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# HEAVENLY RECOGNITION

AND

## OTHER SERMONS.



BY

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To the memory of our beloved daughter,  
Maybell Aileen, whose consecrated and  
cultured young life passed away from  
earth, behind the veil, into the unseen  
glory, on April 16th, 1894, this book is  
most tenderly and affectionately dedicated,  
with the joyful assurance that we shall  
soon all meet again.





## PREFACE.



16 DEC, 1895

These sermons were all preached in the usual way, and amid the pressing cares and claims of a large city church. They are published in response to many requests. They appear as a memorial to the precious loved one who so suddenly went home, and whose recognition beyond will be one of the great joys of Heaven. They might also appear as a thank-offering to God for His goodness in a pastorate which has been exceptionally happy. During six years conversions have taken place almost every week, and the waters of baptism have been troubled nearly every Sunday. To Him be all the praise.

Assurances have been received that each of these discourses has been helpful to a congregation which has grown dearer to me every day. Recognizing this in making the selection, they are laid as an humble offering at His feet, "whose I am and whom I serve," with the fervent prayer that in this new form they may be blessed to a wider circle. It is with this thought and desire alone that they are now put into the hands of the printer.

J. L. C.

NEW YORK CITY,  
April 16th, 1895.



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## Heavenly Recognition.



## Heavenly Recognition.



*"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*—I. CORINTHIANS xiii. 12.



From this great text, I purpose considering some of the evidences we have that we shall meet our friends in heaven, and know them there. I am sure that your interested attention will at once be secured. Next to the underlying questions of future existence, and personal salvation, this consideration comes probably nearest to us.

It is true that death brings an appalling shock, and introduces the most startling changes. Even while we gaze upon the face of the one we loved, we are conscious that a solemn change has taken place. The soul which looked out from these eyes, which spoke with these lips, hearkened with these ears, walked with these feet, wrought with these hands, thought with this brain, loved with this busy, beating heart—this soul is here no more. We are simply looking at the shattered cage lying at our feet whence the singer has flown. Soon the precious form crumbles into dust. We sigh "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still," and we sigh and

long in vain. Our dear ones do not meet us here after this, and the world grows darker, and colder, and lonelier without them. From the present we turn anxiously to that future where hope of reunion is alone possible, and the heart-thrilling question rises to our lips: "Shall we know each other yonder?" In his *King John*, Shakespeare describes the passionate grief of Lady Constance over the approaching untimely death of her imprisoned son. In an agony of soul, she turns to Cardinal Pandulph, and exclaims: "I have heard you say that we shall see and know our friends in heaven. If that be true, I shall see my boy again." But great, anxious clouds of doubt gather over her troubled soul. Sorrow has chased away "the native beauty from his cheek." The ruthless ravages of suffering and disease have completely wasted and changed the fair young form.

"And so he'll die ; and, rising so again,  
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven  
I shall not know him ; therefore, never, never,  
Shall I behold my pretty Arthur more."

It is the bare suggestion of this intolerable thought, the possibility that we shall never see our loved ones more, or, if we do, that they will be so completely changed we shall not recognize them, which makes the sting of death so keen and



bitter, and the darkness of the grave so cold and terrible. Were we absolutely certain that we should soon meet them again, and know them, and walk with them in light, and summer with them on the hills of God, and take up the broken threads of our acquaintance, and talk with them of the past, and positively and really spend the great eternity with them above, then the grief of parting would be in a large measure assuaged. We would go on, and live in intenser service for the Master here a little longer, cheered with the hope of a speedy and blessed reunion. We desire no dreamland of speculation, no merely plausible theories, no empty guessings, with "the wish father to the thought." We want to get down to the solid foundation of truth on this subject, if it is possible.

Can we then be assured that we shall meet and greet our dear ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus on the shores of the better land? We can. This question may be lifted out of the region of surmise and conjecture, and placed upon the basis of absolute and unquestioning certainty. I think such a weight of evidence can be gathered up and presented, that this doctrine will be proved just as truly as we can prove that there is a heaven at all, or a life beyond. The joyous greetings at the celestial gate are as surely before us as are the sad partings that we have here at the grave.

I. There is a strong basis in favor of this belief in what we call *natural religion*. The consensus of human conviction in all ages has been in this direction. Read the literature of the past. Listen to the songs that our old world has sung. Examine the various religious systems that have appeared, and you will find beneath them all a common underlying conviction regarding this subject. This consideration, as we shall find, is important.

A thousand years before Christ, Homer wove the floating traditions of that distant age into his great songs, and they are filled with teachings of recognitions in the life to come. In the twilight shade of the land of departed spirits, the souls of disembodied heroes are constantly meeting those whom they knew on earth, and holding long conversations with them. Four centuries before Christ, when Socrates was about to place the deadly hemlock to his lips, he said that he would be troubled at the thought of dying, "did he not think he should go to wise and just gods, and to men that had departed this life"; and then he speaks with enthusiasm of the joy he anticipated in holding converse with Orpheus and Hesiod, and Homer and Ajax and others, showing how strongly this dying hope was cherished by the ancient Grecian sage. The pagan Romans believed in it as well as the Greeks. A century before Christ Cicero expressed himself in tender and touching

language that would almost befit a Christian. "I feel myself," he says, "transported with the most ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends. . . . I ardently wish to visit, also, those celebrated worthies of whose honourable conduct I have read much. . . . Oh, glorious day! when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits." He tells that he bore the death of Cato with fortitude because he supported himself with the consoling reflection that they would not long be separated. Half a century before Christ Virgil relates how the Sibyl escorted Æneas through the mournful, vernal and blissful fields of the spirit land, where he at once recognized and conversed with his friends whom he had known on earth. "We but depart," said the Roman lyrist, "to meet our Æneas and our Tully and our Ancus."

The same belief in future recognitions existed in other pagan lands. Ernst tells us that "The ancient Germans hoped to meet their friends again, beyond death, in a beautiful and peaceful valley." The burning of widows in India at the death of their husbands, the custom of sacrificing human victims at the death of an African prince, all sprang from the same conviction. They expected these to accompany the departed to the spirit land. The North American Indians be-

lieved that they would meet again in the exciting chase on happy hunting grounds. Many other citations might be made. The views held were usually crudely and grossly distorted; nevertheless, we always find this teaching underlying them. "The barbarian and the savage have loved the tale of the blue mountains and of the shadows behind them where their ancestral shadows are awaiting their arrival."

Dr. H. Harbaugh, to whom I here acknowledge my indebtedness in this discussion, sums up the evidence in these words: "So general is this belief [of future recognition] that it is confined to no age of the world, but is found in all ages. It is confined to no place, but is found in all places. It is peculiar to no denomination of Christians, and to no tribe, nation or religion of pagans, but is found among them all. The learned also have it even as the ignorant, and cherish it with the same implicit tenderness and affection." This statement is none too strong. Common to all religions, and to all classes, and to all climes, and to all ages, savage and civilized, ancient and modern, has been this thought. It is a universal conviction, wide as humanity, and co-extensive with the history of our race. We pause before this most interesting fact, and two arguments branch out from it:

First, all universal convictions of the race are

true. They spring from the constitution of the human soul, and are therefore God-implanted. They are prophetic voices crying in the wilderness of life, and proclaiming things to come. "They are but broken lights of Thee." Not in its superficial and changing moods, but in its deepest permanent longings, *vox populi* is *vox Dei*. Indeed, God never gave anything to any of His creatures to mock and to deceive. Never an eye without light outside to match, never an ear without sound, never a fin without water, never a wing without air. So too of any native conviction of the race. It is "the earnest longing of the creation," the voice of nature within us, of which God Himself is the author. Any want which humanity, as such, feels, is a genuine want. Any hope that it cherishes as such is a true hope. Any fear that it shrinks from as such is no groundless fear. The human body is so constituted that it craves water to drink. God made it so, and therefore we may be sure there is that which will assuage this thirst. The human soul longs after a supreme being, therefore we know that God exists to satisfy this desire. Men universally recognize in themselves the presence of sin, and therefore the fact of sin is established. Men have always clung to the necessity of sacrifice to reconcile to God, and so this conviction is true. Men have always held to a life after death, and that is also true.

And just as broadly and just as deeply, mankind universally believes in future recognitions, and that too is equally true. A few have professed to doubt the existence of a God, but that number constitutes no contradiction to the general decision of the race. A few here and there may deny the doctrine of recognitions hereafter, but they do it superficially. Like hope, this voice of humanity "springs eternal in the human breast." "We shall know each other there" is the broad verdict of the human soul.

Second, Christianity strengthens this conviction. Anything that is untrue it rebukes and destroys. Idolatry withers before the Bible, and therefore it is evil. Vices go down before the truth, therefore they are wrong. Superstitions die out wherever the Gospel is planted, and hence they are false. The doctrine of future recognitions could not have lived in the bright blaze of divine revelation if it were not true. It would have been scattered like the mists before the rising sun. But the reverse of this is what we find. Never anywhere is this belief cherished so strongly as in Christian lands. The more Christian the stronger the conviction. It grows pure and symmetrical and beautiful in the light of the Bible. The unconverted do not think of it and dwell upon it as we do. The deeper the night of the Christian's sorrow, the brighter do these stars of

hope shine out upon him. The riper the saint, and the nearer to the skies, the richer and the riper does this belief become. As his hope brightens, it brightens. As his faith strengthens, it strengthens. As he grows in grace, it grows along with him.

Speaking of this subject Dr. Edwards says: "All the ancient and pious fathers agreed in this." Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, etc., held to it. All the great reformers firmly believed in this doctrine, Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin and the others. All the great theologians maintained it, Baxter and Bunyan and Doddridge and Paley and Newton and Chalmers and Wesley and Alford and Edwards and Fenelon, and the rest.

Now, here is the thought. Would God's Spirit have fostered and strengthened a hope in His followers, if that hope were a delusion? Would He allow their hearts to be misled "by the sweetness of a lie"? Would He trifle with their tears by offering now a false comfort, which He would soon dash to the ground? Would He lead them on and on, and then let them discover that they are only following a vanishing mirage of the desert? The thought is intolerable. The instincts of humanity, and the stronger and clearer convictions of the saints of all ages, combine in

assuring us that "the pure in heart shall meet again."

II. The Scriptures do teach that we shall retain our own identity, we shall know ourselves in the life that is to come. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime." All his earthly career was spread out before the rich man, now in the place of torments. In like manner, the new song of heaven is to Him who was slain, "and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." Here, too, their life below, the tongue and tribe, the lost condition and the wondrous redemption when Jesus washed their sins away are fully remembered. The woman of Samaria recalls to-day in heaven Jacob's well, and the Stranger who revealed to her there the fountain of living water. The three thousand converts of Jerusalem retain yet their recollection of the day of Pentecost. Paul will never forget the noon-day splendour, and the Divine Voice, which called him near Damascus. The same is true of all the saved. Our recollection will last through all the ages; nay, more, it will be perfected in the life to come. There is not wanting evidence, even here, which goes to show that every thought and word and act are imperishably recorded on the pages of our memory. Like lightning flashing out of a midnight cloud and revealing the whole unseen country around, in certain condi-



tions our past forgotten lives are lighted up in a moment, and we behold in vivid panorama what had long passed from our view. And this fact is sustained by a whole class of passages which teach that every one, "for himself," and for "every idle word" spoken, shall yet give an account. "Every man's work shall be made manifest," and the "hidden things" shall be brought to light. There could be neither rewards nor punishments in the life to come if we did not recollect the past. All this involves the most complete personal identity.

We now advance a step further : We shall not only know ourselves, but we shall recognize others too. In Isaiah, the fourteenth chapter, in language of great poetic beauty and dramatic power, the downfall by death of the king of Babylon, and the sensation created in the invisible world when he entered there, are described. Carefully remembering that the passage is a highly-wrought, imaginative picture, we are yet justified in claiming that the assumption beneath it all is, that when a spirit enters the spirit world, the event is known to those there who knew that one on earth. This is all that we are interested in claiming now. The imagery is without significance, if this is not obviously true. Again, the rich man recalled his five brethren who were yet on earth, knew Abraham in Paradise, recognized Lazarus in his bosom, and Abraham knew all

about him and his family. The widest range of knowledge of others is here disclosed. In the judgment scene in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the King says to those on his right : " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Here the righteous remember in the future those who had been befriended by them in this life. Paul loved all Christians ; but his own converts held a position of peculiar nearness to him. To the Thessalonians he writes : " For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? For ye are our glory and our joy." But how could they be this, if they would be unknown to him when the coming of the Lord takes place ? We know each other here, and if we do not in the hereafter, then there must be a lowering instead of a heightening of our powers in the life to come. It would imply mutilation instead of expansion ; decay instead of development ; withering rather than unfolding ; a falling-off instead of a rounding-out and a completing. We would be less instead of our becoming more. But the contrary of this is the invariable teaching of Scripture. All our powers will be strengthened. " For now we see through a glass darkly ; then face to face ; now we only know in part ; then shall we know even as we are known." Here our

whole horizon is clouded by the dense mists of sense and sin; there "we shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." Everyone has heard the story, and it is a good one. "John Evans," said his faithful wife to the good old Welsh minister, as he was in his study one day, "John Evans, do you think we shall be known to each other in heaven?" And the minister answered without hesitation: "To be sure we shall. Do you think we shall be greater fools there than we are here?" There was sound philosophy in this blunt, sturdy answer.

III. The representations of Scripture teach that the life to come is not to be an isolated or secluded one. We are to be together, in one place, engaged in one employment. Death, to the Old Testament worthies, meant "to be gathered to their fathers." Jahn tells us this phrase signified to the ancient Jews that, at the close of life's journey, he who died "was received into the company of his ancestors who had gone before him." Other passages need not be cited. The clearer revelations of the New Testament remove all traces of uncertainty regarding this, Heaven is a "place" which Christ went to prepare; those who are given to Christ shall be with Him in glory; they constitute "the general assembly and church of the first born," they are "arrayed in white robes," and have palms of victory in their hands. They

sing the one great song ; they are "before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple." These charming representations would be as misleading as they would be impossible if each one there was to remain forever a complete stranger to every one else. So, too, with many other passages. "In my Father's house are many mansions." But all the children who gather as a family in their father's house are surely made up of those who know one another. A strange home that would be, where no one could ever recognize the other ! We are to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. But what of a banquet where none of the guests know those who are with them at the feast ? The twelve apostles are to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Shall these judges not know, and shall they not be known ?

Under all these descriptions and figures, the doctrine of future recognition is everywhere taken for granted, and assumed as a matter of course. We are to remember, and meet, and commingle, and worship, and serve, and sing, and banquet with each other in the realm of glory. Bishop Foster has truly said: "Every principle must be revolutionized the future must be a total contradiction of the past, old precedents and analogies must all fail, all things must radically change,

death must obliterate memory and affections and ideas and laws, or the awakening in the next world will be amid the welcomes and loves and raptures of those who left us with tearful farewells."

I again turn over the pages of the Bible. It was not good for man to be alone in Eden. Although he had there the presence of God and the angels, he needed something more. To his complete happiness, the fellowship of his own kind was necessary. If this was so in the paradise that is past, why should it not be so, too, in the paradise which is to come? David said when his child died, "I shall go to him." This could not refer to the grave, for there would be neither hope nor consolation in that. The expression can only signify that he expected to meet and know his boy in the better land. Saul recognized the spirit of Samuel in the cave of Endor. The three disciples knew Moses and Elias "in glory" \* on the Mount of Transfiguration. So we see the redeemed are distinguished, in the life to come, even by their very names. Abraham remains Abraham, Isaac remains Isaac, Jacob remains Jacob, Moses remains Moses, Elijah remains Elijah, and the twelve apostles remain the twelve apostles still. Nor does it end with these. Says Isaiah, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee

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\* Luke ix. 31.

by thy name ; thou art mine." Of every one that overcometh, we are told, " I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels " ; and Paul writes of his fellow-laborers, " whose names are in the book of life." A name for every saint ! Now, all this certainly teaches that we are individually known and differentiated from others, and designated as such by names in the life to come. We do not pass into some generality of existence—into spiritual nondescripts—when we die. Diversity is God's law. There are no two blades of grass alike ; no two leaves of the forest alike ; no two days alike, and there are no two saints alike. There are moral and spiritual peculiarities which distinguish men, just as markedly as any that are presented in physical appearance. Changed, purified, without imperfection, without sin, but enough individuality will yet be retained so that we can be easily recognized, even as Moses and Elias were recognized.

Do you ask for further proof ? Can we pass out of the region of probability into that of certainty ? We can. When Christ was transfigured on Mount Hermon, He was seen in His glory. His countenance shone as the sun, and His raiment became white as the light, yet through all that splendor His identity remained unchanged. They knew Him still, and spake to Him as Christ, on that mountain-top. Take Him after His resurrection.

The disciples recognized Him then in His glorified body. The only thing that prevented their knowing Him always was the unbelief which sometimes clouded their eyes. All the change that took place in Him from

“ The lowly man that once did stray  
A pilgrim on the world's highway,  
Oppressed by power, and mocked by pride,  
The Nazarene, the Crucified,”

up to the glories of the skies, will not prevent our knowing Jesus. The change which death will bring to us will be similar to that it wrought in Christ. It did not destroy His identity. It will not destroy ours, for “we shall be like him.”

There is another thought which stands related to all this. Our sainted ones may not be so far away from us as we think. Moses and Elias were back to earth, on the Holy Mount, when the disciples saw them, near to the places where once they lived. Bible worthies are described in the Epistle to the Hebrews as a “great cloud of witnesses” watching with the intensest interest our progress in the Christian race. We are compassed about with them. The angel who disclosed to John the wonders of the Apocalypse was his “fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book.” As in the days of Paul, we are still made “a spectacle to the angels.” “Millions of spiritual creatures

walk the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep." You remember that day when all was so sad with you, and there was not a ray of light anywhere? Then, an hour after, the whole sky seemed to brighten, and you caught yourself singing unconsciously a song of holy joy. Who can say but that it was the spirit of your dear one that pulled aside the curtain and scattered the gloom? If strange, sweet music can come unseen, wafted on the evening air, and reach and melt the heart, "the viewless spirit of a lovely sound," why cannot celestial influences do the same? The late laureate, in his "In Memoriam," discusses this thought, and the question is raised, if our dead are near us, might they not discover in us some "hidden shame" or "inner vileness" that they never knew before, and so we would be "lessened in their love"? After weighing it, he concludes that such a thought wrongs "the grave with fears untrue." If they know more, they will understand us better, and sympathize more with us. And so Tennyson sings :

"The dead shall look me thro' and thro',  
Be near us when we climb or fall;  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger, other eyes than ours  
To make allowance for us all."

So, too, he puts the sweet words, true as sweet,



and beautiful as true, in the lips of little Alice, the dying May Queen :

“ If I can, I'll come again, Mother, from out my resting-place :  
Tho' you'll not see me, Mother, I shall look upon your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,  
And be often, often with you, when you think I'm far away.”

How thrillingly important it is that each of you should be new creatures in Christ Jesus, so that Heaven may be your home. “ Ye must be born again.” Eternal life is the gift of God, and this is freely proffered to-day. Through living faith in a living Saviour you become partakers of the divine nature. Oh, that all in this congregation would accept Him now and go forth from this hour to serve Him forever. Then, indeed, might you dry your tears, and lift up your voices and sing, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh. There is nothing too good for God to give you ; nothing that will add to your true happiness either in this or the coming life that He will withhold. Before you will lie the unspeakable joy of meeting with, and knowing, and conversing with the dear ones who have gone on to glory.

“ They shall be mine, they as on earth we knew them ;  
The lips we kissed, the hands we loved to press ;  
Only a fuller life is circling through them,  
Unfading bliss, unchanging loveliness.”



## Heavenly Recognition.



## Heavenly Recognition.



*"I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."*—PSALM  
xvii. 15.



Last Sunday morning we spoke of some of the evidences we have of future heavenly recognition, discussing the subject on the positive side. From the universal convictions of the race, from the fostering and developing of these convictions under the teaching of the Christian religion, from the consequences following our own identity, from the broadening and heightening of all our powers in the life to come, from the implications and the express statements of Scripture, we were enabled to gather a mass of cumulative evidence by which we felt we could affirm without the slightest shadow of hesitation that we shall know each other there. We leave that argument there.

Let us now advance to other considerations. There are some who may have difficulties in the way of accepting this doctrine; and, until these are considered, there will lurk behind all proof the misgivings of suspicion. Then there are others who are prone always to take the opposite side of

every question. They like to be considered singular. They think that it savours of superiority—to doubt what is generally accepted. They are like the old Scotch elder, who, when asked what he could do best in the church, promptly and gravely answered, “I can object.” There is a class of just such objectors. They have difficulties with the Bible, creation, the deluge, the sun and moon standing still, Jonah being swallowed by a sea monster, the Trinity, the resurrection of the dead, and many other things. We promptly and frankly reply that there is much that we cannot understand in everything that we receive as true. He who rejects what he cannot fully comprehend may begin by doubting his own existence, and then doubting everything else. There is mystery everywhere. We are not under obligations to explain all objections. We cannot. Here is a boy ten years of age standing beside the knee of Sir Isaac Newton hearing the old man explaining the problems of his Principia—clear as light to the great philosopher, absolutely unintelligible and meaningless to the child. Then I see his kind hand stroking the head of the bright lad, and hear him assuringly say, “Patience, my boy, by and by it will all be clear to you, when you cease to be a child, and have grown up to the intelligence of manhood.” So the Master is saying to us: “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou

shalt know hereafter." And yet the mysteries involved in the doctrine of future recognitions are not greater, not even so great, as are involved in many things that are most surely believed among us.

I. The first objection I notice is, we shall be so changed by death that we cannot know each other hereafter. The future life, we are reminded, is far higher and richer than this. The Scriptures themselves say, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed";

"Therefore, never, never,  
Shall I behold my pretty Arthur more."

Now this argument proves nothing, because change need not destroy identity. The matter in our bodies changes every few years, but we are still known as the same persons. Through all the transitions of life, from infancy to old age, there are peculiarities that go with us from stage to stage, so that identity continues unbroken. And then the change that death will bring will not add anything new. It will simply unfold, expand and make perfect that which we have already. The mightiest change which takes place in the history of an immortal being does not destroy its identity. When a sinner is converted—translated from the kingdom of darkness to that of God's dear Son, old things passed away, and

all things made new—the individual identity remains complete and undisturbed. If a change from sin to holiness does not destroy our knowledge of each other, neither will a change from earth to heaven.

Moses' glorified spirit passed through all the change of death and heaven, yet the three disciples knew him at once on the Mount of the Transfiguration. The translated Elijah appeared there in his glorified body, and they at once recognized him too. The risen Jesus appeared to His disciples after all the change of death, and we find even doubting Thomas exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!" This shows that the change wrought did not efface those traces by which they were known.

