faith, he gives the parting message as though it were the thing which above all else he would have him bear in mind: "Remember—remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead."

That, I say, was the special message preached

by St. Paul, which he called his gospel, because he preached it so often, and which this Easter Day is preaching now to the world. It would be enough, perhaps, to let the day itself preach, and testify to the joy it inspires, and to which, by blooming flower and brilliant color and jubilant strains of music, we are trying to give expression—to let the day itself preach, and testify, by the joy it inspires, to the reality of the fact and faith which it represents, thus assuring our hearts that that which makes us all so glad this Easter day certainly must be true.

But with the hope of confirming your faith in it, let me try this morning to say a few things about it, and first this :

The gospel of the Resurrection is not a new gospel ; it is the natural outgrowth from the Good Friday gospel. During the past week we have been studying that gospel, and trying to learn and take to heart the lesson which it teaches, of the infinite love of God. That is the Good Friday gospel—the gospel of the Cross ; and a glorious gospel it is, in which, as we saw last Sunday, St. Paul so much rejoiced.

See what follows from it. The tendency of love, the desire of love, is to give the best it can—to give its very life, its very self ;

and the greater the love, the stronger is the tendency and the greater the desire. We go to one who is dear to us, and say, "Let me do something for you. Are you in trouble? Let me help you to bear it. Are you in want? Let me supply it. Do you stand in need of a friend at this particular juncture, to serve you in your distress? Let me be that friend," and how grieved, how disappointed we are when we find that we cannot be of any assistance to him. That, I say, is the law, is the nature of love; nothing is too high, too costly for it, no sacrifice too great; it delights, it revels in sacrifice, and is forever trying to give its joy, its substance, its life, to those who call it forth.

Men and women, is it not so? If, then, the love of God be anything like our own, it must have that same inclination in it, and be spontaneously actuated by that same desire. But the love of God, while like our own, is very much greater than ours. It is an eternal love. No amount of human sin, so Good Friday taught us, can overcome and destroy it. It meets it at its worst, its highest point of development, feels its full malignity, suffers all it can do, all the pain it can inflict, the insult which it can offer, mockery, scourging, shame, yet gets

the victory over it. Waters cannot quench it; waves cannot drown it; flames cannot consume it. It is an eternal, an inexhaustible love, and therefore must—it is a necessity—be forever trying to give its own eternal life to men.

So we see how the gospel of the Resurrection seems to spring by a natural outgrowth from the gospel of Good Friday, and Easter is written upon the Cross.

Again, it is the instinct,—those of you who know what love is know that it is so,—it is the instinct, it is the nature of one who loves to keep forever near him the persons whom he loves. “Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” That is the voice, not only of the love of Jesus Christ; it is the voice of all love. That is the way in which it always speaks. Can you not understand it? Has it not often so spoken in your hearts? Is it not so speaking in the hearts of men and women to-day all over the face of the earth? It is the burden of the prayer that is going up from the bedside where love is kneeling down and saying in behalf of those who are lying there and upon whom the shadow of death is falling, “I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.”

That is what love is always trying to do ; to gather those around itself upon whom it is bestowed, and to keep them there, and whose utterance to this effect we are made to hear wherever love prevails ; in the circle of friendship, in the family life, in the household reunions on the anniversary days—"that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." At the baptismal font, where the parent tries to fold his child more closely to his heart, to bring it more intimately into that Christian faith where he himself is standing ; at the marriage altar, where the holy union is formed which only an act of God or an act of treachery can break ; at the open grave, where love is stronger than death, where it cannot help protesting, as against an unnatural thing, at the severance which death has made ; yes, everywhere, on every occasion, where love lights up and warms the heart, this is the voice we hear : "That those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am."

Again I say, men and women, that if the love of God be anything like our own, if it be love at all in any legitimate sense of the term, it must feel as we do, and have the same desire (or it is not love) to keep the life that it loves forever

near it and to hold it fast. It was in the confident assurance of that eternal love, because he felt it more than we, and saw more deeply into its own essential nature, that Jesus Christ declared, "My sheep hear my voice and they shall never perish; nothing shall pluck them out of my father's hand, who loves them, and he will keep them near himself and hold them fast."