Then, too, let us remember that love and knowledge are of the soul. Our bodies of flesh are only the imperfect media through which our real personalities express themselves. We dwell in houses of clay. We catch but glimpses of the soul here and there revealing itself at the windows of sense, and it is through these hurried glimpses that we come to know one another. We cling to the knowledge we have of our departed ones, but how crude and imperfect it really is! We are only seeing through "a glass darkly." But there the body of our humiliation will be transformed, corruption shall put on incorruption, and the natural become spiritual. The house in which



the soul dwells will become translucent, and we shall see and know each other, always, perfectly and forever. There will be no obscured or partial vision. That which is perfect is come, and that which is in part is done away. Then, face to face, we shall know even as also we are known. All the changes from the "earthly tabernacle" to the "building of God" will only be in the direction of facilitating our knowledge of each other, so as to make it immediate and complete.

II. A second objection is, that we shall be so taken up with the fellowship and worship of God, that we will not think of anyone else. His love will so fill our hearts that there will be no room for remembering others.

This theory seems to have a zeal of God, but it is not according to knowledge. It will not bear investigation. According to this reasoning, the more we love Christ, the less we will think of our brethren. It is just the reverse. The more our affection centres upon Him, the more we love wife, family, friends, the young, the old, and everybody else. The more we think of Jesus, the more will we think of His followers. Indeed, this is one of the tests: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." Love to Christ develops love to all others, and especially to the household of faith. This objection is like a child saying that because he loves

his mother, he becomes so absorbed that he cannot think of, he cannot love, he forgets all about his ever having a father or brothers or sisters. Such affection as this would be strange indeed. Paul was devoted to the Master, but see how he loved the churches, too, and how he filled whole chapters with salutations to the brethren. Some one has said: "Just as it is the brightness of the natural sun that makes objects around us visible, so the Sun of Righteousness, shedding His glory through the skies, will reveal to us the faces of those we knew, and those we read of, and the innumerable host whom we shall meet by and by."

III. If we know each other in the skies, when we find out that some of our loved ones are missing, shall not this destroy our happiness? How can we be happy if there will be some of our loved ones that we cannot find there?

This is a most solemn consideration, and one from which the veil cannot be fully lifted in this life. We know that the redeemed will be perfectly happy in glory. We know that the unsaved cannot be there. We know that there are no difficulties which God cannot solve. The finite cannot measure the infinite. There are mountain peaks which rise far beyond our poor, weak vision. The objection that we cannot comprehend a truth has no significance, except in so far as it shows the limitations of our condition. By and by we

shall understand many things that in the very nature of the case are totally incomprehensible to us here. We can well afford to let them rest where they are, and wait until the day breaks.

1. We venture to offer a few considerations that may perhaps help to throw some light on this enquiry. To deny that we shall know our friends in heaven because of this would only be to make matters worse. Assume that you will not know one another in heaven, and then it will follow that through all eternity you cannot tell if any of your friends, if one of those with whom you were acquainted, or of whom you had ever heard on earth, is in the skies at all. Take the one theory, and there will be multitudes there whom you have seen and known here below, though some will be missing. The objection increases rather than diminishes our perplexity. It would make a heaven where there is not a ransomed spirit who knows another or can ever be known, and would require you always to continue a stranger in the skies.

2. Only the ties of grace will outlive the tomb. Those alone that meet on the higher plane of the second birth shall be related in the skies. Into that kingdom we must be born anew. All merely carnal ties will be dissolved at the grave. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The Saviour's answer to the Sadducees was, "Ye

do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels of God in Heaven." When they came to Christ at one time and told Him that His mother and His brethren were without desiring to speak to Him, He disclaimed the earthly relationship and affirmed the spiritual bond. Stretching forth His hands toward His disciples He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." The brotherhood and sisterhood of faith are the only ones that will outlast the tomb. Indeed, there is a gradual separation—a drawing apart, even in this life, between those that are Christians and those that are not. They are not thinking the same thoughts; they do not have the same emotions; they do not serve the same Master; they are not interested in the same things; they do not breathe the same atmosphere; they do not occupy the same world; they are not journeying the same road, and the breach continues to widen until the earthly relationships seem ready to vanish away. I knew two brothers once who lived, both of them, to be old, white-haired men. One of them in tender youth gave his heart to the Saviour, and lived a noble Christian, until now he reached old age. The other lived a hard, wicked life all his

days, and now he, too, had passed his threescore years and ten. How little the fellowship between these two brothers. How different their thoughts, and feelings, and lives. With one, it was the Church; with the other, the saloon. For the one, prayer; for the other, profanity. The one read the Bible; the other, sporting newspapers. They both had friends and associates with whom they were each much more intimate than with one another. The bonds of brotherhood were almost completely severed, and each was going to his own place. And this recalls Jean Ingelow's poem entitled "Divided." A young couple, just married, are standing, one on one side of a silvery rill, and the other on the other side, and hand in hand they walk onward together. The stream widens into a brook and they are forced to let go hands, but they can talk with each other as they journey on either bank. The brook widens now into a river, so broad that they cannot hear one another speak across it, but they can still see each other as they are travelling parallel on opposite shores. At last the river widens into a gulf, and the distance becomes so great that they cannot see across, and thus they vanish from each other's sight forever. So, all over the world, we are constantly dividing, passing to the right and to the left, and between there is "a great gulf" being fixed.

3. There will be such an entire sympathy between us and God that we shall be one in spirit with Him. We shall think as He thinks, love as He loves, hate as He hates, judge as He judges. Here we pray that His will may be done in earth as it is in Heaven. There it is supreme, and His will is the will of all who inhabit that celestial country. God's enemies were the enemies of David. Our unconverted friends will cease to belong to us, and the separation will be complete and final. Dread, stupendous thought! Shall I have no father in the promised land? Shall I have no mother yonder? Shall my husband or wife or child or friend have perished forever from my side? Oh, Christian, bring these now to God, if you would meet with them again on the shining shore.

Our hearts have grown solemn and tender as we have followed together these enquiries, unspeakably solemn as we think of the great separation which must yet take place between saint and sinner, and tender and exultant as we gaze upon that mighty host whom no man can number, clothed in white robes, who gather around the throne. All hail! ye blood-washed throng, to-day we greet you. Your people are our people and your God is our God. Ye are our kindred. As our loved ones have faded from our sight so rapidly, "How grows in Paradise our store!"

not worth while to mourn too much. The parting will not be long. Could we only pull aside the curtain and get one glimpse of them as they are now, could we see them just for one moment; no more sorrow and crying, no more weariness or pain, holy, happy, resplendent, crowns flashing from their brows, palms of victory waving in their hands, chanting such music as never fell on the dull ears of earth, treading the banks of the river of life, engaged in ministries of love, at the Beautiful Gate waiting and watching for us—oh, were this veil of sense only pushed aside a little so that we could look in upon that upper vision, it would dry up all our tears and cause us to rejoice exultantly that they are free. The very thought of it ravishes my soul. Then throb on, throb on, my aching heart; beat on, beat on, ye pulses of life; speed by, speed by, ye fleeting years; quicken your pace, ye lagging footsteps; soon we shall see the King in His beauty and enter the land that is afar off and join the glorious company of the redeemed, and so we shall be forever with the Lord.

A Christian minister tells us of a precious little girl who lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features in her remembrance. As if won by that mother's dying prayers, she seemed to turn instinctively heavenward—a sweet, prayer-loving child, the idol of the bereaved family. She faded away early. She would lie upon the lap of the

friend who took a mother's care of her, and winding her wasted arms about her neck, would say, "Now tell me about Mamma." And when the oft-told tale had been repeated, she would ask softly, "Take me into the parlor, I want to see my Mamma." The request was never denied, and the affectionate child would lie for hours gazing on her mother's portrait. But,

"Pale and wan she grew, and weakly,  
Bearing all her pains so meekly,  
That to them she still grew dearer,  
As the trial hour grew nearer."

That hour came at last, and the weeping neighbors assembled to see the child pass away. The little chest heaved faintly; the dew of death was already upon that fragile flower. "Do you know me, darling?" sobbed close in her ear the voice that was dearest; but it awoke no answer. All at once a brightness, as if from the upper world, burst over the child's colorless countenance. The eyelids flashed open, and the lips parted; the thin hands flew up in the little one's last impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly into the far above. "Mother," she cried, with surprise and transport in her tone, and passed away, with that breath, to her mother's bosom. Said a distinguished divine, who stood by that bed of joyous death, "If I had never believed in the ministration of departed ones before, I could not doubt it now." The poet



Southey said he expected he would know Bishop Heber in Heaven by a portrait he saw of him in London, and Dr. Randolph thought he would know William Cowper by a picture he had seen of him in England. The change in appearance will probably not be so great as we think. "Farewell," said a Brooklyn pastor to a dying saint, one Sunday afternoon; "when you enter Heaven to-day, give my best love to my son, and tell him I will soon meet him." She promised that she would, and in twenty minutes she entered the skies. "Tell them not to forget me," said Rowland Hill, now an old man, with most of his friends gone before, as he was speaking to a poor bed-ridden friend, just passing home. "Tell them not to forget me, and assure them that poor old Rowly will soon be coming too." Shortly after, he did go and meet them.

It was in August, 1845, Dr. and Mrs. Judson and their three children were coming home from Burmah to America. At the Isle of France she seemed so much better, that she resolved to let him go back to the mission, while she and the children would complete the journey. She wrote a parting poem. But she took suddenly ill, and he could not leave her. When the ship anchored at St. Helena, she died. The casket was borne to land, the little boats forming a kind of procession, the foremost, with the precious form, serving for

the hearse, while the others followed, one after the other, behind; their oars beating the waters at measured intervals like muffled drums, and the sad waves of the great Atlantic chanting her requiem. And so those rough sailors laid her gently to rest on that lone, rocky isle of the sea. In her parting hymn, written at the Isle of France, she sang to her husband:

“ We part on this green islet, love,  
Thou for the eastern main,  
I for the setting sun, love ;  
Oh, when to meet again ?

\* \* \* \* \*

“ But higher shall our raptures glow  
On that celestial plain,  
When the loved and parted here below  
Meet, ne’er to part again.”

That was her belief. With rapture they were to meet on the celestial plain, never to part. What was his? After the ship sailed from the lonely grave at St. Helena, he turned to his cabin, surrounded by his weeping children, and abandoned himself “to heart-breaking sorrow. But the promises of the Gospel came to my aid and faith stretched her view to the bright world of eternal life, and anticipated a happy meeting with those beloved beings whose bodies are mouldering at Amherst and St. Helena.” Ah, there it is, husband responding to wife; St. Helena answer-

ing to the Isle of France; earth echoing back to Heaven. And when he died they met again and multitudes of Burmah's dusky sons met with them, their glory and their joy.

Well do I recall the first time I visited New York. I came in from a long journey in the west and the previous night had been spent on the hot train. The early morning found us in the vicinity of the metropolis. The long train swept through the tunnel at Jersey City, dark but short, and then the river and the city rose beyond. It was a perfect summer morning. The sun was rising in all its splendor in the east, the glad waters rippled and shimmered in its golden beams, a wilderness of buildings spread out before us, and as we crossed on the ferry the hum of life came wafted over the river. The whole scene burst so suddenly on us, like a vision, from the darkness from which we had just emerged, that, perfect stranger as I was, I yet remember how I was thrilled at the prospect. So shall it be with us soon. After life's long journey we come to the dark tunnel of death through whose deep shadows we all must pass. But it will only be for a moment, and then the hallowed morn shall break and the river and the city of our God will rise up beyond. What a surprise of wonder shall fill our souls as Jerusalem the Golden will burst full upon us, "far sinking into splendors without end." Not as strangers will

we come there, but the further bank will be crowded with loved ones that "watch and beckon and wait for me," and, as Bunyan has it, all the bells of the city will ring out a welcome home.

"When life's hours of toil are ended,  
And my day draws to a close ;  
When the bells of evening, chiming,  
Call me to my long repose ;  
Eagerly my feet shall hasten,  
And my eyes shall look to see,  
Standing close to Heaven's portals,  
Loved ones, waiting there for me.

"They who long from that far country  
Watched me as I faltered on  
In earth's weary round of labor,  
Strength and courage almost gone ;  
When they see me drop life's burdens,  
And to Heaven's refuge flee,  
Swift will gather round the portals  
Loved ones, waiting there for me."



## The Family of God.



## The Family of God.



*"The household of faith."*—GALATIANS vi. 10.

*"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the sons of God."*—I. JOHN iii. 1.

*"The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."*—EPHESIANS iii. 14, 15.



One of the sad consequences of the introduction of sin into our world was that it broke up and destroyed the unity of the human family. Although descended from one common earthly parentage, although God has made of one blood all the nations of men that dwell upon all the face of the earth, yet ever since the expulsion from Eden our race has tended to disunion and disintegration. Humanity breaks in pieces. We easily fall apart. Men divide nationally into the different kingdoms of the globe. They readily pass into different peoples on the opposite sides of seas and deserts, of mountains and rivers. Socially they become graded into the various castes of society from the highest wealth down to the lowest poverty. Intellectually they are parted from the proud philosopher to the most ignorant savage.

Morally they are severed from the purest saint down to the vilest sinner; and religiously the world has been divided into a whole pantheon of worship, until every passion, prejudice and power; until every virtue, vice and conception of the human heart has at some time or other been worshipped under the name of some deity. Take the time of Christ. The Jew would have no dealings with the Samaritan. A Pharisee would not sit at meat with a publican. The priest and the Levite left the bleeding traveller to perish by the wayside. Poverty perished at the gates of riches. Those who claimed to be religious gathered their phylacteries around them and looked down with disdain upon the sinful, and the whole human family was rent asunder and broken up into ten thousand jostling fragments. Now just here came the great problem. How could these discords and divisions be removed? How could humanity be united into one great family where each would find in each a brother and a friend?

The dream of the ancients was that this could only be brought about by conquest. The powerful nation was to subdue the weaker tribes, change their language, religion and customs and assimilate them to itself. And this work of absorption was to go on until one great universal empire would arise, embracing all within its sway, and thus the race would be unified. War tried it. Babylon



with its Nebuchadnezzar, Persia with its Cyrus, Greece with its Alexander, Rome with its Cæsar. They sought to unite the different fragments of the race with human gore ; but the vast empires which they founded fell to pieces under their own weight and crumbled into ruins ere they reached the zenith of their glory. Force and oppression could never make the nations one.

The modern dream of many is that the enlightenment of our nineteenth century; our education, science and philosophy; our trade and commerce; the industries and interchange of different nations, are removing the "ancient forms of party strife." They remind us that the schoolmaster is abroad. They assure us that our advanced civilization is about to

"Ring out the thousand wars of old, [and]  
Ring in the thousand years of peace."

But look across the Atlantic at the nations of Europe to-day, with their great ivy-covered universities and their ancient homes of culture and refinement. All the resources of these great empires are being drained and taxed to the very utmost to maintain their vast standing armies. Millions of men are there harnessed in steel, standing under arms night and day awaiting the word of command. All these nations are like parks of artillery loaded to the muzzle and wheeled into line, each confronting the other, and it needs but

one unguarded speech by any prominent European statesman, but a single false step to be taken, but one single spark of discord, to deluge that continent with blood and make the whole world tremble beneath the thunders of a universal war. So much for the schoolmaster, our commerce and our boasted nineteenth century advancement.

Ah! dear friends, we must dig deeper down. We must get at the root of the trouble. The stupendous, awful fact of sin must be recognized in any true philosophy of human life. It is only the love of God that can melt; it is only the blood of Christ that can cement; it is only the renewing Spirit that can mould the torn fragments of our race into one grand whole—one glorious brotherhood. At the cross the moralist lays aside his self-righteousness; the savage lays aside his ferocity; the sage lays aside his wisdom; the rich become poor and the poor forever rich; the lofty are laid low and the lowly exalted; the fallen learn to "sin no more." The rude barbarian forgets his ruder speech, and from every corner of the globe, from every grade and circle of society, by the one blood of Calvary, we are united into one new family, the household of faith, the sons of God, the heirs of promise, the inheritors of eternal life. This thought of renewed brotherhood runs throughout the New Testament. There is a new birth; a new nature; a new life; a new

name; a new song; a new heaven and a new earth. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And it is from this higher source that there spring the common interests, common hopes and common heirships of the sons of God. Into the earthly family we are born of flesh and blood; into the heavenly we are born of water and the Spirit. Loving hands watched over our tottering footsteps in the one; in the other He gives His angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways. When we entered the earthly family we received a name; when we became members of the heavenly family, a new name was given to us. In the one, our parents entered it in the old family record; in the other, the hand of everlasting love has registered it in the Lamb's book of life. In our households here the children sing in broken snatches their nursery rhymes, and the beautiful sanctuary-hymns we have just been singing this morning are but fragmentary snatches of the great anthem which fills the skies. Whenever a son becomes of age he claims his own, he receives what was bequeathed to him, he enters on his inheritance; and death to the Christian just means his spiritual majority when, as the heir of God, he crosses to "Canaan's fair and happy land where his possessions lie." Analogies of this kind might be traced almost indefinitely between the family below and the family above.

I. Consider, then, first the household of faith in its unity. Beneath the family there is a factor of permanency, a unity which cannot be destroyed. Unlike any other organization, it does not spring out of self-interest, nor is it a combination arising from kindred convictions. God created the family, and hence, through all the changes which the world has ever witnessed, it has remained the unit of society, while human organizations are forever shifting and changing and passing away. And therefore, from the very nature of the family itself, once a person is a son he is a son forever. Nothing can unmake sonship. It expresses a relationship which cannot be destroyed. Some have strangely fancied that sonship is conditioned on obedience. We all know, however, that it is just the converse of this that is true. This young man is not your son to-day because he obeys, and ceases to be your son to-morrow because he disobeys, and thus passes in and out of sonship. If you have a son, through all he does and is he continues such as long as he lives. Your son when he obeys; your son when he disobeys; your son when you reward; your son when you chastise; your son in sickness; your son in health; no power in the universe can un-son him. Thus in the household of faith. Believers may err, but though they falter and fail at many a point they can never perish. They have "eternal

life"; "shall not come into condemnation"; "shall live forever"; "neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." The greater work was done for us while we were yet "enemies" and "sinners"; "much more then, being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him." The inscription placed on a tombstone in Scotland by the express instruction of the saint who sleeps beneath, is the one comprehensive, suggestive word "Kept." Precious, blessed truth! We "are kept (garrisoned about) by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The arrow of the archer in the valley below must pierce up through the body of the parent bird before it can touch one feather of the young eaglet that is being borne aloft upon her wings. I am standing on a rock out in the sea. This rock must sink beneath the massive waves before I can be drowned. My Saviour must perish before my hope can be destroyed. Yonder feeble old Christian with tottering step and trembling hand is as truly His as the highest seraph who shines before the throne. This tearful, timid little child from the infant class, hymning to-day for the first time her new-born joy, is Christ's as surely as the brightest songster who now walks the streets of the golden city. The young king of Spain, Alphonso XIII., was born on the 17th of May, 1886. Not so strong, not so matured, not so intelligent, lacking in

many ways, as a little child, what he will be when he becomes, if spared, a full grown man ; but the young monarch is just as regal to-day ; his title is as undisputed to-day ; the royal blood of the Bourbons flows through his veins to-day as truly as it ever will.

You are the "child of a king," but you are only a minor yet. This world is but the nursery-room. "The crowning day is coming by and by." You will know more, feel more, enjoy more, be more, have a thousand things there which you cannot obtain here ; but you are just as surely and as truly an heir of glory now as you ever can be. The royal blood of Heaven is flowing in your veins. You belong to the nobility of the skies.

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given ;  
More happy (grant that), but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in Heaven."

II. In its diversity. In the family not only is there unity, but there is also diversity—differences of stature and figure and complexion and temperament and mental attainment. One child resembles the father, another the mother. In a family one son grows up a rugged adventurer, another settles down as a quiet merchant. The one enters the army ; and, a brave soldier, he rushes with a wild huzza into the thickest of the fight and falls pierced with bullets, the name of his

country quivering upon his dying lips. Another is a gentle sister with a sister's trembling fears and a sister's triumphant hopes. One member of a family remains poor, another becomes rich. One graduates from college, another is a ne'er-do-well who never learns a trade. One is strong and robust, another is sickly and deformed. Yet all these diversities are compatible with the completest conception of family unity. So, also, of the Church of God. No matter what your condition or talents, there is a place in the household of faith that each of you can fill better than an angel could. Room for Luther's daring; room for Melanchthon's tenderness; a place for the gifted Hall; a place for the guileless Newton; a sphere for the immortal dreamer Bunyan; a sphere for the immortal singer Cowper; a place for the poet, for the artist, for the man of thought, and for the man of toil. The Church gathers in from all conditions and climes; it has a use for every true vocation; for every noble attainment; for the child that can only give a tract, and for the man who can "scatter seeds of kindness." "In God's world," says one, "there is a place for the wren and the violet, just as truly as there is for the eagle and the rose. In the Church of God there is a place—and that the noblest—for Dorcas making garments for the poor, and for Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, just as truly as there is

for Elijah confounding a false religion by his noble opposition, for John the Baptist making the king tremble on his throne, or for the Apostle Paul compassing sea and land by his heroic deeds." In the past we have failed conspicuously in utilizing the varied forces within the Church. But the trend of Christian thought and activity is now changing for the better. The great organizations which arose around the beginning of this century aimed chiefly at bringing the unconverted to Christ, as, for example, the Sunday-school, Bible and tract societies, missionary societies, both home and foreign. The influences exerted by these great religious activities, like a mighty tidal wave, have swept with blessing around the world. And now at the close of the century another tidal wave is rising. We are in the inception of a marvellous preparatory movement. The Church itself is being organized. Wiser and better financial schemes ; higher educational standards ; calling out the lay talent among us ; women's work ; young peoples' societies, etc. Converts are being looked after and helped as never before. We have yet only the commencement of things in this direction. This tidal wave will rise higher. The forces of evil are being thoroughly equipped, and we must meet organization with organization. Darkness must be confronted with light ; hatred with love ;



sin with holiness, and the world with Christ. Much remains to be done. But the time is soon coming when every new recruit in the army of the Lord will have his place and work just the same as every new soldier has in the army of his country. Then the shout of a king will be heard in the camp. When once the talent, the riches, and the ability which are now wasting and perishing within the Church are sanctified and husbanded for God, this whole world will speedily be converted. Our blessed Lord did not belong to any class ; or, rather, He belonged to them all. He went to the feast of the rich. He sat down in the hovel of the poor. When a child He conversed with the doctors of the law. When a man He took up little children in His arms and blessed them. With the learned rabbi He discussed the mysteries of the new birth ; but, with the simple peasants He plucked up a lily at His feet and wove around it a sweet, simple sermon on God's protecting care ; so profound that none dared ask Him any more questions, so plain that the common people heard Him gladly. And thus Christ belongs to the race. He is a Saviour for the Miltons and the Bacons, a Saviour, too, for the Jerry MacAuleys and the Magdalenes and the poorest outcasts.

III. Notice the household of faith in its universality. It is the one family in Heaven and earth.

Even death does not divide it. A suggestive writer calls attention to the tender fiction wherein we regard our family as one only when they are all with us. We instinctively say that the household is unbroken when they all meet under one roof, play in one nursery, gather around one table, kneel before one family altar. But when they have gone away from our home, and thus have vanished from our sight, we feel as if the family were now destroyed. Surely this is not the case. Though scattered to far distant lands they yet belong to us, and absence only makes the heart grow fonder. We never knew how dear they were until after they went out from under the old family roof and their seat was left vacant by the family hearth. Precisely so in the spiritual household. The little girl of whom Wordsworth sings had the true idea. She persisted in claiming that brothers and sisters, "We are seven." Two had gone to sea, two dwelt in foreign lands, two were in the graveyard laid, and those six, with herself, made the seven. "But," remonstrated the objector,

" ' But they are dead, those two are dead,  
Their spirits are in Heaven.'  
'Twas throwing words away; for still  
The little maid would have her will,  
And said: 'Nay, we are seven.'"

And the little maid was right. Think not, O

lone widow, because husband is dead, that the family is shattered. Think not because mother does not greet you any more at the breakfast table that she has perished. Think not because the familiar place is vacant that your loved one is lost. Think not "because the chair is empty, therefore, that he, your child, is no more." All who have fallen asleep in Jesus belong still to us and we belong to them.

" One family we dwell in Him,  
One Church above, beneath,  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death."

In the mild May morning in England, the lark darts up from the meadow and rises out of sight until under the edge of some rosy cloud he meets the slanting rays of the rising sun; and then "singing at heaven's gate," the liquid notes come trilling down through the amber air and make the valley below rich with his upper warblings. So of our sainted loved ones. Risen, melted away from our sight, vanished in the skies above us; but anon, to the ear of faith, strains of celestial music come borne down to us in this vale of tears and fill it with the melody of Heaven. When the dense mists settle over the shores of Scotland, the fishermen returning in their open boats from the distant fishing grounds sometimes become bewildered in the fog and know not what way to

go. Then their mothers, wives and daughters come down to the beach and sing out full and clear their sweet, wild highland hymns. Soon the responsive voices from the boats answer through the mist. And thus guided by these antiphonal songs they at length safely reach their island homes. Oh! not simply the voices of angels, but mingled also with them are the voices of loved ones, too, that come borne in a song to me, "over the fields of glory, over the jasper sea."

IV. Notice in the fourth place the family in its inheritance. "If children, then heirs." The dead cannot inherit. The stroke which severs soul from body separates us from all our earthly possessions. Yesterday the millionaire rolled in his splendid wealth; but death has cancelled it all, and to-day his possessions belong to others. They are his no more. A soul "dead in trespasses and sins" can inherit nothing. Only those who are begotten again "unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" become heirs to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." And what an inheritance!

Startling the statement of the Apostle Peter. We are actually lifted up and made "partakers of the divine nature." The smallest twig on the great giant of the forest partakes of the life, nature

and sap, and bears the very fruit of the tree itself. So with us and Christ. "We are members," says Paul, "of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Limitless the distance that there must be ever between the finite and the infinite; but yet, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." That drop of dew on the petal of a rose reflects perfectly in its bosom the whole sky that is above it. Yet how small the dew-drop compared to the heaven which bends over it. If we are partakers of the divine nature there will be something about us which must reflect the divine. Jesus loved prayer. Christians will love it too. Christ forgave injuries. Those who are His will cherish the same spirit. The Saviour labored for the perishing. This also should be our meat and drink. So men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

Not only is this true, but we bear also the divine name. The whole family in Heaven and earth is named from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Known by many names on earth, they are all one above. The surname of every Christian is Christ. And what more appropriate than to have called after Him "that body of men of whose creed Christ was the core, of whose prayers Christ was the plea, of whose praise Christ was the burden, of whose preaching Christ was the theme, of whose life Christ was the pattern, of

whose actions Christ was the law, of whose hopes Christ was the foundation, of whose heart Christ was indeed the one occupant"?

Not only do we inherit the name and the nature, but we are also heirs to all that Christ has purchased on the cross. Tennyson sings of the monarch who wedded the beggar maiden, and this is how he sings :

" Barefooted came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robes and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way."

That one single definite act of marriage made her co-heir with himself, gave her a dowered right to all that belonged to him. Assuringly I hear him say to her, "This vast empire, this throne, this crown, all these possessions are mine." And modestly and sweetly she answers, "Yes, and they are mine too." That morning a beggar, that night a queen; that morning clad in "her poor attire," that night robed in the royal purple; that morning in a hovel, that night in a palace; that morning penniless, that night rich in countless treasures. What a change! Oh! whenever a soul is converted in this very act it is wedded to Christ and becomes one with Him; that morning lost, that evening saved; before this, condemned; since then, justified; then a child of wrath, now an heir of glory. And this means that all which belongs

to Jesus as my Saviour belongs also to me. His life is my life; His tears, my tears; His vigils, my vigils; His garden agony, my garden agony; His trial, my trial; His death, my death; His resurrection, my resurrection; His ascension, my ascension; His throne, my throne; His crown, my crown; His righteousness, my righteousness; His glory, my glory; His Heaven, my Heaven. I have a dowered right to all that is His. I am an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus.

Nor is this all. Jesus has gone on before to prepare a place for us. I pass through the pages of the Bible. All that is gorgeous in imagery, all that is rich in thought, and all that is elevating and inspiring in prospect are heaped together in bewildering magnificence to give some sort of notion, some glimmer, some faint inkling of what God has in store for those who love Him. Heaven is a paradise; is a country; is a kingdom; is a palace; is a temple; is a banquet; is an inheritance that fadeth not away. There they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." We cannot dwell on these. Take that one description of a city contained in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Revelation, where is there anything to be compared with it? New York City after all only

covers a little patch, just a dot of land along the North River, some fifteen miles long and less than three miles wide. Yet this is the largest city on the continent and one of the greatest cities in the world. But look at this description. A city one thousand five hundred miles square! From New York to Buffalo, less than five hundred miles; from New York to Chicago, nearly a thousand miles; from New York to St. Paul in Minnesota, about fifteen hundred miles. From Maine to the south of Florida less than fifteen hundred miles. "And the city lieth foursquare." The loftiest mountains on the globe are about five miles high, yet they pierce far through the clouds, and their summits are lost in the azure. But here is a resplendent city rising one thousand five hundred miles in height. Our greatest mountains would be less than mole-hills; would be invisible beside it. Flung around this mighty, massive city is a wall of deep red jasper—symbol of the shielding blood of Christ. Its twelve gates of white silvery pearl typify holiness, for nothing that defileth can ever enter there. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus we have the names of the twelve jewels which flashed from the breast-plate of the high priest, "ardent with gems oracular." But the very foundations of this golden city are laid in the same twelve precious stones. Their mystic meaning has been suggested. The deep red



jasper is the symbol of suffering; the sky-blue sapphire, the symbol of truth; the white glistening chalcedony, the symbol of purity; the rich green emerald, the symbol of hope; the veined sardonyx, the symbol of discipline; the blood-red sardius, the symbol of love; the golden-green chrysolite, the symbol of a glory manifest; the wonderful sea-pure beryl, the symbol of bliss; the sunlit rapture of the topaz, the symbol of joy; the flame and azure chrysoprase, the symbol of peace; the purple jacinth and amethyst blend in promises of further regal glory. But that is not all. There is more than this.

“ A Heaven without my Saviour  
Would be no Heaven for me;  
Dark were its walls of jasper,  
And rayless its crystal sea.

“ There, not to one created thing  
Shall our embrace be given,  
But all our joy shall be in Christ,  
For only Christ makes Heaven.”

The created must always be the conditioned and the limited. Give a child a toy to-day and it will outgrow it and want something more to-morrow. Give a man an estate and, unsatisfied, he will go on at once and seek after another. Give Alexander the Eastern civilized world and tradition tells us that it found him weeping because he had not other worlds to conquer. The

human soul will outgrow all created things. It must have something higher if it is to be forever happy. And it is here that this wondrous statement of the Apostle comes in: we are "heirs of God" Himself. The Psalmist exclaims, "My soul panteth after the living God." "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." What cared the Armenian princess, of whom Xenophon tells us, though all her earthly goods had been taken from her and destroyed? She has her noble husband yet who so bravely offered to die for her, and she is rich in him. His thought belongs to her, his affection is her property, his strong arm is her defence. She owns him, and in this possession she feels herself still a queen. So it is with the Christian. "With all His gifts and graces, with all His attributes and perfections, Jesus is mine. His head is mine to rule over me and keep me in subjection to Himself; His heart is mine to love me with more than a mother's tenderness; His eyes are mine to watch over me in all my ways; His feet are mine to run after me when I am going astray; and His hands are mine to lift me to His shoulder rejoicing, and bring me to His fold again." The infinite, exhaustless, uncreated God Himself becomes the portion and heritage of His people.

On the longest day in summer, the twenty-first of June, in 1887, the jubilee of Queen Victoria's long reign was celebrated in London with unprece-

dented splendor. It is said to have been the greatest State pageant in all English history. Nothing to be compared with it has ever been seen in modern Europe. Representatives from every civilized court in the world were there; not only from America and Europe, but also from Japan, from Siam, from every remote colony, and from every distant quarter of the globe. Eleven carriages filled with Indian and eastern princes swept along the route in gay oriental attire, making the first division of the procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey. Fifteen carriages, filled with royal visitors from other lands, made up the second division of the procession. Ten carriages, occupied by the royal family of England and their relatives, made the third division. Thronged and packed as never before were the streets of London, while the roofs of the buildings were gay with clouds of bunting and decorations. How the troops deployed! How the cheers went up in one unbroken chorus during the whole six miles from the Palace up Constitution Hill, along Piccadilly, to the Abbey! How filled to the door was the venerable cathedral itself! Ten thousand illustrious men and women gathered within its massive walls. Never before in the world's history had so many kings and princes and dignitaries of State assembled under one roof. The golden sunlight streamed in through the colored

windows. The iridescence of many rainbows glowed in the long spaces between the pillars. With their gorgeous uniforms the interior of the cathedral became one blaze of magnificence. How the bells of the city pealed forth from all the churches, how the fanfares of silver trumpets rang out on the air, how the cannon thundered, how the grand old organ rolled out its great notes of thanksgiving! When the Queen entered the Abbey the whole assemblage rose to their feet and, led by a great choir, ten thousand voices joined as one in singing the national anthem, "God save our gracious Queen." Men and women burst into tears. The scene was simply overwhelming. There, among the illustrious dead and among the illustrious living, a great nation did all it could to show its loyalty and devotion to a beloved sovereign. And at night the hilltops of England and Wales blazed with bonfires.

On the day that all this was going on in London, and near the same hour, I stood with a little company of sad friends in a lone, sequestered spot on the banks of the Hudson. At our feet the silvery waters of the beautiful river overhung with a light dreamy mist which half concealed and half revealed a fleet of snow-white sails. About us the still pomp of the listening mountains. Above us a quiet brood of quiet sky. Around us the rich foliage of June, the blossoms of summer, and the songs of birds. At our feet the fresh earth of a

new made grave. In the little white casket the angel form of one of our infant class Sunday-school scholars. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." And as we stood there the thought came: Oh! if I could only follow the flight of that sweet spirit home to the city of our God, if these poor eyes of flesh were only opened like those of the servant of Elisha, what a scene would break upon my view! Angels above, angels beneath, angels before, angels behind, a convoy of angels on every hand. Speeding over the plains of light it went in a "chariot of gold of the seventh refining." Up, up, sweeping through the gates of the celestial city, while all the bells yonder are pealing forth their joy. On, on, up to the foot of the throne, then the Master taking the weary one in His bosom and saying, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Great Britain did her best, but all that brilliant pageantry was only as a glow-worm's spark, only as a child's toy, only as nothing to the unfading glory which awaits the ransomed home. There is no nobility like that of Heaven; no royalty like that of the skies. Far better when yon "shrivelled skies are like a banner furled" to belong to the family of God, than to have any distinction which this poor earth can show.

"We speak of the realms of the blest,  
That country, so bright and so fair,  
And oft are its glories confessed,  
But what must it be to be there!"



## **Two Tests Applied to Christianity.**





## Two Tests Applied to Christianity.



*"Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."*—JOHN iv. 42.



We are to consider to-night a subject of the greatest importance. Can we know with any degree of positive certainty that the Bible is of God, and that its teachings are absolutely and unquestionably divine? On this whole matter, is it possible for us to get out of the realm of mist, and the quagmires of peradventure, and plant our feet upon the solid rock? Other nations have had their religions; how can we know that the religion of Jesus is the only one that has come from above? Other religions have had their sacred books, too; how can we tell that this book alone contains God's special message addressed to a sinful world? If it can be proved that the Bible is divinely inspired, then the most stupendous consequences follow. We want to be right. We want to make no mistake. We want to leave this world in peace. We want to have every preparation that a soul should have to fit it for the life to come. Can we know that what this old book tells is cer-

tainly true, and that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of men. We can ; and my purpose is to hint at a few of the proofs we have that the Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and Gethsemane and Calvary, that mysterious Being of deep griefs and untold sorrows, was the God-man, the Saviour of sinners, and that He is still in the world working His wonders of transforming and renewing power.

There are many inviting and tempting lines of argument into which we cannot now enter. Put the sacred books of paganism, for example, beside the Bible, and you will want no further evidence. The silly, absurd stories which abound in the former, with the jealousies and quarrels of their impure gods, and the sties of moral pollution in which they wallow, are no more to be compared with the teachings of this book than are their pitiable, grotesque idols to be put side by side with the exalted monotheism of revelation. Then again, there are the facts of history. The astonishing discoveries that have been made, and that are still constantly coming from the plains of Babylon, and from the ruins of ancient Egypt, where the inscriptions on brick and stone, in tomb and temple and palace, on rock and wall, tally and match, fact by fact, with the teachings of God's Word. The very mummy of the Pharaoh of the oppression, Rameses II., now lies in the museum of Bulak, near Cairo in Egypt. Then there is the

line of argument from fulfilled prophecy, from miracles, and from multitudes of other sources, all converging toward the same sublime conclusion. Our text, however, limits us to two lines of thought.

I. We believe because of the testimony of others. "He told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" declared this witness to the people of Sychar. And they believed because of her saying.

II. We believe because we ourselves have experienced. "We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." This presents the evidence which comes from our own consciousness.

"Here," you say, "is the New Testament story: A child is born of a virgin, in a little town called Bethlehem; He grew up in Nazareth, worked with hammer and adze, and saw and plane, in a carpenter shop until He was about thirty years of age, is alleged to have wrought many miracles, delivered certain remarkable discourses, gathered about Him a few followers, was put to death; rose three days after, was seen for forty days after He came back from the dead. Then one day He led out His followers to the summit of a little hill, and while He spake His feet ceased to press the ground, and He rose majestically in the air, until a cloud enveloped Him and He was wafted away to His

native skies. Now," you say, "there are nearly nineteen hundred years since all this is said to have taken place, and this is a very long time. All the alleged witnesses have been dead and buried for eighteen centuries. It took place, too, in a dark, superstitious age, and on the other side of the globe. How can I be sure that any of these events ever occurred? Might not His disciples be deceived, or be deceivers? Oh, if I had only been there myself! Had I seen Him cleanse the leper, and open the eyes of the blind, and feed the hungry thousands on the green sward, and walk on the ridges of the deep, and raise the dead; had I seen Him for myself after His resurrection, and walked with Him and talked with Him and ate with Him and drank with Him and beheld Him rise and melt away into the azure, then I would be sure; but it is so long since this is said to have occurred, and we have only the testimony of others for it, that I don't know what to think or believe." Let me say:

1. That the age of Christ was not a dark but an enlightened one; Rome was in the very zenith of her intellectual and material splendor; it was the time of her greatest poets and historians and philosophers. Palestine, too, abounded with great schools of learning.

2. Instead of being credulous, it was a period of doubt and disbelief and widespread scepticism.

Philosophy had destroyed faith in heathen divinities. The exquisite temples of the old world were sinking into ruin and decay. The people had deserted them. Belief was gone. The condition of paganism is well illustrated in Pilate looking into the face of Jesus, and sadly asking "What is truth?" The condition of Judaism is typified in the disciples, "slow of heart to believe," and refusing all evidence until compelled to accept it in the face of infallible proofs.

3. The disciples could not be deceived, for they had seen Jesus after His resurrection, not once, but often. He was seen of them singly, in small companies, in large companies, by over half a thousand at once, seen of them in the house, on the road, in the city; on the mountain, by the sea; seen in the night, in the twilight, in the full blaze of day; He walked with them, talked with them, explained the Scriptures to them, showed them the prints of the nails and the spear, until all doubt was banished, and incredulity itself was satisfied. With a sob of joy, and a transport of wonder, we hear the thrilling confession: "My Lord and my God."

4. They could not be deceivers, for they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by their avowal. For the expression of their belief in the resurrection they were hated, scourged, beaten, bruised, treated as the filth of the earth, hunted

like wild beasts, pursued into strange cities, yet not one of them ever recanted. In the most distant lands they laid their heads down upon the martyr's block, and the word that quivered from them in their dying breath was, "Jesus is risen." Nor is this all. Up to the time of the crucifixion we find them irresolute, timid, bickering, quarrelling among themselves. They denied Him. They forsook Him and fled at the first blush of danger. Fifty days after the resurrection we find them at Pentecost transformed into moral giants, facing Jerusalem, facing the world, counting it all joy to suffer, glorying in tribulation, renouncing everything, fearing nothing, courting every danger, welcoming death. Every effect must have an adequate cause. Nothing can account for this complete revolution in the whole character of these disciples but the fact that Jesus was risen from the dead, and that *they knew He was risen*.

5. We are in a better position to judge of the truth of Christianity to-day than had we lived in Palestine in the time of Christ. You may occupy a place so close to a painting that the picture will be blurred. You must stand back a certain distance. A soldier who fought in the ranks at Gettysburg told me that he knew almost nothing of what was going on around him. What with the noise and smoke and excitement and confusion, the moans of the dying, and the shouts of

the living, he knew only what was transpiring within the little circle where he stood. In order to understand the grand strategy and the masterly military movements, the reason of the massing and the hurrying of troops, one would need to be out of the battle, away back, on some distant eminence where he could survey the whole field. Although thirty years have passed since the war closed, we are not able to judge of it as the true historian shall hereafter. We are only collecting the facts yet. We have a far better estimate of the true character of Washington than they had in the time in which he lived. Then there were those who opposed him, slandered him, hated him; and there were those, too, who believed in him, honored him, and were ready to die for him. Had we lived in his day, among so many clashing opinions, we would not know, perhaps, what to accept. It took time for the smoke of passion to clear away, and now he stands out colossal, one of the purest and the grandest figures in all secular history. Cromwell was born nearly three hundred years ago. He beheaded Charles I., and his own body was taken from its grave and hanged on a gibbet. It is only in recent times, chiefly through the writings of the late Thomas Carlyle, that the real magnificence of his character has come to be understood. Over two hundred years had to go by before a correct history of that

greatest man of his age could be written. I understand the Reformation now far better than if I had lived among the excitements and confusions of that disturbed period. I know what Jesuitism is to-day much more thoroughly than if I had lived in the sixteenth century and witnessed the strange fervor of Ignatius Loyola, its Spanish founder.

Now, then, we really have a great advantage over those who lived on earth when Christ appeared among men. Some said He had a devil, and wrought His wonders by satanic agency. The leaders of the people hated Him. His footsteps were dogged, and they crucified Him amid jeers and execrations. Others clung to Him as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. Had you lived among these excited and clashing opinions, you might have hesitated ; but now we have all that the disciples had, backed up and buttressed by all the cumulative evidence of eighteen centuries. We know what Christianity is. We know what it has done for the world. We know what it is doing now. It has had time to show itself in its true character. It has blotted out nameless sins; banished human slavery, exalted womanhood, ennobled childhood, transfigured and blessed humanity, dried up earth's sorrows, and sent millions singing home to glory. We speak of the miracles which Christ wrought while on earth ; but mightier mar-



vels, "greater works than these," are being accomplished by Christ every day. Men like Augustine, Bunyan, Newton, Col. Gardiner, Thomas Annan—men from the gutter, and the prison, and the lowest slums of vice, the very refuse of Satan, have been taken and lifted up, and washed and cleansed and ennobled, until they have shone as stars of glory in the firmament of God. Christianity is divine, for its signs and wonders and triumphs have never ceased from the earth. Banish the religion of the Bible from the land, close our churches, extinguish our altar fires, scatter our Sunday-schools, do away with the Christian Sabbath, and let fifty years go by, so that the influences of Christian teaching may in a measure disappear, and you would not need to go to the future life to find a hell. You would have it right here in New York. A prominent man said solemnly the other day that he would rather take the life of his daughter with his own hand than have her live the life that would be assigned to her if there was no religion in the world. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

II. Our text brings before us, too, the proof that comes from personal experience. "We have heard him ourselves, and know." Quoting from the revised version, we find in John vii. 17 these words: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God

or whether I speak from myself." There is a principle of the utmost value in this passage. It means: Supply the necessary and invariable preceding condition, and you will know for yourself. Will to do His will and then you will know of the teaching. Now this is perfectly scientific. It is the test which is everywhere required. If you want to know for yourself about medicine, then go to a medical school, and acquaint yourself with its teachings; having supplied these preceding requirements, you will become possessed of the desired information. If you want to know about the history of a country, get the best text-books and master their contents; the consequence will be that you will have the wished-for knowledge. If you want to know about astronomy, some of its wonderful generalizations, how men can predict eclipses, and measure the velocity of light, and weigh the suns; study astronomy—supply the condition, and then you can ascertain. If you want to become acquainted with the contents of a book, there is only one way—read the book. The same applies to all departments of knowledge. If I want to know for myself the truth about anything, no matter what, then I must supply the preceding condition, and only then can I ascertain. Some one may tell me that the squares on the two sides containing a right angle are together equal to the square on the side subtend-

ing the angle. I may accept that as a matter of faith from others. But when I have studied my Euclid, I know it just as truly as did Archimedes, when he rushed through the streets of Athens, shouting "Eureka," "I have found it."

Now, Christianity occupies precisely that same scientific ground. Supply the conditions, and you will know. Repent of your sins and renounce them. Cast them off, and become dead to them. Accept of the Lord Jesus as your all-sufficient Saviour, and then you will ascertain in your own deepest consciousness that Christianity is divine. You will receive a new power, a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, new aspirations, new hopes. Old things will pass away, and all things will become new. Test it and you will find out. There is something about Christianity that somehow has made drunken men sober, that has made irritable men gentle, that has made degraded men pure, that has robbed death of its terror, and sent unnumbered multitudes with the glow of a holy smile on their faces, into eternity. What is that mysterious, transforming *something*? Supply the preceding condition, and you will know. "If any man will do his will," he will know of the doctrine. I cannot define it. I cannot describe it. It passeth knowledge. You must experience it for yourself if you would find out. Nor need we be surprised at this. Take the simplest thing. I

hold in my hand an orange. Let me assume that you have never seen an orange before, and I undertake to describe to you what it tastes like. Like an apple? pear? plum? peach? No. The only way for you to find out is to taste it for yourself, and then you will know all about it. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good";

"The love of Jesus, what it is,  
None but His loved ones know."