So again I say the Resurrection gospel comes out of the Good Friday gospel, and Easter is written on the Cross.

Our survival of death, therefore, resolves itself simply into a question of God's ability. We know that he does desire to keep us fast, and not to let us perish, because he loves us. That is the nature of love, the one thing in ethics of which we can be sure, as of a demonstration; that is the nature of love.

God does desire to keep us and to hold us fast and not to let us perish. The question is, Can he do it? and when it comes to that "can he do it?"—the God, whose power is so great that we can trace no boundary around it, can set no limit to it, and of which we are forced to say that it is an immeasurable power—when that becomes the question, it is no longer a question. Yes, and

more than that ; it resolves itself simply into a question of God's existence. For every instinct of the human heart, apart from the teaching of religion, tells us that God is supremely good. There can be no other God than a good God, and what is goodness but love? and it is this belief of man in infinite goodness or love, combined with infinite power, which has inspired his heart with the inextinguishable hope of an immortal life, and which the Resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms.

It is not necessary, therefore, that we should go to-day into questions of historical evidence to prove the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, although such evidence exists and abounds. There is first the undoubted fact that immediately after the crushing disappointment of the Crucifixion, some events did occur which suddenly gave a joyful animation and a wide expansion to the whole Christian Church. Then we have the testimony of all the disciples that that event was nothing less than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and then again, there is no other competing theory upon the subject that has stood the test of critical examination or that is worthy of a moment's consideration.

But these are questions which all persons are not qualified to entertain and to debate ; neither is it necessary. Believe in the eternal love of God, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, instead of seeming to you an improbable thing, with many presumptions against it, will be in the line of what you are led to expect.

With that inward temper and predisposition toward it, the evidences which have come down will be full and ample, and more than sufficient for you. Without that inward temper and predisposition toward it, no amount of historical evidence would convince you, even though one should rise from the dead this Easter Day before your very eyes. You would say that he was simply awakened from a trance, or that there was some illusion in it.

“People as a rule do not believe a thing,” says Professor Mozley, “on the strength of external evidence alone.” There must be some sympathy, some kindred feeling for it, or they cannot come into the persuasion or even appreciation of it. If Columbus had not had in him the spirit of discovery, to use Dr. Mozley’s illustration, he would never have seen the evidences which he did see in behalf of a western hemisphere lying beyond the hitherto trackless

waters, could never have rightly interpreted the different scattered facts which threw some light upon it, and which bore in upon his mind the conviction that the continent was there. And it is only when we have that spirit of eternal love in our hearts which we have been commemorating during the past week that we can appreciate at their full worth and value the historical evidences that have come down to us in behalf of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and believe that eternal love has given eternal life.

And now, having tried to show you that the gospel of the Resurrection comes out of the Good Friday gospel, let me proceed as briefly as I can to speak of the blessedness of that gospel, and of the glory which it throws around this mortal span of our earthly life. I am not disposed to depreciate the importance and blessedness of this earthly life. I certainly do not think that our time here should be spent in the absorbing contemplation of the hereafter, and that all the pleasures of existence in this world should be surrendered by us as though they were of no account. They are of much account. It is a glorious world. Can a man open his eyes in it this bright Easter morning and not believe it? God made it.

It is a glorious thing simply to be alive, to feel strength and vigor bounding through our frames, to grow in heart and mind, and enrich ourselves with affection, to see new forms of beauty, to catch new visions of right, to come into contact more and more with truth, to rejoice in the splendid conquests over his earthly environment which the spirit of man has effected, to behold from year to year, almost from day to day, a better knowledge, a higher wisdom, a fuller light, streaming in upon him and giving thereby a wider horizon to him.