It is Frank Moore in his "Women of the War" who tells us of an officer in a Rhode Island battery who was severely wounded by a fragment of a shell near Richmond. He was removed to Washington, where he underwent a critical operation. It was the last year of the great civil struggle and the third of his service, though he was now only twenty-one. Immediately on receipt of a telegram, his mother hurried away from her New England home on the earliest train and reached Washington at midnight. But the strictest orders had been issued that no one should be admitted to the ward, as the slightest excitement might prove fatal to him. She was compelled to sit in an adjoining room waiting anxiously for morning to come, when she hoped to obtain permission to enter from the surgeon. A nurse sat at his bedside fanning his fevered brow and anon resting her fingers on his fluttering pulse. At length the ward grew still and dark and the patient seemed

to be asleep. The kind nurse glided out unnoticed and told the mother that she might go in softly and take her place beside him. He seemed to be sleeping and probably would not know the difference. Without uttering a word she came in noiselessly, seated herself beside the bed and began fanning him as directed and then laid her fingers on his pulse. But though apparently sleeping the poor sufferer at once noticed the change in the touch. Opening his great beautiful eyes he said, "That feels like mother's hand. Who is this beside me? It is my mother! Turn up the gas and let me see mother," and they met in one long, joyful, sobbing embrace. He knew her gentle, soothing touch. Once you feel the touch of Jesus you will never forget it, for there is no other hand like His.

In my church there are half a dozen men whose united testimony would establish any fact to the complete satisfaction of any court of justice; would send anyone in the city to the electric chair. They are men of known probity and integrity of character. These men come forward voluntarily in our devotional meetings, and in the most solemn way testify that under certain definite conditions, by repenting of their sins, and accepting Christ as their personal Saviour, their lives have been completely changed. They have a consciousness of pardon, and of power to triumph over tempta-

tion. They know that they are saved. Now, I can take these six, and multiply their number to fifty, or five hundred, or fifty thousand men of like character and intelligence and conviction who would testify to the same thing. They would do it in the most solemn circumstances, and repeat it with their dying breath. They are not deceivers. They are clear-headed, wide-awake, successful men that could not be misled. Then I can take this number and increase it again unto a multitude in number like the sands of the sea, from all ages, from every condition, from every land, in every class of circumstances.

“ They with united breath,  
Ascribe their glories to the Lamb,  
Their triumph to His death.”

Now what are you going to do with all this united testimony to this one blessed fact? If anything in the universe can be proved beyond all possibility of question by the most indisputable evidence; if there is any fact that is certain, by the unanswerable testimony of the mightiest and truest and noblest, and the best of all ages; it is the one central fact that the Lord Jesus Christ saves His people from their sins. He who rejects this, rejects what is established and proved as surely as that the sun is in the heavens.

You cannot go back to heathenism. You would not sink into the degradations of Moham-

medanism. But then, is not modern science going to take the place of all religion? Will it not do everything for us? Science is lauded to the skies. She is the goddess of liberty. She is going to make the world happy. Hers is the harp of Orpheus that is to sing the world into harmony, and allure the shade of sweet Eurydice back from the underworld. Science will dry up the world's tears, and comfort her sorrows. So they tell us.

Some years ago, there appeared in England a little tract by Dr. J. Parker, which was afterwards republished in this country. It is entitled "Scientific Sympathy, or Job's Comforters." The writer imagines, in this brochure, a person in some such deep distress as that in which the patriarch Job was found. Fortune all taken away at a stroke, his children perished out of his sight, himself wasted to a shadow with disease, his heartless wife bitterly speaking of suicide as the "only release from grief so unendurable," and in the sore anguish of his wounded soul, the stricken man is lying on the ground moaning in suffering, bewailing his cruel fate, and sobbing bitterly after his lost children.

The author then imagines three of the most distinguished men of modern times coming, like Job's three friends, with *scientific comfort* to console him. The three men were John Stuart Mill, the materialist, Huxley, the naturalist, and Dar-

win, the evolutionist. They bent in genuine sympathy over him. They offered him the very best that science could bring. They talked learnedly of protoplasm, and molecular disturbance, and microscopic fungus, and a white brown fluid in the heads of animals, and cosmic spaces and chemistry, and oxygen and hydrogen and carbolic acid, and decomposition, and told him that the bodies of his dead children might yet nourish plants and animals. And they talked, and they talked, and they talked, until the poor, patient, wearied man arose in his anguish and indignantly drove them all away, and then he turned his tear-streaming face to the sky, and there was light in the cloud, and Jehovah answered out of the whirlwind. Job's comforters of old were princes in sympathy compared to the cold, cruel, mocking, scientific comfort that this hard world could give. It has nothing that can speak pardon to the soul, or heal her wounds, or whisper hope. Miserable comforters are ye all ! The human heart, in its deepest longings, hungers after the living God, and He alone can satisfy.

In his *Moor of Venice*, Shakespeare tells us how the beautiful Desdemona lay asleep in her bed-chamber, when her cruel, crafty husband, Othello, entered the room with a lighted candle in one hand, and a dagger in the other to murder her. As he beheld her snowy beauty before him,



sleeping so sweetly in her innocent loveliness, he paused; his conscience smote him, and he shrank back abashed from the frightful crime. Then he concluded that he must put out the candle so that he could not see her, before he would commit the dark deed. Yet all the while his soul was deeply troubled. You remember what he said:

“Put out the light, and then put out the light.  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore  
Should I repent me; but once put out thine,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume.”

Ah, friends, put out the light of history, and history will repeat itself and rise and write itself anew. Put out the light of song, other singers will yet appear, and the air will throb with their melodies. Put out the light of philosophy; it was extinguished once and it kindled again on a brighter shrine. Put out the light of discovery; other Columbuses will come, and the hidden continents and the unknown islands will emerge from the trackless waves. Put out the light of invention; and the same mind which captured the secret once, will watch and track it afresh. Put out the light of civilization; that has been frequently done and a better has arisen upon the ruins of the old. Put out all knowledge, all literature, all advance-

ment; extinguish the torch of them all, and the race that found out these once will in time restore them. But once put out the light of this blessed Bible, awakening a morning in a hundred lands, filling the dark valley of the shadow of death with the golden beams of the Sun of Righteousness, lighting up the whole pathway from the City of Destruction up to the Celestial Gate; the candle of the soul; the torch of earth; the glory of the skies; *once put out this light*, and there remains no more altar at which a world's hopes can be re-kindled, and therefore:

“ Should all the forms that men devise  
Assail my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”



## The Years of Silence.



## The Years of Silence.



*"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."*—LUKE ii. 52.



Herod, misnamed the Great, died in the city of Jericho, about April first, in the year 750 of the founding of the city of Rome. He passed away in the seventieth year of his age, after having reigned thirty-seven years. Thirty-four of these years he reigned in Jerusalem, having captured the city from the Parthians. He was one of the most atrocious men who ever lived. Suffering from an indescribably loathsome disease, he acted like a madman. About two weeks before he died over forty Jews were burned alive at his command in Jericho. Five days before his death he had, by Augustus's permission, the pleasure of murdering his own son, Antipater. Three thousand of the leading men of the Jewish nation were collected by him and shut up in the hippodrome at Jericho, with strict instructions that as soon as he passed away they should be slain, in order, as he expressed it, "that there should be such mourning as men usually expect at a king's death," an order which was mercifully not obeyed. This

was the Herod who slew the innocents at Bethlehem. Amid much barbaric splendor he was buried in the castle of Herodium, near Bethlehem. "The body was carried upon a golden bier, embroidered with very precious stones of great variety, and it was covered over with purple, as well as the body itself; he had a diadem upon his head, and above it a crown of gold; he also had a sceptre in his right hand" (Josephus, Book xvii. 8, 3). His son Archelaus succeeded him in Judea, and reigned nine years, when he was banished. After this that portion of Palestine was incorporated into the province of Syria, and governed by a Roman procurator, who made his home at Cæsarea. According to Andrews, Jesus would have been a little over a year old when Herod died. All these changes had, therefore, taken place before He, at the age of twelve, visited the temple. The bell had struck. A new era was ushered in. Shiloh had come, and the sceptre had departed from Judah.

From Bethlehem to Egypt, and then back to Nazareth, came Joseph and Mary with the Holy Child. There Jesus remained till He was about thirty years of age. We have a few gleams of light athwart the darkness and silence of these mysterious years. "And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." In His youth we see Him once up at the passover in Jerusalem,

hearing and asking questions of the doctors of the law. To the troubled inquiries of Joseph and Mary He replied with the words, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Then we are told that He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them. We have also the words of our text: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." We know that Joseph was a carpenter, for Jesus was called the carpenter's son. We know that Jesus Himself was a carpenter, for they asked, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Juda, and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" John informs us that "neither did his brethren believe in him," and Mark adds that His own kinsmen said of Him after He had called the twelve, when a great throng crowded around Him, that He was beside Himself, and they sought to lay hold on Him. Gather up the whole, and what comes to us from it?

I. There was a changeable and an unchangeable side in the person of Christ. As to His deity He could say, "I and my Father are one." "Before Abraham was, I am." God was His Father, an expression which signified equality with God. He had a glory with the Father, before the world was. The Word was God, and the Word became

flesh and "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Ours is a wondrous Saviour, because He is divine. There are mysteries connected with the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord, but there are mysteries in everything. If God can reveal Himself through nature, through firmament, and star, and storm, and mountain, and valley, and modest flower, why should He not incarnate Himself in nobler human form, and speak through human lips, and answer definitely the questions of my wildly-beating heart, and settle forever the problems which gather around my anxious soul? If God is love, the incarnation is a necessity.

Men have speculated curiously as to when it was that Jesus became divine. Was it only at His baptism, when the Spirit descended on Him like a dove? Some have thought so; but this cannot be true. When He was at the temple, at the age of twelve years, He knew that His Father's business was His mission. And what mean the angels' message and the guiding star, and the visits of Gabriel, the inspiration of Anna, and the song of Simeon, and the wonders in the sky, if from the very beginning He was not God manifest in the flesh, as divine when He rested upon the bosom of Mary, as when He stilled the storm, or raised the dead, or hung upon the cross and said, "Finished," and drooped His head and



died? He died as no other man died; He lived as no other man lived; He was born as no other man was born, because He was like no other man. From cradle to cross, and from cross to crown, and yet at the right hand of power, as our King and Mediator, He is the God-man, the Saviour of the world.

II. Then there was the mutable, the changeable, the human side. Sin excepted, He was in all respects as we are. There was physical and mental and spiritual development; the blade, and the ear, and the full corn in the ear. And this does not argue any imperfection. An acorn may be perfect as it lies in the ground; the little twig which grows from it, and which is six inches in height, may be perfect; the shrub which grows from this also may be perfect; the young tree from this may be perfect; and the giant oak of the forest may be perfect too. Each in its degree; each in its place; each in the fulness of its measure. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." As Dr. G. D. Boardman says: "He was a real babe, with a babe's dawning consciousness; a real child, with a child's feelings and thoughts and griefs and joys; a real youth, with a youth's buoyancies and temptations and aspirations and opening vistas of vocation; a real man, with a man's full sense of mission or Christhood." It is with the human

side of Christ's person that we deal specially this morning.

III. Rousseau, the Frenchman, is credited with the remark that "the conception and delineation of such a character as that of the man Christ Jesus, by such men as the fishermen of Galilee, would have been a greater miracle than the actual existence of such a man." This is nowhere more noticeable than in the silence which hangs over His earlier years. One sentence from Jesus' lips at twelve is all we have until in the waters of Jordan, when He was about thirty years of age, He said to John at His baptism, "Suffer it to be so now." From His childhood in Nazareth until He was twelve, silence. From twelve to thirty, eighteen years of silence. Afterwards it was said "Never man spake as this man." With equal truth could it now be said: Never man was silent like this man. Now, biographers, left to themselves, would not have so written the story. You all know how fond we all are of incidents in the childhood of great personages. We love to find in these pre-intimations of their coming manhood. "The child is father to the man." So strong is this curiosity that men overstepped the bounds, and in the early centuries they invented apocryphal gospels, filling the obscurity of these years of silence with such prodigies and wonders as they thought appropriate to His divine origin and mis-

sion. These books were written by Christians, too, not by enemies.

Place such productions as the Protevangelium of James, the gospels of the Nativity of Mary, of Pseudo-Matthew, of Thomas, of Nicodemus, the Arabic gospels of the Childhood, the history of Joseph the Carpenter and other similar writings alongside of the sublime records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In the former we have stories which tell us how the animals in the stable where Jesus was born constantly adored Him; how He shone like a pillar of light in the arms of His virgin-mother when He was seen by Simeon and Anna at the presentation in the temple; how dragons and lions and leopards and wolves grew tame and gathered round and escorted the holy family on the way as they fled to Egypt, worshipping and adoring Him with the greatest reverence; how at His command the lofty palm bowed down its topmost branches to the ground that Mary might partake of the fruit and then accommodatingly arose from its roots that a spring of water might come forth; how demons in the shape of crows and serpents were seen escaping from the head of a demoniac boy who accidentally came in contact with one of His garments; how He changed a bewitched mule into a man; how a city of idols was transformed by Him into heaps of sand; how at Naza-

reth He moulded twelve sparrows out of soft clay and at His bidding they flew chirping away; how a boy who stumbled against Him fell dead; how he changed His playmates into kids and then back again into boys; how He stretched out with His hands pieces of wood to the required length in the carpenter shop; how He carried water home in His garment and scores of similar preposterous and wicked prodigies. And these are just the kind of absurdities that men, even good men, would have fallen into had they fabricated the story of the life of Jesus. Human thought was not equal to any such conception. The darkness and caricatures of the one bring out by their very contrast the light and the reality of the other. How impressive and dignified the silence which hangs over the hills of Nazareth over against the foolish prattle of these fictitious stories! The sagacious author of "Ben Hur" retains the dignity of his picture of the Saviour by never putting any words of his own in the lips of his Christ. All his sayings of Jesus are in the language of Scripture. No writer, however gifted, could construct anything that would not appear puerile when attributed to the God-man, and General Lew Wallace shows his wisdom in not daring to attempt it.

The sublimity of the four gospels could only come from men who wrote as they were moved

by the Holy Ghost. On their very face they bear the evidence of their superhuman origin.

An analogy has been observed between the early typical, and this diviner shrine. When Solomon's temple was erected in Jerusalem, every part was so fitted and finished, that during the years of construction, "neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron was heard in the house." "The noiseless fabric" grew as grow the trees, and the blossoms, and the grass of the fields. Tier by tier, wall by wall, pillar by pillar, it arose in solemn, majestic, reverent silence, until all was finished. That ancient structure was a type of Christ. "Destroy this temple" (His body) "and in three days I will raise it up again." In silence rose the great house of worship on Mount Moriah. In silence, one thousand years after, God builded a temple far more glorious among the sweet hills of Galilee with sacrifice of nobler worth, with incense of richer prayer, enshrining within the true Shekinah. And this is God's way of doing things. The great forces which govern the world work silently. The stars move silently through the sky. The power which ties the planets to the skies acts silently; and Christ, in like manner, grew up also in silence.

IV. And yet we know something of His environment. It was in Galilee. It was at Nazareth. "If a person wishes to be rich, let him go north ;

if he wants to be wise, let him go south." This was a common saying among the Jews. Judea was barren, desolate, sombre, with bare hills and limestone heights, and deep valleys, and solitary plains, having renowned Jerusalem for its centre, with its great rabbinic schools. Men from all over the world went there who wanted to be learned in the law. Galilee was otherwise. Upper Galilee was covered with rolling hills and glorious mountains. Lower Galilee was filled with the most fertile valleys. Josephus speaks of it as "a terrestrial paradise." All fruits were said to grow to perfection there. All known trades were carried on within its borders. Fishing in the lake was free to everyone. Josephus tells us that in the time of Christ there were two hundred and forty towns and villages in Galilee, each with a population of not less than fifteen thousand. Nazareth is not mentioned directly in the Old Testament, nor anywhere by Josephus. It did not bear a good name. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathaniel, of the neighboring town of Cana. "He shall be called a Nazarene," which was a term of reproach. The word Nazareth means, in Hebrew, "a branch," and Christ is often called a branch in the Old Testament. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch (netzer) shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah xi. 1).

The village of Nazareth was situated sixty miles to the north of Jerusalem, in a cup-like valley, amid the mountains of lower Zebulun, just where they dip into the plain of Esdraelon. It was hidden among the hills in one of the most lovely and secluded spots on earth. Dr. Robinson counted fourteen mountain-tops in the eminences that swell up around it and shut it in on every side. These mountains range about four or five hundred feet above the little village in the steep valley below, and the valley itself is nearly twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea. Flowers of every hue in the richest profusion and freshness of color are there. Fruit of every kind, maturing earlier and better there than anywhere else in Galilee. Orchards and groves of olive, of fig, of orange, of pomegranate on every side. White houses, half-covered with rich, trailing vines, embowered amid the groves. One fountain below, where all the villagers came to get their supply of water. Says E. Renan, in writing of Nazareth: "The animals are small, but extremely gentle, lively and graceful, turtle-doves, bluebirds so slight that they alight upon a blade of grass without bending it, crested larks that come almost to the feet of the traveller, little brook-turtles with quick, soft eyes; storks of grave and modest air, putting off all timidity, allow themselves to be approached by man and seem to call him."

Climb up that steep hill to the west, fully five hundred feet high, and look out on one of the most wonderful expanses of scenery in the whole world. The mountains of Galilee, rolling away to snow-capped Hermon, spreading out to the north; the promontory of Carmel, the coasts of Tyre, the broad waters of the Mediterranean to the west; the rich plain of Esdraelon in its mantle of green, and the mountains of Ephraim to the south; the graceful cone of Tabor to the east. The great caravan routes of traffic passed near by, but did not touch this village shut in among the hills. Now let me pause and think.

Christ's teachings show how deeply He was in sympathy with nature. At this fountain "the boy Jesus" came and filled His pitcher; over these hills His footsteps often wandered, "voyaging on strange seas of thought alone." On these heights He learned to retire and pray. As Fairbairn has said, the rural imagery which afterward appeared so much in His discourses came to Him here. Here in His walks He beheld the lilies which shamed the splendor of Solomon, the sower scattering the seed, the vine-dressers pruning away the dead branches, the tares growing with the wheat, the green blade, the sickle in the yellow corn, the fig-tree putting forth its leaves, the shepherd calling his sheep by name



and leading them forth into green pastures, the fox with his hole in the hillside, the sparrow for whom God cared—all these and many other pictures had grown familiar to Him “as He walked in pious meditation, fancy-fed,” over these hills that overlook the village and the fields and the vineyards which clustered around this mountain-hidden home. Its images never forsook Him, and they wove themselves into the teachings of His busy after-years. Nature is God’s oldest Bible. Men had only read a few of its broadest, general lessons. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. i. 20). But ever since Jesus lived in Nazareth every flower and leaf and fruit and bird have been vested with a new and nobler meaning. Everything He touched has grown eloquent with messages of a divine pre-science. Everything He named stands forth as a witness of a Father’s loving care.

V. I know another thing. That home in Nazareth was as holy as it was beautiful. He was subject to His parents. This Galilean maiden to whom the angels came was neither the queen of Heaven, nor the mother of God; she was a sinner saved by grace. It is idolatry to worship her.

She was simply the earthly mother of the holy Child. Mrs. Browning has for her the words:

“Say of me as the angel said, ‘Thou art  
The blessedest of women!’ Blessedest,  
Not holiest, not noblest. No high name  
Whose height, misplaced, may pierce me like a shame  
When I sit meek in Heaven.”

This is the true “Ave Maria.” Yet she was, in every way, a most remarkable woman. She trusted the word of Gabriel; she humbly bowed to the will of God. Then when she sang her wonderful Magnificat among the hills of Judea, almost every expression in that exalted song is taken from the Old Testament. She is “the Eve of a new race. She is the Hannah of the gospel dispensation.” As you listen to her song, you catch echoes from the harps of Miriam, and Deborah, Hannah and David. You think of the thirty-first, the one hundred and thirteenth, and the one hundred and twenty-sixth psalms. It is a blending of old and new, and has been called the last psalm of the Old, and the first hymn of the New Testament. Then you know the sweet life she lived until we part with her at the great pre-pentecostal prayer-meeting in the upper room. Luke tells us that Joseph and Mary went “every year” to Jerusalem to the passover. Joseph is never referred to after the time when Jesus at twelve went up with them, and the tradition is probable, that he died

soon after this visit. What a home must this have been where Jesus lived in Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and His brothers and sisters ! A carpenter shop in one end, and the family in the other of the house in which they dwelt, and which was lighted chiefly from the door. How the Scriptures were revered ! How the Sabbath was honored ! How they went together to the synagogue three times each Sabbath. Here the rolls of the Old Testament were read, which spoke of a coming Seed, a Shiloh, a Prophet like Moses, a son of David, and a virgin who should bear a son upon whose shoulders the government should be laid. "These eyes were homes of silent prayer," and Heaven brooded over that thrice-hallowed spot. I would not lift the veil. But that modest village home in Nazareth is a type of what every home should be. Our earthly dwellings are places where the foundations of character are laid, and where we are fashioned and moulded for the conflicts of life and for the home above. God pity the thousands of children growing up in Christless abodes among the rich and the poor alike, of our cities, where the day of rest, instead of coming as a sweet benediction, comes as a curse. Remember the dwelling at Nazareth, and fashion your home after it.

VI. There was the village school. Says Dr. J. P. Thompson: "Eighty years before Christ, schools

flourished throughout the length and breadth of the land. These schools were free and were for all alike. Education was taken up as a national work and laws were passed, fixing the location and the form of school buildings, the number of children to one teacher, the age of pupils, and the duty of parents in preparing their children for school and in watching over their studies. By much effort a law was passed making education compulsory; but at first that law did not apply to Galilee, yet Galilee had its village schools which were open to all." These places of public instruction were attached to the synagogues. Children were required to attend them from the sixth year of their age. The Bible was the only text-book till they were ten. They began with the book of Leviticus; then they took up the rest of the Pentateuch; after this came the study of the prophets and then the remainder of the books in the sacred canon. Pupils were required to be at least fifteen years old before they could enter the academy. There is no probability that there was anything beyond the primal village school in Nazareth. We find Jesus in His public ministry both reading and writing. Yet He was not recognized as a man of letters. In John vii. 15 we are told that at the Feast of Tabernacles the Jews in Jerusalem greatly marvelled at His teaching and asked, "How knoweth this man letters (*γράφματα*), hav-

ing never learned?" He had never received the special training which fitted men to be rabbis. He had sat at the feet of none of their sages. He did not graduate from any of their great academies. He was pupil neither of the schools of Hillel nor Shammai. Yet there blazed forth a splendor from His teaching which they had never known. He spake as one who had learned nothing from the world. There was an authority about Him which proclaimed Him the direct messenger of Heaven. Yet, as Meyer observes, this "does not necessarily exclude the supposition that during His childhood and youth He made use of the ordinary popular, and in particular of the synagogal instruction." If we accept this view then we go back to His village home and picture to ourselves the schools of these days. "The teacher wore a turban, and a long robe or gown fastened with a girdle about his waist. He sat upon a cushion with his legs crossed under him . . . and the children sat cross-legged in a circle upon cushions on the floor. They had no desks, but held their books or scrolls in their hands; and whatever the teacher told them they would repeat together with him at the top of their voices. One can see just such schools now in Egypt and Syria" (Dr. J. P. Thompson). He who came to be a sympathizing high priest passed through all the experiences of life, and is thus touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

He is the schoolboy's friend. He is here too our example. What a student He must have been ! Think of this pupil in the school of Nazareth and gird yourself to your tasks with fresh courage and hope. He knows all about your struggles, and if you look up to Him He will help you in your work.

VII. There was the school of toil. How pathetic all this is ! Think of Peter the Great laying aside the crown of Russia, and working in the shipyards of Holland and England. And then think of the Son of God laying His glory by, and spending these patient years of toil. The first Adam wrought in the Garden of Eden, the second Adam in the shop of Nazareth. I know not whether it is true, as some have thought, that after the death of Joseph, the burden of supporting the family rested upon Jesus as the eldest son. I know not whether it is true, as Justin Martyr says, that He made ploughs and yokes. Suffice it for me that the one broad word "Carpenter" is written over these eighteen mysterious years. It teaches me:

1. That Christ has ennobled and made sacred all toil. The clerk at his desk, the saleswoman behind the counter, the newsboy selling papers, the sweep upon the street, the washerwoman at her tubs, the mechanic behind the bench—if that be his or her calling, if she or he is doing it in the

fear of God, and ever in the "great Taskmaster's eye," then a work is being done, not unworthy of the archangel, nor beneath the Son of God. All legitimate labor is noble and holy, only let us do it as Christ would have done it. Away from the noises of earth, in the lowly valleys of life, unseen by human eyes, there is many an humble toiler to-day who will yet shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our God. All of us in our varied vocations are to show to others that we have been apprenticed to the Carpenter of Nazareth, and that we have graduated from His school; more honest, more faithful, more trustworthy, better men and women, so that the world will see the difference, and take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

✕ It is said that the working classes are alienated from our churches, and will not attend them. The churches may be in part responsible for this, by turning the cold shoulder to them, and if so, woe to the churches! Christ belonged to the working class. He recognized in all human beings souls of priceless worth, gave them their day of rest, broke the chains of slavery and set them free. All the advantages that working men have in America over those in the heart of Africa they owe to the Bible. They accept the blessings which the Prophet of Nazareth has given to them, homes, friendships, hospitals, culture, advantages that

could only be possible except through Christianity, and yet how often they stop there and reject the Giver. It is the old scene at the cross. They crucified Christ, but parted His garments among themselves. Men are rejecting and crucifying Him to-day, and at the same time are greedily appropriating to themselves the garments with which His holy religion has clothed our civilization.

2. It was a long time to wait, thirty years, for the brief ministry of three and a half, but not a moment of it was wasted. He was about His Father's business in the shop at Nazareth as truly as when He trod the sea. "What a long foreground you must have had for such a start," said one to a writer whose first book came out late in life. By strange disciplines God is preparing us for greater service. "As in nature so in morals ; the slower the crystallization the more perfect and abiding. And all this was as true for the Christ as it is for you and me." Thirty years of almost complete seclusion. Then a few years of intense, infinite action, and His Father's business is finished, and a world redeemed. This far your years may appear barren and fruitless. Your life may seem to you to be hidden away in the obscurity of some Nazareth, some deep-lying valley ; away from the great caravan routes of earth's noisy travel ; shut in from the broad movements that fill the world ;



unheard of outside ; unrecognized by those about thee. Toil on, O Christian ; act well thy part day by day in the obscurity where thou art ; fulfil thy mission now in glorifying thy God and doing thy work ; grow neither weary nor impatient with thy daily task nor thy buried years. For thee, too, over the hills of thy Galilee, will soon be heard the forerunner's cry summoning thee to higher service.





**Christ's Life Unique.**



## Christ's Life Unique.



*"Who is this?"*—MATT. xxi. 10.



It was Sunday of Passion Week. Jesus had left the little suburban village of Bethany, two miles to the east, and passed westward toward Jerusalem, amid the waving of palm branches, and the hosanna shouts of the multitude. When He reached the crest of the Mount of Olives, and the great city suddenly burst full upon His view, spread out in all its magnificence beneath His feet, He beheld it, and broke out into a loud, impassioned lamentation.\* As the procession passed on through the gate toward the temple, the whole city was strangely moved. One great eager question rose uppermost from excited lips all over the city: "Who is this?" This question has come throbbing through the centuries from that day and place down to the present hour. It is being asked on every continent and shore and island of our planet. It is an immortal question.

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\*εκλαυσεν, Luke xix. 41.

It will never be suffered to die. Who was this Babe of Bethlehem, this carpenter of Nazareth, this teacher by the sea, this wonder-worker in the city, this preacher on the mountain and on the green hillside under the blue sky of Palestine nearly nineteen centuries ago? Was He the Messiah that should come? Was He indeed the God-man? Was He an impostor deceiving the people? Was He simply a reformer like many others who have arisen before and since? Or, is this a new star different from all the rest that swims in upon our vision? This is really the central problem of Christianity. If He was divine, then all that He spake was also divine. Then all that He taught about God and the Scriptures and man and sin and salvation and time and eternity are true. The importance of this inquiry is understood now as it never was before. Observe how the life of Christ is being studied at the present time throughout the world, and note the number of works of every kind that are teeming from the presses of both hemispheres on this subject. All this is dense with significance, and rich with the most glorious promise. Christ's life is unique.

I. In its antithesis. Let us glance briefly at the lives of some of the world's greatest sages, and place them side by side with the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We will seek to be perfectly frank and generous; anxious, even, to recognize every

excellency and worth that each of them possessed. The contrast will be as instructive as the study is tempting.

Socrates marked the culmination of the wisdom of ancient Greece. His dialogues are given to us by his pupil Plato, and his memoirs by his pupil Xenophon. He lived about seventy years. He began life as a sculptor; was a profound student, a brave soldier, a wise statesman, a teacher of youth. Unjustly condemned to death, he calmly and courageously drank the fatal hemlock. He was pronounced "the best and happiest of men." He rose, though with much vacillation and uncertainty, above the idolatry about him, to the thought of one supreme God. He discoursed regarding the immortality of the soul, but the processes are labored and difficult. When he reached the summit of his conclusions he faltered and drew back. As has been truly said, a doubtful and uncertain "If" was the highest altitude that poor Socrates ever attained. His personal life was impure. His quarrels with his unhappy wife were the scandal of all Greece. He was haughty and wilful and foolish and passionate. He acknowledged and deplored his own shortcomings. His dying words were a request to his followers to sacrifice a fowl on his behalf. Contrast with all this halting and impurity, the calm, clear, steady, golden light which gathers around the life of the

Son of God. He never hesitates. He never wavers. He *knows*. All the unseen lies spread out before Him as a matter of familiar, perfect cognition. In passing from Socrates to Jesus, it is like leaving a dark night, with a few twinkling stars here and there, for the clear light of perfect day. In a spasm of admiration, Rousseau, the French infidel, was led to exclaim: "If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." A marble statue on the front of a large mound of earth in the fine cemetery of K'iah, China, bears on its front the inscription: "The most sagely ancient teacher, the all-accomplished, all-informed king." It is to Confucius. Although a man whose memory is cherished by perhaps a third portion of our race, he was much inferior to the other great sages of the world. Nevertheless, we readily accord to him his full meed of recognition. He was a man of much worldly sagacity and intelligence. He collected many wise maxims. In a negative and imperfect form, limiting it to his own land, he enunciated the Golden Rule, much as had been done by Aristotle and Isocrates and Hillel. A few of the loftiest minds have vaguely and dimly seen the outlines of this universal precept. But there were the gravest defects. He was simply a compiler and restorer of the old order of things. His face was turned to the past. His stars were all behind.



His blighting influence is seen in the utter stagnation which has continued to exist to this day in China. He divorced his innocent wife. He favored despotism. In anything like a real sense, there was with him no God, no life to come, no sin, no salvation; and there was no prayer upon his lips when he died. When we turn from all this to the pure, worshipping prophet of Nazareth, looking trustingly up into heaven, with the name of "Father" ever upon His lips, and the "many mansions" ever before Him, the friend of the outcast and the suffering, who took into His great loving heart a lost world, and died to save it, we feel as if we had left a stifling charnel house, with bats flitting about in the darkness, for the sweet sunlight of the sky, and the fellowship of the pure and the blessed. The legends tell us that Prince Siddhartha lived at first the life of a gross voluptuary amid all the carnal and sensual sins of a young eastern despot. In a revulsion of feeling, he renounced all these, and established Buddhism. His religion was a great improvement upon the gross Brahmin idolatry from which it was a recoil, and yet how crude and repulsive are his teachings. In his system, everything comes from matter, and there is no personal God. Neither is there freedom of the will, and we are left the slaves of fate. The body is the seat of evil, and has to be made to suffer, hence his unnatural asceticism. In his

doctrine of transmigration, the mother is taught that the soul of her dead child may be in the worm that writhes at her feet, the reptile which hisses across her pathway, or the wild beast that howls in the forest. His highest bliss is Nirvana, "a blowing out" or extinction of being. It is the philosophy of despair. The best that Buddhism can do is "to plant us in a sepulchre, and extol it as our place of rest. Jesus says, 'Roll the stone away from the door of the sepulchre, and the dead come forth to enter upon the joys of the life eternal.'" You are familiar with the widely-known poem on Buddha—"The Light of Asia," by Edwin Arnold. It is romance rather than history, and its imagery is much colored by sentiments borrowed from the Christian faith. During a voyage with Dr. Ashmore, of our Chinese mission, Sir Edwin and he were speaking of this poem, and the comparison which many believed he instituted in it between Christianity and Buddhism. And this is what Arnold said: "No such object was in mind. For me Christianity, rightly viewed, is the crowned queen of religions, immensely superior to every other; and though I am so great an admirer of much that is great in Hindoo philosophy and religion, I would not give one verse of the Sermon on the Mount away for twenty epic poems like Mahabharata, nor exchange the Golden Rule for twenty new Upanishads."\*

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\* Dr. J. A. Broadus, "Jesus of Nazareth," p. 66.

I shall not wait to speak of Mahomet, his one hundred and fifty million followers; his strange life, his marvellous energy, his one God, his prayer, his Koran, his excellencies borrowed from Jews and Christians; and yet his utter perfidy, his blood-thirsty sword, his incendiary torch, his low, voluptuous, sensuous life which stands out everywhere in such complete and utter contrast to the life of Jesus. These men have moulded, and some of them are still moulding, the lives of teeming millions of our race. I return from my rapid survey. I don't want to rest my dying head on a pillow of "Ifs" with Socrates; I am chilled by the blankness of Confucius, an empty, eyeless socket in place of a God, with no voice coming back from beyond the grave; I start back aghast from the hopelessness of Buddha, and shudder from entering the inky cloud where all is silence; I recoil from the loathsome sensuality of Mahomet; his hands are dyed in human gore. I turn away from them all, and now, among the hills of Galilee, I see the youthful form of the Prophet of Nazareth. Oh, Thou Christ of the manger, and the garden, and the cross, and the resurrection, to whom can I go but to Thee, for Thou alone hast the words of eternal life! Thou art this lost world's solitary hope. The humblest cradle taught by Thee lisps a wisdom such as earth's wisdom never knew. "The gray barbarian" is "lower than the Christian child."

These great men but groped and grovelled deep down beneath the shadows, but Thou, the despised, the rejected, the crucified, standest forth as "time's solitary, perfect character, history's transcendent miracle."

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells through the vale, and midway leaves the storm ;  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

II. Christ's life was unique in that it was the theme of distinct and specific prophecy. His coming had been foretold hundreds of years before. The Old Testament was finished about four hundred years before the Christian era. We know that it contains the fullest predictions of the advent of a Messiah. The four gospels alone have two hundred and twenty passages, either directly quoted from, or alluding to, the Old Testament. He was to come during the time of the fourth great kingdom predicted by Daniel, that is, during the days of the Cæsars (Daniel ii. 44). He was to appear before the sceptre departed from Juda, that is, before the death of Herod the Great (Genesis xlix. 10). He was to be born of a virgin (Isaiah vii. 14), in the town of Bethlehem (Micah v. 2), the innocent were to be slain (Jeremiah xxxi. 15), He was to be in Egypt (Hosea xi. 1), He was to be despised and rejected (Isaiah

liii. 3), and yet He was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles (Isaiah xlii. 6). So minute are these predictions that we are told of the very animal He rode when He entered Jerusalem at the time of our text, of the precise sum paid to the traitor, of the indignities of His trial, of the disposition made of His garments, of His thirst and the vinegar they gave Him to drink, of the associates of His death, of His great lonely cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" of the character of His burial. All these, and multitudes more of details are given with the greatest definiteness ages before He was born. Dr. A. T. Pierson forcefully illustrates this thought after the following manner. Take the life of Abraham Lincoln from its lowly beginning all the way up to the President's chair, and then on to its tragic close: Suppose you were to find in the writings of Lord Bacon three hundred years ago, an exact, minute, and detailed description of the life of the coming President, the time of his birth, the name of the place where he would be born, and many precise statements regarding his life. And then stretching back for centuries before Bacon, we would find a long line of other writers in different countries and conditions, all uniting in the same predictions, and each furnishing other and equally important material for this prophetic biography. Let this be conceived of, until in the united predictions, his

whole career would be brought vividly and exactly before us down to the manner and circumstances of its close, so that even the precise words on his dying lips were given, what would we say of it? Yet this is the condition of things we find in the Old Testament. "To him gave all the prophets witness." Going out to Emmaus with the two disciples, we find Him "beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." From the opening promise made in Eden that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," down to the closing prophecy in Malachi, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple," we have a whole system of completest prediction matching the life of Jesus, as the wax matches the seal with which it is stamped. Now, this could not be the result of collusion, or sagacity, or accident. Nothing like it ever took place in the case of any other. And it was because He was Himself different from all others, and came into the world to accomplish a special mission.

III. He is unique in His claims. Elsewhere we have spoken of the thrilling silence which reigns over His youthful years, spent in secluded Nazareth, so unlike the ways of man, so worthy of the Son of God.\* There is the calm, dignified unfolding of a heavenly flower. I look into the

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\* See Sermon on "The Years of Silence."

life of Paul, or Augustine, or Bunyan, or Newton, or Wesley, or Judson, or any other distinguished man of God. I find that the piety of each began with confession of sin and sorrowful contrition for the past. There is some definite experience when the old sinful life is cast aside and a new life begun. Not so with Jesus. Never once in all His life is there the slightest consciousness of the least unworthiness of any kind from the beginning of His life up to its close. Oft alone with God in prayer, in constant communion with the skies; and yet not the slightest shadow of guilt was ever once recognized as resting upon the perfect mirror of His soul. In all His supplications there is no thought of personal forgiveness. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" was His triumphant challenge. The glory of the unseen Father was revealed through Him unto the world. He made the most astonishing statements in reference to Himself. "Come unto me." "I will give you rest." "I am the light of the world," "I am the bread of life," "Follow me," "I am the way, the truth and the life," "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," "I and my Father are one," "The glory that I had with Thee before the world was." Yet, somehow, you are not startled. They are just such statements as seem natural to Him. You expect nothing else from His lips. Indeed, the

one overshadowing thought with which you rise from the careful study of His life is that of meekness and lowliness. When reviled, He reviled not again. The poorest publican and the most out-cast sinner found in Him a friend. It has been well said that "Nature is never prodigal of her gifts. Birds of gay plumage have no song; strength is denied to creatures endowed with swiftness. Thus it is often said, and with justice, that as one man is generally distinguished by the predominance of one virtue or one class of virtues, and another man by the ascendancy of a different kind of excellences, so the union of both might realize perfection. Had the peculiar gifts of John and Paul been blended, the result might have been a perfect apostle. Were the intrepidity of Luther, the tenderness of Melanchthon, and the calm intellect of Calvin combined in one person, you would have the model of a faultless reformer. Had Whitfield possessed Wesley's tact and power of management, or Wesley, Whitfield's restless vigor and burning eloquence, would there not be the type of a complete evangelist?" But in complete symmetry and proportion all the graces and excellencies that adorn humanity were gathered up and displayed in Christ Jesus. He was the only ideal man. "So perfect in every relation of life—so wise in speech, and so pure in conduct—so large in compassion and intense in



beneficence—so replete with everything that charms into attachment and rapture. He was the incarnation of universal loveliness." \*

Now, then, here arise the questions: How could such a plant as this grow out of the narrow, sterile soil of Palestine? How could an era of hatred produce incarnate love? How could a time of cruelty produce infinite pity? How could an age of bloodshed produce the Prince of Peace? How could a period of the most unlicensed indulgence produce stainless purity? Can a rose grow up and bloom upon an iceberg? Can a tree strike down its roots in the sea, and wave its peaceful branches amid the rolling billows? Will a rock produce life? Then tell me how came that cruel, bigoted, sinful age, that despised village, that degraded province, that enthralled country to produce the life of Jesus of Nazareth? Ask the question of Evolution. Could Renan not tell why the valley of Nazareth never produced another Jesus? Whisper this inquiry into the ear of philosophy. Shout it to the world. This answer has been given: Supernatural ideas were His because He was supernatural. Divinity was His because He was divine. Sinlessness was His because He was the Sinless One. Calmness was His because He was the Ancient of Days. Love was His be-

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\* Eadie on the "Divine Love," p. 192.

cause God is love. There is only one answer : "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." \*

IV. Now look at another line of thought. Every effect must have an adequate cause. There is a mighty uplifting force in the world to-day called Christianity. Wherever it has gone darkness has fled before it ; society has been transformed ; men have been raised out of themselves. Before it reaches a country, infanticide meets us at childhood ; womanhood is trampled in the dust ; man is taught to hate ; the young are sold into slavery ; the sick left to die ; the old abandoned to wild beasts—no merciful God above, no peace within, the pall of death over all, and no hope beyond. But let Christianity once touch that shore, and instantly everything is changed. Childhood is tenderly cared for, womanhood exalted, the chains of slavery break, hospitals for the sick, the aged honored and cherished, pure homes, blessed Sabbaths, sweet sanctuary songs ; for a pain, a balm ; for a tear, a smile ; for despair, hope ; death wreathed with a halo of glory, and changed into the gateway of eternal life.

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\* See on this subject " The Character of Jesus," by Bushnell.

Any cause must be at least equal to the sum total of its effects. The energy which inheres in steam simply transmutes itself into the endless activities of machinery which the steam puts in motion. The effect produced cannot be greater than the cause producing it. The fountain-head of water in the great reservoir up among the hills must have power at least equal to the demands of all the watermills below which are set in operation by it. The power is yonder; the effects are seen in the work done here. Now, we only see the smallest part of the influence of Christianity yet. Eternity alone can measure it. But we do see what it has done within these nineteen centuries. Winning its triumphant way in the face of the bitterest hostility, quenching the flames of persecution with its blood, rising above corruption within itself, transfiguring humanity wherever it goes, rearing its colossal monuments in literature and art and song, it now, after the lapse of nearly two millenniums, goes forth among the nations of the earth with all the youthful enthusiasm of Pentecost, to world-wide conquest. These are the effects visible in the world around us. What is the all-sufficient cause of these stupendous transformations? It must be equal to the sum of all the results. Where is the motive power? Where the fountain-head?

I can trace a river back to its source. Deep

grooved into the centuries, I trace the channel of our holy religion back to Bethlehem, to Nazareth, to Gethsemane, to Calvary. Christianity is Christ. Who, then, can He be? His name spoken more often to-day than those of all the great men of earth put together, every letter written in all the foremost nations of the world dated with reference to the time of His birth, the sun never setting on His conquests, all the mountain tops of heathendom even now agleam with His coming glory. And while I ask and wonder, Jean Paul Richter comes to my side, and back through mist and cloud and change, he points to One hanging in darkness and tears, in agony and blood, upon a tree, crying "Father, forgive." And as he points to that scene, he reverently exclaims: "Purest among the mighty, and mightiest among the pure, who with His pierced hand has raised up empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages."

And this gives us a further consideration: The character of a man may be learned from the company he keeps. The more a Hindoo worships Vishnu, the more degraded he becomes, because this idol is more impure than himself. It is so with all idolatry. The nearer the planets get to the sun, the brighter they shine. The farther away they recede in their orbits, the more dim

they grow. This fact alone enables us to determine what the sun must be. So, too, with Christianity. We find this: The more that men drift away from the teachings of the New Testament, the more sinful and degraded they become. On the other hand, just as they turn towards Christ, they grow away from sin, and their lives become transfigured and beautiful. How was it that Saul, the murderous, was changed into Paul—the calm, patient, joyous apostle? Because he got near to Jesus. How was it that Augustine the profligate left his life of shame, and became the world-honored preacher of righteousness? Because he got near to Jesus. How was it that Jerome left his dungeon in Constance, cheerfully ascended the fagots, and sang out his song of triumph until his voice was hushed in the flames of martyrdom? Because he got near to Jesus. How was it that Krishna Pal emerged from his degraded heathenism, and went forth a herald of light to his benighted countrymen? Because he got near to Jesus. How was it that Thomas Annan, the coarse ruffian, became the sweet evangel to “bonnie Dundee”? Because he got near to Jesus. But why multiply examples? There are millions on the earth to-day that are living witnesses to His saving power. A shining host which no man can number would be willing to hush their harps and come down to earth to testify to His redeem-

ing grace. This, then, is my argument: He must be Purity, before contact with Him will make the vilest pure. He must be Courage, before contact with Him can make the timid brave. He must be Holiness, before contact with Him can make a savage holy. He must be Love, before contact with Him can make the most repulsive lovely. I ask no more. "Who then is this?" Only one answer is possible. I fall at His feet and worship: "My Lord and my God." "Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel."

## **The Originality of Christ's Teaching.**





## The Originality of Christ's Teaching.



*"Never man spake like this man."*—JOHN vii. 46.



Officers had been sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus while He was present in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. So deeply impressed were they with the gracious words which fell from His blessed lips that these men returned awed as by an invincible spell, exclaiming, "Never man spake like this man." Such was the confession of His enemies then. Such has been the confession of His enemies ever since. Whole volumes could easily be filled with citations from the self-confessed tributes of His foes. Nor need we be surprised at this. We have already considered the peerless pre-eminence of His personality. We saw that this constitutes its own best evidence, and the very uniqueness of Christ's character proves that He was divine. Now, if this is true, if His life was unlike that of any other, it is but reasonable to expect that His teaching would be in harmony with that life. His words will be as different from those of others as He Himself was

different. A life which is divine will express itself in speech which is equally divine. And this will be made to appear as we proceed. We observe

I. That the teachings of Jesus were independent of His own age. This is saying more than we may at first think. The present sustains a similar relation to the past that the fruit does to the flower. All our progress is an outgrowth from the long history that has gone before. "In to-day already walks to-morrow." "Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." The utmost that we do is to carry forward the development a little farther beyond the results already achieved. From the sure footing that has been trodden, we proceed to new positions. What applies to an age or a country applies likewise to an individual. The most original and independent of our great thinkers are themselves largely the product of the times in which they dwell. Their greatness consists in the fact that they have more profoundly mastered the history of their department of knowledge; that they have more minutely and clearly traced the tendencies of its underlying principles; and that they are able more definitely and distinctly to forecast and shape the future. With the utmost accuracy you can tell the period in which any prominent statesman lived by the sentiments he expresses.