It is a glorious thing just to be alive. But, ah! how much more glorious it is when we know that the life in which we rejoice will go on and not die; that when this house of clay, beautifully and wonderfully made, yet this house of clay shall have been taken down; when it shall have become too fragile and weather-beaten by the storms of earth to hold us any more, we shall not be cast out to perish, but shall simply move on into some better and roomier house which the eternal love that holds us fast has provided for us. It is sweet and good to live, but how much sweeter and better when we know that what we call death will be merely a letting go of that which we can no longer hold, a casting

off of that which can no longer serve us, a going out from that which is but a prison door, and when everything that is mortal about us will be swallowed up in the more abundant life.

What a much more glorious thing is that, and what glory does it give to our earthly life !

Again, while it would still be our duty, even if there were no prospect of another world, to live a high and noble life,—no man can question that,—to do justly, to love mercy, to live purely, to meet with a brave and resolute front the difficulties of our lot, and to take an earnest and active part in all humanitarian and educational work ; how much more efficiently will we perform that duty in the light of the Easter hope ? While it would still be our duty to put our shoulder to the chariot wheel of human progress when it drags heavily, to do all in our power for the advancement and enlightenment of our fellow-men and to make both ourselves and the world as pure and bright and fair as we possibly could, yet how much more bravely will we enter upon that duty, and how much more efficiently will we perform it, when the broad bright arch of an eternal life is stretched over our heads and light from heaven shines upon our path !

It is the duty of the mariner to carry his vessel across the waters. His duty is on the ship, and he must not let it go without him. He must keep it balanced and trimmed, and stand at the post of danger; must protect the varied interests which have been committed to him, and at the cost of his life, must try to conduct them in safety to the haven where they would be. His duty is on the ship. But, ah! how much more efficiently will he perform his duty, how much stouter his heart, how much higher his courage, how much greater the confidence which he possesses in himself and which he inspires in others, how much more intelligent his commands, when from time to time he can look at the heavens above him and find from the lights that are shining there the path upon the watery waste in which the vessel should move, and in which through storm and wind and wave, he is trying to guide and keep it!

So does the glad gospel of this Easter Day, and the bright vision which it gives of an eternal life, put new courage, new strength, new intelligence into our task. Can any man doubt it? Does it not take the efforts which we make in this world in behalf of our fellow-men, transfigure them with its brightness, ennoble them with its far-

reaching outlook, and throw a new glory around them?

And yet again, what a great and glorious thing is human love! How empty, how sad, how dark the world without it! It is the light that shines upon us to guide us on our way and illumine the clouds about us; our shelter from the stormy blast, our refuge and our home. It sweetens the bitterest cup, it eases the heaviest burden, it lightens the darkest day. It gives to the heart in which it dwells a joy like heaven itself, and although it also gives at times sorrow as deep and strong as the joy was high and great, it is still the best and sweetest and dearest thing on earth. But how much sweeter and better does it become when we know that the grave is not its prison house, that death is not its destroyer, that it is ours not only here and now, but ours forever, and that somewhere, somehow, sometime, we shall find what we have lost!

Life, duty, love—these are glorious words, none higher in human speech. But how much more glorious do they become when they are given back and interpreted to us in the light of that eternal hope which this Easter Day inspires! How much more glorious, how much more clear, does everything become! In the

light of that hope we can understand ourselves as we cannot without it—as no man can without it. Those deep and earnest longings which spring up in the heart only so often to be defeated and crushed, those yearnings and aspirations which seem to come from some eternal source, and to which we try to give utterance by art and beauty and song, but which we cannot fully in any of these ways express; it is only in the light of that eternal hope which this Easter Day inspires that we can interpret ourselves to ourselves and know what we really mean, and what we really are.

Then fill the churches with flowers, and let the arches ring with the carols of children's praise, and the most triumphant peals of music which the genius of man has inspired; let everything that is beautiful and cheerful and bright be called upon to express the joy that is in our hearts to-day. Oh, earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord upon this Easter Day. In all your duties and tasks, your joys, your sorrows, your ambitions, oh, men and women! remember, remember, that "Jesus Christ was raised from the dead," and that eternal love—it must be so—has given eternal life.

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