The speeches of a man to-day could not have been delivered in Colonial times. The problems discussed in Europe now could not be attributed to the middle ages. Even the greatest men of genius are no exception to this rule. Greek philosophy reached its highest culmination in Plato. But Plato would have been impossible had there not been three hundred years of speculative thought back of his time. He would not have been possible were it not that his master Socrates went before him. Indeed, in his dialogues we are not quite sure how much belongs to the master and how much is due to the pupil. He had all the advantages of noble birth and abundant means and social culture. Under the best instructors in his native land, he carefully mastered the teachings of his predecessors. To perfect his knowledge, ten years were spent in travel. He lived to the age of eighty-two. With much confessed weakness and imperfections he attained to the knowledge of his fellows, and rose beyond. He was simply the highest intellectual development of his times. So, too, of our own Shakespeare. He lived in a marvellous literary age. We know that his plots and plays were largely borrowed from history, legends, stories of various kinds, and other productions. With his wondrous genius, he filled out and perfected what had already gone before. He differed in degree but not in kind

from his contemporaries. He was simply a Mount Blanc amid surrounding Alps. Turn now to the teachings of the Nazarene. It has been the fashion in certain modern quarters to try and evade the force of the argument of His originality by attributing much of what Jesus taught to Rabbinical sayings current in His day, and preserved to us in the Talmud, and other comparatively modern Jewish writings. I cannot do better here than to quote the judicious and conclusive statement of Dr. John A. Broadus on this subject: "The alleged proofs of this indebtedness are few and curiously inadequate. It is folly to say that Jesus derived the Golden Rule from His older contemporary, Hillel, for we have seen that it existed centuries before. The statement is frequently made that the Lord's Prayer is all found in the Talmud, or in the liturgies now used in synagogues. I have investigated all the proofs of this adduced by accessible writers, and the facts are as follows: the only exact parallels presented in the Talmud and the liturgies are to the address, 'Our Father, who art in heaven,' and the two petitions, 'Hallowed be Thy Name,' and 'Bring us not into temptation.' There are phrases somewhat resembling 'Thy kingdom come,' and 'Deliver us from the evil one.' There is no parallel to 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth,' or to 'Give us this day our daily bread,' or to

the petition which Jesus emphasized by repeating it after the prayer, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.' Thus the most characteristic petitions of the prayer are wholly without Jewish parallel, and the scattered phrases similar to some of its expressions are such as devout Jews could hardly fail sometimes to employ. The image of the mote and the beam, and two or three other expressions elsewhere employed by Jesus are found in the Talmud. They may have been proverbial. Or it is entirely possible that the Talmud and other late Jewish writings really borrowed sometimes from the New Testament. The Jews in Alexandria early borrowed largely from the Greek philosophers, and at a later period the Jews are said to have borrowed from the Arabs ; why might they not adopt an occasional phrase from the Christian writers, whom they could so easily claim as really of their own race? Thus the charge of indebtedness to Hillel, or to the traditions in general, so far as I can find evidence, quite breaks down." This position is strengthened when we remember that the first edition of the Talmud only appeared in the latter part of the fifth century of our era, and that all the editions that are now extant are of a comparatively recent date, none of them being four hundred years old. Did not the Jews rather take an occasional expression from the New Tes-

tament and incorporate it into their own writings? The later books would be the ones to do the borrowing from the earlier productions. And even where current expressions are used (as it was essential to do) they represent entirely different things. Take such words as sin, and repentance, and faith, and prayer, and righteousness, and the kingdom, and no contrast could be more absolute than the meaning attached to them by Jesus on the one hand and by the Rabbis on the other. The grossest realism marked the Messianic expectations of that age. The imagery of the prophets was taken literally, and then distorted into the wildest extravagances. The Christ was to be a temporal sovereign; His kingdom was to be of this world. Brilliant military victories were to be won over the Gentiles; great literal banquets were to be observed by Israel in the wilderness; the soil was to be wonderfully prolific in harvests; and fruit was to be borne on all trees, and to mature every day. They revelled in sensuous dreams. Their hopes were earthly and carnal. Whence, then, came those spiritual teachings of Jesus, directly in antagonism with the preconceived opinions of His people and of His times? "My kingdom is not of this world," it cometh not by observation; it is within you; it is like seed; like a net; like leaven. Blessed are the poor in spirit; those who mourn; the meek; the merci-

ful; the persecuted. If thou art smitten on one cheek turn the other; whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Rich Dives who fared sumptuously every day is lifting up his eyes in hell, and the beggar Lazarus is borne on angels' pinions to Abraham's bosom. Ye must be born again. Ye must become as little children. Greatness is service. So counter were His teachings to all the current thought of that period that they could not understand Him. Even the disciples who lived nearest to Him did not comprehend His meaning until after they were specially enlightened on the day of Pentecost. The words of Dr. Horace Bushnell are instructive in this connection: "Here, then, we have the grand idea of His [Christ's] mission—it is to new-create the human race and restore it to God in the unity of a spiritual kingdom. And upon this single fact Reinhard erects a complete argument for His extra human character; going into a formal review of all the great founders of states and most celebrated law-givers, the great heroes and defenders of nations, all the wise kings and statesmen, all the philosophers, all the prophet founders of religions, and discovering as a fact that no such thought as this, or nearly proximate to this, had ever before been taken up by any living character in history." Who, then, can this Galilean Mechanic be, before whom all

earth's greatness dwindles away? Whence this wisdom which startled the world with messages such as never fell upon the ears of mortals? Now, look further :

II. At the universality of His teaching. It is impossible for even the greatest and best of men to rise above the prejudices and peculiarities of their national surroundings. Demosthenes was a Greek, and Cicero a Roman, and Garibaldi an Italian, and Richelieu a Frenchman, and Washington an American; and Bismarck is a German, and Gladstone an Englishman. The time when Jesus lived was a period of the fiercest and bitterest narrowness. So hated were the Samaritans that many of the Jews made a long detour so as to avoid even passing through their territory. To touch the garment of a Gentile meant pollution, or if one of them entered a forbidden part of the temple the penalty was death. The people who knew not the law were accursed, and publicans were outcasts. But there is not the slightest trace of localism or party spirit anywhere in the teachings of Jesus. With Him the one who rescued the bleeding traveller left by the wayside to perish was a Samaritan. "He must needs go through Samaria." He conversed with the woman at the well. He tarried and preached in Sychar. He rebuked the intolerant spirit of James and John who would have called down fire



upon the unbelieving village of Samaria, and the only healed leper of the ten, mentioned as returning to give glory to God, was the Samaritan stranger. He was the friend of publicans and sinners. He commended the faith of the Roman Centurion of Capernaum, and of the Canaanitish woman from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. He taught that God so loved, not simply Palestine, but the whole world, that He gave His Son to die for it. "The field," He exclaimed, "is the world." "And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." His last commission ere He departed was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Eternal life is limited to no class or country or clime, but it is for whosoever believeth. With Him there was no difference. His great heart embraced this whole sinning, sorrowing, perishing earth, and He yearned over it with a divine compassion. And we notice here, too, the difference in the form of His teaching. There was no elaborately drawn out system of dialectics, reaching from premise to some faltering conclusion. This was the manner much in vogue among the ancients. The method implies imperfection. We pass by it from what we know to the unknown. But to Him with whom nothing was unknown such a process could not be. Neither did He

teach after the manner of the scribes. They depended on tradition and precedent. They ventured nothing that could not at least seem to be backed up by the sayings of "them of old time." Stalker says: "It was an age of shams above almost any that have ever been." The preacher in the synagogue trifled with sacred things. Edersheim tells us that "he would divide a sentence, cut off one or two syllables from a word and join them to the next, so producing a different meaning or giving a new interpretation to a text." "Parables, stories, allegories, witticisms, strange and foreign words, in short, anything that might startle an audience was introduced." Now, contrast with all this the intense moral earnestness of Jesus weeping over the lost, wearing out His days for their welfare, breathing out His life for their redemption; an earnestness which even now after nearly nineteen centuries is setting the world ablaze. He asserted. He witnessed. He proclaimed. He spoke with the authority of one who had measured all the fulness of infinite truth, and before whom it lay spread out in open vision. At His command the storm was hushed, demons fled, the sick recovered, the fig-tree withered, and the graves were opened. So also His authority is seen in other ways. The utmost that an Old Testament prophet could say was, "Thus saith the Lord." The message of an apostle was, "In His

Name." The limit of a scribe was, "It is written." But here we have not the disciple speaking, but the Master; not the servant, but the King; not the prophet, but his Lord. "I say unto you." "I am the Truth." "It is I." "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." There is therefore a clearness, a definiteness, an absolute certainty about the teaching of Jesus that the world never knew before or since. How the Fatherhood of God becomes settled as He speaks. With what priceless value does He vest the soul. How He clears up all questions as to its immortality and the nature of the life to come. What a terrible thing sin is shown to be with its deathless worm, and its unquenching fire. How tender the pity and compassion of our God. How the iron fate of philosophy melts away into a prescient Providence, which watches the sparrow when it falls, and counts the very hairs of our heads. How real and wonderful prayer becomes before His example and His invitation. All misgiving vanishes. His messages are like light flashed directly from the eternal throne down into the darkness and sorrow of this fallen world. Thus it was that He went about teaching by the sea, and in the temple, and on the mountain, and in the humble dwelling. And He spoke of common things that the humblest could understand. He drew His illustrations

from fields and flowers and grass, and shepherds, and flocks, and pastures, and fishermen, and nets, and sea, and leaven, and bread, and a father weeping over a wandering son. And whatever He touched it spoke of God, and the universal human heart was thrilled, and the multitudes flocked around Him. Over against this put the musty atmosphere and the heavy cobwebs and the dim uncertainty which gathered about those who taught in His time. You at once feel that with Jesus there is the fresh breath of morn, and the joyous overflowing of living waters, and the singing of birds, and the full shining of the pure light of transparent day.

III. He began within and worked outward. In this likewise His teaching was new to the world. Plato's masterpiece is his Republic. The study of it is instructive because it brings before us the method by which the mightiest intellect of cultured Greece proposed to elevate the race and develop the highest type of humanity. In his Commonwealth the individual is to be lost sight of in the state. Philosophers are to be rulers. The sick and the weak are to be cast out. The right of private property, the family relationship, the choice of a vocation, belong to the state. "The exactest prescripts and instructions" are given to regulate every detail of life. By a system of outside restrictions rigidly applied and enforced ideal

men and women were to be produced. This has ever been the way.

The Rabbinical traditions sought for similar results in the same direction. They covered the whole of life with an elaborate network of the most trifling rules, reaching even to the washing of cups and pots. They made clean the outside of the cup and the platter. The Koran attempts to make men what it would have them be, by loading their memories down with the endless iteration of the most paltry requirements. Brahmanism does it with its numberless regulations of caste. It is so with Buddhism. It is so with society everywhere. Overt actions are restrained by penal codes. Men are kept in check by the tremendous influence of public opinion. Like the Gadarenes, the best that the world's wisdom has ever devised is to tie down the demoniac with fetters and chains. It works from without inward, from the state to the individual, from deeds to life, from conduct to character. Jesus reverses the whole process. He commences within, in the very core of our being, and then works outward. Spirit first and then conduct, thoughts first and then actions, the fountain first and then the streams. First, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and then "Arise and take up thy bed and go thy way." By His mighty power He casts the legion of unclean spirits out of our poor demon-tossed human-

ity, and then clothed and in its right mind it is found sitting at His feet, no more needing these external restraints.

With this thought in mind, let us open our Bibles at the Sermon on the Mount and see how He strikes directly at the centre of things. — Murder goes back of the outward blow to the inward hatred. Impurity goes back of the act to the thought. Profanity goes back of the words to the spirit. Prayer retires from the public street, where it “may be seen of men,” to the secluded closet, where “none but God can hear.” And this explains the remarkable silence of Jesus on many important things. He spoke nothing *directly* of the horrors of war, of the evils of slavery, of the degradation of womanhood, or of corruptions of government. He gave no hint of the rotundity of the earth, of undiscovered countries, of the wonderful possibilities of steam and electricity. He begins with the individual. Nineteen times Jesus is said to have had private interviews with single persons alone, as recorded in the four gospels. First get the secret soul right before God, and then hands and feet, and lips, and life will all become right. And as the man becomes right, the family will become transformed after him. And the family will transform the community, and the community the nation, and the nation the world, until we have a new earth

wherein dwelleth righteousness. As you elevate the people, their institutions will gradually but surely be changed and elevated after them. Likewise as the race comes back to its allegiance to God, nature will come back to her submission and allegiance to man. As humanity advances Godward, the material world will unlock her secrets, and the riches of her hidden stores will be disclosed. Make men right, and everything else will follow. The truth of this is illustrated in the progress of Christian nations in contrast with the stagnation of the other nations of the earth. The more Christian the more advanced do they become in every way. While the mighty men of the past are almost forgotten, and their most wisely devised plans are being thrown aside, the teachings of the Carpenter of Nazareth are the mightiest living force which is to-day revolutionizing the world.

IV. His originality is seen in the way of salvation which He discloses. A thrilling scene that was on the fourth day of the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago when Joseph Cook asked his oft-repeated question about Lady Macbeth's red right hand. Never on any occasion did he do it more opportunely. Addressing himself to the representatives and advocates of the other religions, he said: "I turn to Mohammedanism, can you wash our red right hand? I turn to Confu-

cianism and Buddhism and Brahmanism, can you wash our red right hand?" And they were silent. Then he added: "It is a certainty and a strategic certainty that the soul can have no intelligent peace until it is delivered from the love of sin. It is a certainty and a strategic certainty that except Christianity there is no religion known under heaven or among men that effectually provides for the soul this joyful deliverance from the love of sin and the guilt of it." Calvary has made it possible for God to be just and yet instantly to save every one who trusts in Jesus. Repentance and pardon and justification and sanctification, and the imparting of a new nature, and the inwrought fruits of the Spirit are all the pre-eminent and peculiar teachings of the Christian faith. No such pictures anywhere else as the matchless story of the Prodigal Son, of the loving Shepherd who, leaving the ninety and nine, "went to the desert to find his sheep"; of the lost one bathing His blessed feet with her tears, and then going forth from that house, radiant, her sins, which were many, all forgiven; of the poor Magdalen so changed and lifted up that she became the first witness of the resurrection; of the gates of Paradise rolled open before a dying robber. And the experience of multitudes unnumbered attests the truth of these teachings, and they are to-day living witnesses of its power.



“ Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,  
 Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan !  
 No meretricious graces to beguile,  
 No clustering ornaments to clog the pile,  
 From ostentation, as from weakness free,  
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,  
 Majestic in its own simplicity.  
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar  
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,  
 Legible only by the light they give,  
 Stand the soul-quickenings words, BELIEVE AND LIVE.”

And this brings us to our last thought. Another peculiarity of His teaching was that He announced a kingdom founded on love. Nations have rested on force, have been kept together by oppression, have been maintained by standing armies. Amid all the fierce passion and bloodshed and bitterness which filled the world, how strangely fell these sweet, musical words from the hills of Palestine, “ One is your Father which is in heaven, and all ye are brethren.” “ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you.” “ Blessed are the pure in heart.” “ Blessed are the peacemakers.” “ Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.” “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Here is a problem : How can a being ruined by sin be again restored ? Society says it is impossi-

ble, shuts the door in his face and leaves him alone out in the darkness and storm to perish. The cold world frowns on him, and says he must suffer for his sin, and points to the prison and disgrace. Formal religionists shrug their shoulders and pass by on the other side. There is only one thing can save him, and that is *love*. "There is some one, then, who does really care for me, who pities, who reaches out a helping hand," he exclaims, and the crushed heart takes hope and courage and strength again. And this is the message which Jesus brings: There is a great heart of infinite love and pity bending over you. There is a hand of limitless power outstretched to help you. There is a divine Spirit to renew you. There is a fountain filled with blood where you can be made whiter than snow. There are ministering spirits to watch over you. There is a blessed morn from the darkest night of sin. There is certain salvation for the "uttermost" sinner that believes in Him. Yes, Napoleon, you were right. Yourself and Alexander and Charlemagne founded empires on force, and they crumbled away. "Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for Him." Then, as the great soldier chained to his rock in the sea mused and thought, the influence of Christ's teaching rose up before him, and these weighty added words

came from St. Helena: "Measure the religious doctrine of Jesus by that of the time and place He lived in, or that of any time and any place. Yes, by the doctrine of eternal truth. Consider what work His words and deeds have wrought in the world. Remember that the greatest minds have seen no farther and added nothing to the doctrines of religion; that the richest hearts have felt no deeper and added nothing to the sentiment of religion, have set no loftier aim, no truer method than His of perfect love to God and man. Measure Him by the shadow He has cast upon the world. No, by the light He has shed upon it. Shall we be told such a man never lived, that the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who did their wonders, thought their thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus."

The son of Ariston, while conversing with his pupil Alcibiades, put these words into the lips of Socrates: "Unless it please God to send us some one from Him to instruct us, do not hope ever to succeed in reforming the morals of men." "Yes," he went on to say, "we must wait till some one comes." Slowly the night of centuries passed by on the watching, longing, troubled world. Then a bright star shone out in Judea's midnight, and there was a burst of angel song. A babe was

born in Bethlehem. The Godhead veiled in human flesh appeared. A voice coming down the ages is now repeating itself around our planet. It is a voice, definite, authoritative, commanding—a voice which will speak till time shall be no more. It was first heard on a mountain-top in northern Galilee, when the skies suddenly parted over the Christ, and Heaven's mandate fell upon a listening earth: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; *hear ye him.*"



## **Christ's Credentials.**



## Christ's Credentials.



*"We know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."*

—JOHN iii. 2.



Let us close our Bibles and allow ourselves to reflect a little. In these successive Sunday evening discourses we have been following a strictly logical method of inquiry. We took the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and compared it with those of the world's greatest sages, and at once the comparison became a startling contrast. We looked at the age in which He lived, and found the Roman Empire honeycombed with vileness. Things that it were a shame even to name are darkly hinted at in some awful passages of Paul. And Josephus tells us that Palestine was no exception. "The land was full of robbers," and at "no time in their history had the nation been more wretched." We asked how a province known for its lack of culture, a village that had become a by-word and a reproach, a carpenter shop with its heavy, absorbing toil could produce the spot-

less, divine character of Jesus. Can darkness develop light? Can hatred become the parent of love? Can bigotry produce catholicity? Can selfishness and immorality bring forth benevolence and purity? This is the rock upon which infidelity has split to pieces. It has never solved these problems, and it never will. Flashing through the clouds from the opening heavens came the only answer, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Christ was not of earth. He was the incarnate son of the living God. Like a clear mountain peak that soars to the sky, rising above all the impure atmosphere at its base, He lived, and loved, and died alone.

Passing from His personality we naturally inquired what He taught. We heard His conversation with Nicodemus on the new birth, and with the Samaritan woman about the well of living waters. We hearkened to the great words of life and power spoken to the throngs at the feasts; and then we retired with Him and His disciples to the confidences of the Mount of Olives. We sat at His feet while He spoke the great Sermon on the Mount. We were with Him after He fed the hungry thousands when He discoursed on the bread of life; we were present too when He proclaimed His matchless parables to the gathering throngs. We reverently drew near and listened to His last touching farewell to His disciples on



the night in which He was betrayed, beginning with "Let not your heart be troubled," and ending with His intercessory prayer. We heard those strange cries of suffering and of love upon the cross until amid shrouded skies and shuddering earth and rending veil and opening graves the word "Finished" startled the air, and He bowed His head and died. Then, as we returned from Calvary, we found ourselves exclaiming with the centurion, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Now He who lived as never man lived, and spoke as never man spoke, and suffered as never man suffered, and loved as never man loved, in the very nature of things must have acted as never man acted, and worked as never man worked, and done what man had never done. There would be perfect harmony between what He did, and what He said, and what He was. A life that is lifted out of range with all others must be filled with deeds that are in harmony with itself. This is the *a priori* argument. Any thoughtful person would expect and predict as much beforehand. We now open the Gospels, and, to our inexpressible joy, find this to be the case. Beautiful deeds of miraculous power are interwoven into the Saviour's life from His incarnation to His resurrection and to His ascension.

The general argument against the credibility of miracles was never stated stronger or better than

by David Hume in his celebrated essay. He puts it thus: "A miracle is a violation of the law of nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established that law, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." Then he sums up his position with the remarkable statement, "A miracle must be an event which has never been observed in any age or country." But how came he to know that such an event as a miracle had never been observed in any age or country? Was it the "unalterable experience" of the time of Christ, for example, that no miracle took place then? This is the very thing to be investigated. What right has he to say as he does, on what authority does he assert, how came he to know that "uniform experience is against every miraculous event"? Before he could be justified in making this statement, he must have perfect knowledge of the history of every person that has ever been on our planet every moment of his or her existence. If he were uncertain of the experience of any one person who ever lived, even for an instant, he could not be sure but that there this miraculous "event" had "been observed." In his major premise, Hume assumes the very thing to be proved, and a more glaring example of begging the whole question was never perpetrated. And neither is a miracle

“a violation of the law of nature,” nor yet is it a suspension of any law of nature, but the interjection of a new power. The usual experience is, that a body falls to the earth at a certain well known velocity. But sometimes a body is seen rising from the ground into the air. As Dr. W. M. Taylor has said: “When a boy throws a stone up into the air, there is a counteraction of the force of gravity, so far as the stone is concerned, but there is no violation of the law of gravitation, for the simple explanation is that another force, generated in the will and exerted by the muscular energy of the boy, has come into operation and performed its work while the force of gravity is really as strong as ever it was. In like manner, a miracle does not violate nature; but a new force comes in at the moment to produce a supernatural effect.”

Whenever there is life, there is a constant counteraction of what is known as the laws of the material world. Especially is this true wherever *will* exists. Manhattan Island would be to-day only forest and swamp and rock and rivulet had it been left simply to the physical laws of inanimate nature. But a new power came in. The forest disappeared and the city rose in its stead. The face of the whole habitable earth is constantly changing from what it would be, if left to nature's material laws without the presence of another force. In

every step and breath and act some of the established uniformities of the physical world are being overruled. Will not the suggestion of this illustration hold? Can man effect a change in the uniformity of nature, and can there be no change from God? Can a worm of the dust bring about a new departure from the old order of things, and cannot the infinite Creator bring to pass something different from the usual procedure? "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" What we call a law of nature is simply the way in which God usually does His work. In His sovereign wisdom He may, for reasons of His own, choose to do things in a special way, and we call these miracles. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the divine Being has so tied Himself up by His own laws that He cannot interpose in behalf of any of His creatures should He choose. Lacordaire imagines the case of a poor woman crying to heaven from the slums of Paris for deliverance, and then he satirizes the helplessness of a God who would be compelled to answer: "I would gladly help you, but I cannot." John Stuart Mill belonged to the same materialistic school of philosophy as David Hume. No one would suspect him of any sympathy with Christianity, and yet as a logician he is compelled to acknowledge the fallacy of Hume's argument

against miracles. Even Prof. Huxley in his biography of Hume had to make a similar confession.

Having cleared the way thus far, we are now ready to take more positive grounds. We pass from the realm of possibility to that of certainty. You profess to hesitate about believing in miracles, and gravely question if any ever took place. Then account for the existence of the very world upon which you stand. Tell me, How came sun and moon and stars? Whence came the waters of the sea, and the air which surrounds our planet, and all the elements of matter? Push your investigations as far back as you can. Accept any theory you please. When you stand on the outer edge of all your research, and look backward you will find a chasm too deep, too wide for anything but a miracle to bridge. What lies beyond? Genesis will answer, "In the beginning, God." So that, right on the threshold of all science and all existence, we begin by postulating the miraculous. We commence with creation by admitting the necessity of the supernatural. Then, again, we have trees in our forests; how came the first tree? We have plants in our gardens; how came the first plant? We have grain in our fields; how came the first seed? Whence came the first germ of life, the first animal, the first man? There must have been a period when they were non-existent, and then when they did exist.

How can we pass from the one condition to the other? There are at least five great miracles in nature confessed by everybody, and proclaimed by science. These are: The origin of matter or creation, of force, of vegetable life, of animal life, and of the human will, man's regal power of freedom of choice. As we turn over the pages of the book of nature the supernatural meets us there. Now let us turn to the pages of the Bible. If the God of nature, with its miracles, is also the author of this Book, it will contain miracles, too, and lo! to our greatest joy, here they are. The God of nature is also the God of revelation.

When Columbus returned from his discovery of the new world, his little fleet came very near perishing in a storm. Suppose that his three ships had gone to the bottom, and he himself alone was floated on a plank to the shore, barely escaping with his life. Let him then go to the court of Spain, and tell his wonderful story. Who would believe him? All that they would have would be his own bare statement, uncorroborated by a single proof. Conviction was produced that a new country had been discovered when he backed up what he said by producing "the rich and strange spoils of the new found lands—the gold, the cotton, the parrots, the curious arms, the mysterious plants, the unknown birds and beasts, and the nine Indians he had brought with

him." No shadow of doubt was left after this. So with the purpose of the miracles of Jesus. "These superhuman events were the sign-manual of the Most High given to authenticate messages sent forth from the headquarters of the universe." They were the proofs by which He showed that He was a representative of heaven sent out on a special errand of love to a ruined world. They lift Christianity out of the range of other religions, and demonstrate that it is divine. Let us hear what Jesus says about them. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me" (John x. 25). The disciples of John the Baptist came asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" He answered, "Go and show John again those things which you do hear and see ; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew xi. 4, 5). The last of these, preaching the Gospel to the poor, was quite as startling to that generation as any of the other proofs. "The same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me" (John v. 36). "Though ye believe not me, believe the works" (John x. 38). "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John xiv. 11). So overwhelming

were the proofs of His Messiahship as shown by His supernatural deeds that every shadow of excuse for unbelief was taken away, and this is His terrible arraignment of the men of that generation: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John xv. 24). Now, when Jesus said these things, did He speak the truth? We are shocked at the mere suggestion. Yet this is what is involved. Of course He spoke the truth. He could not be the purest and holiest being that ever visited our earth, if He did not.

Then the fact of His miracles is established. But we have other evidence. What did His disciples say? Their unanimous verdict, voiced by Peter before the throngs of Pentecost, was "that Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and signs and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts ii. 22). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews bases the guilt of neglecting so great salvation on the fact that God bore witness to its truth "with signs and wonders and with divers miracles" (Heb. ii. 4). We have the candid impression of an intelligent outsider. Nicodemus knew that Jesus must be a teacher sent from God, because no man could otherwise do the miracles that He did. We have the unbiassed verdict of the common people. When



the dumb man possessed with a demon was at once completely cured, "the multitude marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel" (Matthew ix. 33). We have the admission of His bitterest foes. Lazarus was brought back to life: "Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles, and if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him" (John xi. 47, 48). These things were not done "in a corner." They took place in the broad light of open day before the millions that were present at the great feasts in Jerusalem, and in presence of the thronging thousands who gathered around Him at every step. They were performed again and again, until all possible uncertainty as to their reality was completely and finally removed. In secret He did nothing. In their desperation His enemies imputed them to Beelzebub. The miracles were there, and could not be gainsaid. Even the Talmud, and Celsus late in the second, and Julian, the Apostate of the fourth century, and others of the very bitterest assailants of Christianity were compelled to confess that these very marvels were wrought by Christ; and then, like the Pharisees before them, they attempted in various ways to evade the consequences of their concession.

Christianity is the only religion which our world has ever had that challenges our allegiance by

furnishing indisputable facts and proofs of its divine origin. As has been frequently pointed out, neither Buddha nor Confucius claimed to possess supernatural power. Any marvel with which Mohammed imposed on his disciples he took good care that, like Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and his golden plates, nobody else should see them. The only evidence that they had was his own unsupported testimony. It was left for their followers long afterward to invent feats to be attributed to them. In his "Notes on the Parables," Trench calls attention to a similar condition of things in the miserable impositions attributed to mediæval saints. In the first and second editions of the "Life of Ignatius Loyola," there is not the slightest hint of or reference to his pretending to superhuman deeds. It was long after, that his admirers claimed hundreds of them for him. There is no pretence of anything miraculous in the letters of Francis Xavier. It was after he had been long dead that the superstitions of the Romish Church told the most astonishing things about him. So is it always. The stories invented sprang up sometimes hundreds of years later, when all the witnesses were dead. They begun in some far-off, out-of-the-way place, the farther away in time and locality, the bigger and the more extravagant did the miracles become. They are usually so absurd

and silly as to contain their own refutation. Push your inquiries backward, and the proofs grow fewer and fewer until at last, as you near the time, they wholly vanish. Now, it is just the very reverse of this that takes place in reference to the charming miracles of Jesus. The further back you go, the proofs multiply and increase at every step. It has been observed that the Gospel by John was written near the close of the first century, and you only find eight miracles recorded in it. The Gospel by Luke was written earlier, and it has more. The Gospel by Matthew was the next earliest, and it has a greater number. The Gospel by Mark was the first written, and it has the most of all. The nearer you approach the age of Christ, the fuller and clearer and more definite and circumstantial the evidence becomes. When you come to His contemporaries, the testimony of the whole Jewish nation, friend and foe alike, united without dissent in proclaiming His mighty works.

Take the one pivotal miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. If this is proved it will be admitted on every hand that everything else is proved. We have shown in another place that the disciples were neither deceivers, nor could they be deceived in reference to this fact.\* From outside Roman

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\* See Sermon on "Two Tests Applied to Christianity."

history, we have the certain date when Festus succeeded Felix as governor of Judea. We know, therefore, that the first Epistle to the Corinthians was written not later than the year fifty-seven of our era, or twenty-seven years after the crucifixion. We know from this letter that belief in the resurrection of Jesus was already wide-spread throughout the Roman Empire, and we are told in it of more than two hundred and fifty living witnesses at that time who could yet be produced as having actually themselves seen the Lord alive after His resurrection (I. Corinthians xv. 6). Multitudes were already sealing their testimony with their lives to a risen Saviour. Twenty-two years after the death of Jesus, the first Epistle to the Thessalonians was written, declaring the same widely-accepted fact of the resurrection. Ten years after Jesus died on Calvary, the proofs of His resurrection were so overwhelming that the foremost scholar and bitterest enemy of His time was thoroughly convinced, and Paul became a glorious convert to the new faith. Just fifty days after the resurrection the disciples, right in the heart of all the hostility of Jerusalem, announced that He was alive. His enemies, knowing how overwhelming the proofs were, maintained a discreet silence. The challenge of the Apostles that Jesus rose again was left untouched and unquestioned, and thousands came forward and joyfully

accepted the message. The testimony of multitudes of experts in evidence, who have gone over all the ground with the utmost care, is given, and they agree fully with Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, when he says, "I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." And this establishes everything. God would not raise up an impostor. The incarnation, therefore, is true, and every intervening miracle is true, and all He taught is true, and the atonement is true, and the Bible which He honored is God's message from cover to cover.

This, then, is the most stupendous and the most glorious fact in the universe. The eyes of all Europe rested on a small hamlet where the fate of the future of that continent was being decided. Our little planet has been big enough to have a Calvary, and there the powers of darkness met their Waterloo. Other worlds are interested. Angels desired to look into these things. Redemption's story will be repeated throughout all the ages of eternity.

Before the established verities of the Christian religion, the highest enthusiasm becomes tame. "The noble army of martyrs" when they gave up their lives did not do too much. The mission-

aries who have gone to distant fields, and whose exploits constitute some of the brightest pages of human history, are simply doing what might be expected. And the men and women who are pouring out their richest treasures of heart and life at His feet are but rendering their reasonable service. The saving of souls and the building up of Christ's Kingdom is *the business* of life, and everything else is but incidental and tributary. Oh, God! wake up Thy ministering servants and Thy churches to a sense of the magnitude and the importance of their mission.

Do miracles take place yet? The question needs to be answered with care. Not every alleged case can be put down as true. We know the influence of imagination and will, and the tendencies of certain nervous disorders. Those whom Jesus healed were made at once and completely whole. The miracles of the Bible are too sacred to be compared with any clap-trap. We push all these aside, and then answer that in His own sovereign wisdom and in the lives of saints who have dwelt in special and peculiar nearness to Himself, there are assuredly times yet when God does interpose in supernatural way. The testimony to this comes from sources too high and trustworthy to be set aside.

Then, too, all the miracles of Jesus, indeed the whole purpose of the manifestation of the super-

natural, have been, that men might believe. They are stepping stones to higher things. After the descent of the Holy Spirit "greater works than these" were to be done. It was Augustine who said, "If you do not believe the miracles, you must then believe that the world was converted without miracles, and this would itself be a miracle." Every day new marvels of grace are bearing witness to the power of a living, ascended Jesus. Cannibals are being saved, Hindoos are being saved, outcasts are being saved, men and women all about us are being saved, you and I have been saved. This whole dark world of ours is swinging out into the light of God.

Ere we close, let us go back again to that dear old land and once more lay our hands on these sacred parchments by which Jesus showed Himself divine. His credentials are demanded. And when the storm is hushed at His command, and the waves become a pavement beneath His tread, and the water blushes into wine at His look, and the fig tree withers beneath His frown, then we know that nature's Master and Maker and Monarch is here; that all the forces of the material world are under His command; and we bow reverently at His feet, and worship Him as the Creator. Has He any further credentials? Yes, and when we see Him healing the sick, giving eyes to the blind, and speech to the dumb, and

feet to the lame, and cleansing to the lepers, we know that He is the Great Physician, and that His hand is everywhere on the pulses of life ; and that we can pray to Him beside the bed of suffering, knowing that our Maker is our Friend. Has He any additional credentials? Yes, and when we find Him forgiving sins and casting out demons, and rescuing the man of Legion, and rebuking unclean spirits, and bidding them depart, then we know that He rules likewise over the invisible ; that He can minister to a mind diseased, and cleanse the heart, and pluck out a rooted sorrow, and make us pure, and we fall down and adore Him as the Saviour. We can ask no more. But He has other credentials, too. And when we see Him raising the widow's son, and bringing back Jairus' daughter, and commanding Lazarus to " come forth " ; when on the morning of " the third, the appointed day " lifting up the gates of death from their hinges He emerged from the sepulchre amid the shouts of angels and the worshipping of men, and the skies were rifted, and up through the glory He ascended while all heaven was singing the twenty-fourth Psalm, " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in," then we rise and follow the hearse with its nodding plumes to the grave, and when the casket is lowered, and the earth is being cast upon



its lid, there rings through all our souls a mighty voice from behind us, exclaiming, "Oh, death, I will be thy plagues ! Oh, grave, I will be thy destruction " ; and when we turn to see the voice of Him that speaks to us, we see hands and feet and brow that were wounded, and we recognize Him, and fall before Him and cry, Rabboni, Thou art He that liveth and was dead and art alive forevermore, and Thou hast the keys of hell and of death. There let us rest.

“ And as beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar,  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

“ I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air,  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.”





A Physician's View of the Great  
Healer.



## A Physician's View of the Great Healer.



*"Luke, the beloved physician."*—COL. iv. 14.

*"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."*  
—LUKE i. 1-3.



The distinguished physician who is here introduced to us is the writer of the third gospel, and the author also of the Acts of the Apostles. Tradition makes Antioch, in Syria, his native city. At the beginning of the Christian era, the art of medicine was, for the most part, in the hands of the Greeks; and Syria, from whence Luke reputedly came, was in those days famed for the skill of its physicians. Laodicea, the neighboring city to Colosse, was in the time of Strabo a great medical school. Luke was not of Jewish parentage, for Paul expressly excludes him from those of the circumcision (Col. iv. 10-14). There is no

doubt whatever that he was a native Greek ; perhaps at first a proselyte to the Jewish faith. His introduction to his gospel (the first four verses) is exactly modelled after the two great Greek historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, while the style and idiom of his language constantly betray Greek origin and culture.

All through his writings we meet with the modesty of true greatness. Nowhere does he introduce his own name, nor record a single word spoken, or act performed by himself. It is Paul alone who three times mentions his name, and always in terms of the greatest affection. He hides himself in the Acts under the personal pronouns, "we" and "us." In this unassuming way he meets us first at Troas (Acts xvi. 10), where he joins the company of missionaries that went to Macedonia. As Dean Alford points out (Gal. iv. 13 and Acts xvi. 6-10), it was during the early portion of this journey that Paul was grievously sick, and he suggests that this may be the reason why Luke, the physician, accompanied him on his journey from Troas to Philippi. Then back from Philippi (Acts xx. 5, 6), he journeyed with Paul to Miletus and Jerusalem and Cæsarea, and on the stormy voyage to Rome where, in faithful and affectionate ministry, he remained by the side of the great apostle.

Writing to Timothy from his Roman prison,

Paul pathetically adds, "Only Luke is with me" (II. Tim. iv. 11), and again he sends the salutation of Lucas to Philemon (*v.* 24). We see here the loyal and affectionate friend, through evil report and good report, through perils and imprisonments, and sorrow and suffering, ever clinging to the heart-sore apostle up to the very close. The physician to minister to him, the associate to comfort him, the true Christian to sustain him. And the influence of their blessed fellowship has been clearly traced in the writings of both. In the account of the Lord's Supper given by both Luke and Paul, they use almost literally the same terms; the statement, "This do in remembrance of me," is only to be found in the twenty-second chapter of Luke, and the eleventh chapter of first Corinthians. So also we trace the fruits of their happy association in the prominence that they both give to certain great phases of truth. The word "grace" occurs one hundred and forty-six times in the New Testament, but only twenty-one times outside of the writings of Paul and Luke. The word "faith" is found some two hundred and forty-three times in the New Testament, but "not quite" fifty-three times outside of Luke and Paul. The words "joy," "rejoice" or "be glad," are used about one hundred and sixty times in the New Testament, but only forty-six times outside of these two writers. There are

said to be some two hundred expressions common to Luke and Paul, that are more or less foreign to the other New Testament writers. How often must they have conversed together over the great themes of redemption, until their thoughts and their very language became tinged and colored by the same blessed truths.

Poets have delighted to sing, and historians have loved to chronicle the records of human friendship. David and Jonathan, Elijah and Elisha, Luther and Melanchthon, Peter and John, are all touching examples of beautiful fidelity; but not least among them all is that of the poor, sick, forsaken, imprisoned apostle, and the faithful, loving physician ever at his side. What hours of heavenly converse, as they talked

“ . . . of all He did and said  
And suffered for us here below;  
The path He marked for us to tread;  
And what He's doing for us now.”

I. Luke is the systematic historian among the Evangelists. “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus” (i. 3). The expression, “and it came to pass,” the regular historian's phrase, occurs about sixty times in his two compositions, showing how completely he has kept the historical standpoint in view from first to last.



Luke uses seven hundred words which occur nowhere else in the New Testament. With the greatest accuracy he determines the exact date when these wonderful events took place. It was the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of Ituræa and the region of Trachonitus, Lysanias was the tetrarch of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas were high priests when the Word of God came to John the Baptist, the son of Zecharias, in the wilderness of Judea. Luke alone tells us that the ripe old prophetess Anna was just eighty-four years of age when the infant Jesus was presented to her in the temple ; that the Saviour was twelve years of age when He was disputing with the doctors in Jerusalem ; that He was about thirty when He was baptized ; that the interval between the resurrection and the ascension was just forty days. He puts down respectively the years, months and days that Paul spent at Corinth, Ephesus, Cæsarea and Rome (Acts xviii 2; xx. 31; xxi. 4; xxiv. 1; xxviii. 30).

There are more references to Jewish history in his writings than in those of any of the other Evangelists. The fullest details by far of the great Herodian family are contained in his writings. He alone tells us of the falling of the tower of Siloam, and the Galileans whom Pilate slew,

and of Christ's trial before Herod. Nor is this all. His writings are marvels of historical accuracy and detail outside of Jewish history, wherever we look at them. Indeed, Dr. Gregory thinks that "probably no books of antiquity contain so many varied and wide-reaching references to the institutions, customs, geography and history of their times as the two books written by Luke." Not Palestine alone, but Damascus and the cities of the East ; Ephesus and the many cities of Asia Minor, Athens and the cities of Greece, Rome and the cities of Italy, the Mediterranean and its navigation and islands, Crete, Clauda, Malta ; whether he brings us into contact with kings, governors or chiefs ; whether we are with him in temple, or synagogue, or at pagan shrine ; whether we find ourselves in the society of military officers, or soldiers, or ship-captains, or sailors ; whether he describes Jewish, or Greek, or Roman, or barbarian customs ; whether he reports the conversation of Jesus, or the discourses of Peter, or Paul, or Stephen, or Philip, or Tertullus, or Claudius Lysias—everywhere there is the same marvellous accuracy of detail down to incidental references that are hardly noticeable.\* Herein is a thing most wonderful. Writing of an age "fertile in great events, in changes in governments, and in

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\* See DaCosta *in loco*.

the boundaries and names of countries and peoples," his writings have been sifted "fact by fact, detail by detail, expression by expression," by the scholarship of all the centuries, and everywhere with only the result of proving their infallible accuracy. No documents of this kind could be fabricated. They could not have been written at any other time or place. And their astonishing fidelity only proves that the pen which wrote was guided from above. "Holy men of old spake and wrote as the Spirit gave them utterance."

II. In his writings, we not only see the historian, but we also discover the physician. We sing

"The great Physician now is near,  
The sympathizing Jesus."

But in Luke, more than anywhere else, we find Christ as "the Great Physician," the healer of all manner of sickness and disease. The flavor of his profession hovers about his style. In describing the sickness of Peter's wife's mother, he uses a technical, scientific term still found in Galen (Gospel iv. 38). Similar scientific language is employed in writing of the blindness with which Elymas, the sorcerer, was punished (Acts xiii. 11), and also in describing the illness of the father of Publius, whom Paul cured on the island of Malta. In the latter case, in speaking of the gifts which

the healing called forth, he uses the word applied to professional fees. In the proverb of the camel and the needle's eye, the other Evangelists employ the word for the ordinary sewing needle—but with Luke, the physician, it is the surgical needle\*—and so on. How exact his language—just such as we would expect from a physician, in describing the man suffering with dropsy (Gospel xiv. 2), and the vainglorious Herod Agrippa smitten down in his pride (Acts xii. 23). And how precise he is as he tells us that the poor woman bowed with an infirmity had been afflicted eighteen years (Gospel xiii. 11), and that Æneas, who was sick with the palsy, whom Peter healed, had kept his bed eight years (Acts ix. 33); and that the man cured of his lameness at the Beautiful Gate of the temple was about forty years old (Acts iv. 22). How clearly he discriminates between those who were afflicted with diseases, and those possessed with demons! It is the beloved physician who alone tells us that in His garden agony the Saviour sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, again using technical medical language in his description. And Christ's last miracle of healing is recorded by Luke alone: "And he touched the ear of the servant of the high priest, and he healed him" (Luke xxii. 50, 51). He

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\* *βελόνη*.

alone preserves the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself" (Gospel iv. 23); and when the twelve are sent out in the ninth chapter, and the seventy in the tenth chapter, in each case they are commissioned to "heal the sick," words only to be found in Luke. Thus the proofs of his early medical training meet us through all that he writes. A noble profession is that of the physician. He puts his hand on the fluttering pulses of life. He is the guardian of the family secrets. He is the counsellor and comforter and friend. Standing between us and the grave, with his back to the tomb, inch by inch he vehemently fights back sickness and death from our homes. There is no contagion that he shirks, no hour of the night that he does not promptly respond to our call; no garret too cheerless, no cellar too gloomy, no outcast too abandoned whose sufferings he does not attempt to alleviate. There is no class that does a larger amount for charity, without thought of reward or even gratitude. God bless the physician! giving eyes to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame, and calling back to life those who are in the very shadow of the tomb. Jesus was a physician. The disciples were commissioned to heal. Luke was a student from the medical schools of Syria. We are beginning to learn that missionaries for heathen lands should have a medical

training. A physician should not only be skilled in his noble profession, but also should be the soul of honor and sympathy. We want no physician beside the couch of our suffering ones whose lips are not pure, or whose brain is not clear. He ought to be a true Christian who stands in our home, as the ground is becoming holy, in that most sacred of all hours, when the hush is over all, and the shadow is falling, and the room is growing dark and cold and still. No class of men more need the help that cometh from above. Let this early M.D. be our model. Let our physicians be found walking in the footsteps of their illustrious forerunner of eighteen hundred years ago.

III In Luke we have the Gospel of the perfect man, and this was just the Gospel required by the universal Greek. Matthew's is the Gospel of the heart, Christ regnant over human affection, the fulfilment of the prophetic longings of the soul, the gospel of the Hebrews. Mark's is the Gospel of the will, of energy, of action, of triumph, "every step a victory, every word a beam of light," the Gospel of the all-conquering Roman. Luke's is the Gospel of reason, and John's is the Gospel of faith, rising over all, the Gospel of the Christian. The Egyptians worshipped reptiles and creeping things. The Hindoos worship cattle and serpents, and stones, and rivers, and hills. But the Greeks worshipped the perfect human form. In

the finest marble they chiselled out in faultless beauty the figures of their divinities, and these were always made after our likeness, and in our image. They sought after a perfected, ideal humanity. Plato longed for the coming of a divine man. This is the Gospel which meets that desire. Not simply the son of Abraham, the head of the Hebrew race, but Jesus is here, the son of Adam, the Son of God—the universal man. This being so, He will pass by no period in life or portion of the race ; therefore :

1. We find that Luke's is the Gospel of childhood. Here we have the birth and youth of John the Baptist ; the rich details of the birth of Jesus, and the angels chanting their cradle hymn over Bethlehem ; the circumcision and the presentation of Jesus in the temple, when good old Simeon took up the babe in his arms, and then wished to go home ; how the child grew at Nazareth. The other Evangelists have it that they brought children to Jesus, but Luke has it that they were infants who were taken (xviii. 15). Jairus' child with Luke is " one only daughter about twelve years of age " (viii. 42). The demoniac child at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration is the only child. " Look upon my son, for he is mine only child " (ix. 38). What a charming record this, with little children everywhere lingering among its fascinating pages. We can well understand how the

young have always loved this gospel. It is their own peculiar book.

2. It is the gospel of womanhood. The word *woman* occurs in Matthew and Mark together forty-nine, and in Luke alone, forty-three times. Most critics have agreed that in Matthew we have really the genealogy of Joseph, while in Luke we have the direct genealogy of Mary, the mother of our Lord. Here we are introduced to Elizabeth, the mother of John, one of the "daughters of Aaron," and Anna in the temple, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and it is he alone who mentions her name the last time as we find her at the prayer-meeting which ushered in the Pentecostal blessing. He alone tells of the widow who was wronged by the unjust judge, of the widow of Nain, whose son Jesus raised to life, of the woman who was a sinner, washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head. It is in Luke that we find the beautiful picture of Martha cumbered with much serving, and Mary sitting at the Saviour's feet (x. 38-42). Here alone we find the daughters of Jerusalem bewailing while our Lord is on the way to the cross (xxiii. 27-29). In Luke alone are given the names of those devoted women who stood and wept and saw Him die. In the Acts, the same thought appears. Alike are they baptized and persecuted, both "men and women" (viii. 12; ix. 2). Here



Dorcas is raised from the dead (ix. 36-42); and Lydia, the first convert in Europe, is a woman; and Damaris, a woman, is one of the converts in Athens, and Priscilla is the excellent wife of Aquila, and there are four daughters of Philip that prophesy (xxi. 8). Outside of Christianity, woman is the drudge, the slave, the soulless and worthless menial of man; she has been hitched to the plough beside the ox; she is made to carry the hod. Her birth is a calamity, her life one long wail of despair; her death an eternal slumber. It is Christianity alone that has raised her up, and taught her to smile, and sing, and hope.

3. Luke's is the gospel of compassion. He uses the word *sinner* oftener than all the other Evangelists combined. His beatitudes in the sermon on the plain are for the "poor," the "hungry," the "naked," the "weeping." Here alone we have the parable of the king's son where "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" are gathered in. Here alone the parable of the prodigal son, and of the lost sheep, and of the lost coin. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read so much about almsgiving as in Luke, particularly in the Acts (Acts iii. 1-7; ix. 36; x. 2, 4, 31; xxiv. 17). The thought beneath all our great charities, that which has caused hospitals, and asylums, and orphanages, and homes, and benevolences to spring up in the world, is the

one which appears in such richness in these pages, and for which we are chiefly indebted to the beloved physician. Luke is the poor man's friend. The sorrowing pass before us here, and as they pass their sorrows are changed to joy. And what joy wells up everywhere as we read through these pulsating pages! Joy among the angels over Bethlehem, joy among the shepherds on the plain, the joy of Simeon and Anna at the presentation in the temple, the astonishing joy which thrills the sky "in the presence of the angels" over one sinner that repenteth, and the great joy which filled the disciples when they came back to Jerusalem after witnessing the ascension of our Lord. Jerusalem filled with praises to God after the scenes of Pentecost. "Great joy" in the city of Samaria after the revival under Philip, all the brethren in Antioch filled with "great joy." In the midst of bitter persecution we find the disciples "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." This, too, recalls the related fact, viz.: that there is more about the Holy Spirit in Luke than in all the other gospels, associated with Zecharias and Elizabeth, and Mary and Simeon, and Jesus' baptism and other events, while the Acts of the Apostles is more properly called the Acts of the Holy Ghost.

4. As the gospel of universal humanity, belonging to every age, and sex, and nation, it overleaps

the narrow bounds of Judaism. Here alone is the parable of the good Samaritan. Here the one Samaritan leper of the ten that were cleansed returned to give glory to God; and Samaria is mentioned after Judea in the Acts (i. 8), as the place where the Gospel was next to be preached; and it is he alone who quotes from Isaiah the promise "All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

IV. Luke's is the gospel of prayer. The three synoptic Evangelists give us the prayer in Gethsemane, but Luke furnishes the fullest account. Outside of that, Matthew gives us but one instance, and Mark two instances of Christ praying; but Luke gives us seven—gives us all the others. In Luke, at His baptism, Jesus is praying (iii. 21); He withdraws into the wilderness and prays before He heals the palsied man (v. 16); the night before He called the twelve, He spent alone in a mountain in prayer (vi. 12); at the time of Peter's confession He "was alone praying" (ix. 18); at His transfiguration He prayed (ix. 28); even on the cross, He prays for His murderers (xxiii. 34); and in His last words, He commits His spirit into the hands of His Father (xxiii. 46). From the waves of Jordan, from the wilderness, from the mountain, from the garden, from the cross, there rises through all this book the pleadings of earnest supplication wafted to heaven. Luke loves to point us to the praying Christ, and bids us abide with Him there.

Legend makes of Luke an artist. They tell us that he painted two portraits, one of the Saviour, and one of the Virgin Mary. The tradition comes from the sixth century, and in the thirteenth century he was made the patron saint of painters. I need not say that this floating tradition is all a myth. But Luke has furnished the artist with some of the most glorious subjects that have ever been cast upon the canvas. The Virgin and the Child at Bethlehem; Simeon in the temple; the scene with the doctors of the law; Jesus, from the Mount of Olivet, vanishing in the clouds of heaven with priestly hands upraised in benediction, and many other scenes in common with the other Evangelists.

Justin Martyr, I know, would have us believe that Jesus had no physical beauty, from a misinterpretation of the prophecy which describes Him as without form or comeliness, like a root out of dry ground. I cannot think him correct. True beauty and deformity belong to the soul. Moral worth will flash through the veil of flesh, and reveal itself in external expression. We know nothing of His complexion, the color of His hair or eyes, or His stature. Tradition deals in her dreams, and the artists present only their own ideals. But whatever His physical appearance, beautiful He must have been who loved the children; who uplifted womanhood; who pitied the

suffering ; who healed the sick ; who went about everywhere doing good. Beautiful those eyes, so often upraised in prayer ; those lips that said " Father, forgive them " ; those hands, so often clasped, and so often opened. Beautiful those feet that always journeyed on errands of love. No, Justin Martyr, Jesus was beautiful ; the Christ of Luke is fairest among the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely.

V. I have only to remind you once more that Luke's is the gospel of song. None of the other gospels contain any, but there are five great songs that swell through the exalted pages of this gospel. Zecharias' prophetic song, the Benedictus, part Jewish and part Christian, used, some believe, as early as the fourth century ; the song of Mary, the Great Magnificat, sung in public worship since the commencement of the sixth century ; the angels' carol, the Gloria in Excelsis, chanted since the second century ; the song of good old Simeon, the Nunc Dimittis, used in church services since the fifth century ; and the Ave Maria, the " Hail Mary " of the angel, sinfully perverted now, but used in its original beauty as far back as the antiphonies of the sixth century. Infidelity is songless. It listens long and earnestly on the eternal shore, but it hears no sound. It goes back to the gates of life and asks

“Whence?” but darkness covers all. It lifts its eyes to heaven, but there is no open door. It drops a pebble over the precipice, but no echo returns. With a shudder it interrogates the tomb, but these cold, stony lips offer no answer. Gloom without a glimmer; silence without sound, and the pall of death brooding over all.

But Christianity has songs for the cradle, songs for the sick chamber, songs for the grave, songs for the cathedral, songs for the prison cell, songs for the lonely garret. It girdles our world with rapture. It fills the mountains of life, and the valleys of death, and crowds the gateways of earth and heaven with bright, blessed, celestial praise.

“ Let those refuse to sing,  
    Who never knew our Lord ;  
But children of the Heavenly King,  
    Should sound His joys abroad.”



## The Changed Leaf.





## The Changed Leaf.



*"And we all do fade as a leaf."*—ISAIAH lxiv. 6.



The beauty of our autumnal foliage is one of the glories of America. Travellers assure us that the tints of our forests greatly exceed in number and brilliancy those of the old world. George Barnard, who is an authority on the subject, gives a list (probably not complete, however), of but eleven trees that assume different hues in England toward the end of September, the season when they change their color in that country. On the other hand, Wilson Flagg, a distinguished botanist of New England, has furnished the names of twenty-six of our trees and shrubs that display yellow tints alone, and thirty-seven additional trees and shrubs which display all the shades of purple and red. Nor is this all. The European trees do not exhibit the almost endless variety of tints that are so remarkable and delightful a characteristic of our forests. With them

a sombre brown and yellow are the prevailing colors.

Thus Thompson, who has so accurately and beautifully written on the seasons, describes the general brownness of the autumn across the Atlantic:

“ But see the fading, many-colored woods,  
Shade deepening over shade, the country round  
Imbrown, a crowded umbrage, dusk and dim,  
Of every hue, from wan declining green  
To sooty dark.”

No such description as this could be applied to our glorious western forests, where yellow and orange and crimson and scarlet, with enough other colors between to make the harmony complete, blend together so beautifully, and appear with such vivid and striking advantage against their background of green, and against our skies of peaceful blue. As autumn advances, the leaves of the sumac and grapevine begin to look red, the walnut, brown ; those of the honeysuckle, blue ; the leaf of the American ash changes into four or five colors ere it falls. The unquiet foliage of the wild poplar exhibits yellow tints, sometimes approaching to orange or fawn. The birch and willow take on a pale straw color; the elm a bright yellow or pale brown. The sycamore changes to a clear, bright brown. The oak leaves, with their deep lobes, change from a pale brown

to a deep crimson or Indian red ; while queen of the forest is our maple. Its broad leaves gather all the tints of the autumn woods, and it flashes forth upon our sight, robed in every intermediate hue, from bright orange till it blushes into the deepest scarlet.

“ Green and red and golden yellow,  
Cherry bright and rich maroon,  
Blend the hues of glowing sunset  
With the softened tints of noon.”

It is God's brush which has touched these forests, and made our groves and valleys and mountain sides luminous with beauty ere the fading foliage falls to the ground and perishes. Nor should we allow this farewell of summer to go by without a passing thought. Christ constantly employed things in the material world as illustrations of higher truths. Since He spoke, the withered fig-tree has continued to warn against offering God “nothing but leaves.” The birds have never ceased to sing, as they wing their way through the air, of Him who careth for them, and the lilies of the field have ever testified of the One who has arrayed them in glories greater than any that Solomon ever wore. Oh, did we only understand things aright, did we but see them as they really are, every mountain the world over would be to us a Sinai from which Jehovah yet thunders forth His law ; every valley would be a vale of

Sharon, where the roses and lilies bloom ; every tree would be to us an acacia wrapped in flame, from which God is yet speaking ; every orb of light shining in the heavens would be a star of Bethlehem pointing to the manger. Every harvest would be to us simply a repetition of the miracle of the loaves and fishes multiplied, and every lake would become a Sea of Galilee, on whose waves the Saviour yet walks and sleeps. We would "find sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything."

This is the thought underlying our text. All nations have caught some of the analogies of nature. There is the springtime of youth, the ripe harvest of matured manhood, the white shrouded winter of death, and the fading autumn, a symbol of human frailty, when we, too, do fade as does the leaf.

I. This subject has a sad side. It speaks to us of decay and death. "We all do fade as the leaf." There is a pensiveness which gathers about this season of the year. The birds that filled the groves with such melodies have left us. The flowers will soon be all in their graves.

" 'Tis the last rose of summer left blooming alone ;  
All her lovely companions are faded and gone."

And she, too, will soon be with them. The stealthy night encroaches upon the day, and the inconstant summer flees to the tropics. One re-

marks on the stillness which fills the autumn woods. Where all was so lately vocal with song, and instinct with life, there is only the occasional chirp of an insect, with here and there the sound of a ripe nut dropping to the ground. Then again, the winds sob and moan and shriek and wail, as if the spirits of the air were let loose, and went forth everywhere uttering a universal funeral woe. The bitter, dreary rains weep down upon the dark earth like the tears of mourners falling upon new-made graves. The days are hung with gloom, as if the pall of death were over all. As Bryant has put it :

“ The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year;  
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown  
and sere.

Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie  
dead,

They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.

The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs,  
the jay ;

And from the wood tops calls the crow, through all the  
gloomy day.”

Now, all this is not without purpose. Every “sere and yellow leaf” falling to the ground, every tree standing stripped and bare, every gustful wind and barren field preaches of universal human decay. They each tell us that generations of men, like the foliage of successive summers, are fast passing away. Where are the mighty nations

of the past—Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Greece and Rome, that rose and flourished with such power and pride? Faded and gone like the falling leaf. Where are the cities they built, and the solid walls which arose in their strength, and the glittering armies which marched forth from under their gates of brass? Faded away like the leaf. Where, the poets that sang, the kings that ruled nations, the statesmen that swayed senates, the mighty men of war beneath whose tread the continents trembled? Faded away like the leaf. So, too, of the most massive piles that are going up everywhere around us. The tooth of time will gnaw them up. They must all perish at last. All human greatness must crumble away.

Many suppose that the frost is the cause of the falling of the leaf. This, however, is not the case. By a broad, general law, as the months go by, the leaf begins to fail. At first it has a vigorous hold upon the tree. The strongest tempest will not shake it off. The water continually absorbed by the roots is taking up with it, however, a small proportion of earthy matter, which is deposited in the delicate cells of the leaf, until those cells become incrustated with this deposit. A joint forms between the leaves and the tree. Thus, as the season advances, they begin to droop and languish and wither, and then they fall, leaf by leaf, until the ground is strewn with them. So,

likewise, by a fixed law of our physical being we, too, soon begin to fade away. At first our hold of life is strong. We cling tenaciously to it. But gradually the seeds of decay begin to deposit themselves. The flush of youth disappears. The step is not quite so elastic, the eye is not so keen, the ear is not so acute, the arm is not so strong; the bands which bind us to life are, one by one, being loosened. We begin to totter and grow feeble and tremble like the leaf trembling on the branch, until the last hold we have upon time is severed, and we are silently borne away down to the ground.

Sometimes, too, the fall of the leaf is hurried on by the wild autumn storms which suddenly sweep over the land and throughout the forest. What a harvest of dead leaves do the tempests gather! The air is filled with clouds of them that are wheeled about in circling eddies and then hurried to the earth. And the analogy holds. A great plague of cholera visits the East, the yellow fever, in a pestilence of death, sweeps over the South, a storm of war breaks forth, and swaths of men are hurried into the tomb. Thus, in one way and another, like the foliage of our passing summer, we wither and fade, and droop and die.

“ The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
Be scattered around, and together be laid ;  
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,  
Shall moulder to dust, and together shall lie.”

II. This subject has an encouraging side. In "Norwood" you will remember how Dr. Wentworth, sitting under his favorite tree and surrounded by the listening children, wove his sweet fable of the "Anxious Leaf." The tell-tale wind had whispered to the tiny thing that some day it must fall down to the ground and die, and, affrighted, the trembling leaf told the twig, and the twig the branch, and the branch the tree, and so the news spread abroad in genuine fashion. But the tree, rustling all over, turned preacher and soothed and reassured the quivering leaf by telling it that no change could take place until it was ready to go. Then there was no more sighing after that, but the little leaf danced up and down merrily, as if nothing could ever happen to it. And so it grew all summer long, till the bright days of October came and all the leaves around changed their dress and grew beautiful, and the joy of it made this leaf beautiful too. At length one day the leaf cried out, "Oh, branches! why are you lead-color and we golden?" And the branches answered, "We must keep on our work-clothes, for our life is not done; but your clothes are for holiday, because your tasks are over." And the joyous leaf in very gladness bounded away like a flame of glory. Its life work was done, and it could well afford to put on its holiday attire and soar away. And, moreover, too, the stem had



grown longer and thicker, and the whole tree stronger and more vigorous because of this humble leaf. Twig and branch and trunk, down to the point of the farthest root, have felt its influence. The world is better because it had been in it. Strip the leaves off a tree, and it cannot grow. It must die. What things could be apparently more worthless?—and yet they have gone on silently working piling up cells, prolonging the branches, shaping the arches, sinking the roots, rearing the boughs, until “nothing but leaves” has built for us all the forests of the world. They perish, but there are left behind them monuments which will remain. They die, but the forests live.

An insignificant insect is at work down on the bottom of the ocean, with miles of water overhead. Surely it would be hard to fancy how little it can do. But it toils on, building in those tossing and treacherous seas, vaster than our cities, higher than our mountains, domes of rock that mock our solidest masonry, until a great new island rears its green head above the surging billows, and man finds there a home. The little coral worm dies, but the coral reef which it built will last while the world endures. If the humble leaf and the humble coral live not in vain, then why should you? Those workmen who toiled in stone and iron may be forgotten, but the Brooklyn Bridge will remain

a monument to their labor. So of any true life. Sir Christopher Wren died, but St. Paul's Cathedral stands there still. Watt died, but the steam engine moves on. Morse died, but the electric telegraph flashes its messages around the globe. Mozart died, but his Requiem yet weeps over the dead. Handel died, but his Messiah sings of a life divine in a hundred lands. Michael Angelo died, but his marvellous creations on canvas speak. Milton died, but his Paradise Lost still justifies the ways of God to man. Bunyan died, but his Pilgrim journeys yet the narrow way. Carey died, but India is being redeemed for Christ. Courage, brother, depressed with the littleness of what you have done, dejected over the worthlessness of your work! Let this withered leaf rebuke thee. Faithfully meet the duties of each day as they come. Falter not. You are building better than you know. As God builds up the forest with perishing leaves, so with perishing men and women He is building up the world and redeeming it for His Christ. The work you are now doing for Him will remain long after you have passed away.

III. This subject has a bright side. A few days ago I took a drive out in the country. The autumn leaves were clad in their richest splendor and the scene was simply enchanting. It was as if the sunbeams had woven a parting crown, and

placed it upon the brow of the forest. It was as if the leaves had lain so long bathed in the light of summer suns that they had become transfigured into the same glory.

“ We wound along the narrow mountain road ;  
Beside our path the tireless river flowed ;  
And all the woods in autumn beauty glowed.

“ Scarlet and gold and crimson clad the trees ;  
Their royal raiment fluttered in the breeze.  
Was ever monarch's glory like to these ?

“ Their splendor lit the rugged mountain tops ;  
A crimson blaze that gleamed above the copse,  
And every leaf a flake of fire drops.

“ The river ran a stream of ruby red,  
Bright with the radiant reflection shed  
From all that rustling glory overhead.”

What a magnificent illustration of the dying Christian ! God's saints are like those forest trees in their golden autumn tints. They are grandest in decay, brightest when they are about to pass away ; catching the glory of the skies when the hand of death is upon them. Like the kindling splendor of the setting sun, there is often a strange brightening which haloes the close of life. So near at hand is the better country that the quickened ear catches the sound of distant bells ringing from across the river, and hears the echo of angel choirs.

Ask yon storm-tossed, weather-beaten apostle whom they are about to lead from the Mamertine dungeon out to the place where the Roman headsman with drawn sword awaits—ask him how the sky looks to-day. And Paul answers, “Ready to be offered. A crown of righteousness awaiting me. To depart is to be with Christ, which is far better.” Ask yon white-haired old man at Patmos what are the closing scenes which gather around his island home. And John answers, “The whole heaven is lighted up with visions of celestial splendor. Palms of victory, crowns of glory, pearly gates opening, golden streets flashing, angel bands beckoning me home. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” Christian ministers are bending tenderly over the bed of Samuel Rutherford, waiting for the chariots of God to come. What vision is this that breaks in upon thy soul? “Glory shines in Immanuel’s land. Oh, for arms to embrace Him! Oh, for a well tuned harp!” The stormy, weary, suffering life of Richard Baxter is about to end. The hour of sunset is deepening into the shadows of night. How is it with thee now? “I have peace, I have peace.” James Harvey, before thou leavest what is thy last testimony? “Oh, welcome death, thou mayst well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian.” Go to the humble dwelling of Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, and tell him that

death is approaching his door. In rapture he exclaims, "Oh, come in glory; I have long waited for thy coming. Welcome joy." There is no shadow in the valley when the untiring spirit of John Wesley enters. In that room so filled with tender devotion hearken to those assuring words, "The best of all is, God is with us." Saintly Payson, smitten down in the midst of thy much-loved toil, summoned away at the early age of forty-four, how seems it to thee in thy closing hour? "I float in a sea of glory." The thoughts of Adoniram Judson, the great missionary, turn to the future. How does the close of life look? "When Christ calls me, I shall go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school." Dying Mrs. Foster, what have you to say? "A pilgrim in the valley, but the mountain tops are all a gleam from peak to peak." So also of millions more. These are the merest samples. Christianity transfigures and glorifies the dying bed, and lights it up even as our autumn forests are kindled with beauty from above.

IV. This subject has a prophetic side. It speaks of resurrection. The leaves fall to the ground and perish. They dissolve back into earth, and fertilize the soil around the roots of the tree. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The long cold months follow, and there they lie under their shroud of snow. Impossible, I hear

you say, that these should ever rise again. Incredible that God should raise the dead. But His eye watches over every particle of each of these faded, withered leaves. They lie just where He intended them to be. He can raise them up again. At length the dreary winter is past, the rains are over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds has come. The resurrection trumpet of spring calls up all nature into life, and the forests burst forth into vernal beauty under brighter skies, and amid new summer scenes. Changed into nutriment, these fallen leaves are "lifted up through the trunk and flung out like fresh banners again from the topmost bough." They pass through death into life. Sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in corruption, raised in beauty; sown amid the sobbings of the winds of autumn, raised amid the zephyrs of the spring.

The chief objections to the doctrine of the resurrection come from the scientific side. One of these alleged difficulties may be illustrated thus: The bones of Wickliffe were dug up from their grave by his enraged enemies, and burned to ashes, and the ashes sown into the brook Swift, and the Swift conveyed them to the Avon, and the Avon to the Severn, and the Severn into the narrow seas, and the narrow seas into the main ocean. "And thus," says Fuller, "the ashes of

Wickliffe are the emblems of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

"The Avon to the Severn runs,  
The Severn to the sea,  
And Wickliffe's dust shall spread abroad,  
Wide as the waters be."

How can the particles that composed the body of this good man be collected from all parts of the earth and united in his glorified body? Is it at all reasonable or credible that any such collection should take place? Can the body of this humiliation be gathered up from the bottom of the most distant seas and changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body? How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? It is certainly not very much to the credit of scientific men to urge as an objection what can be so readily answered on their own grounds. Take the bodies we have now, where were the particles that composed them a short time ago? Well, the tea came from China; the wheat from the Dakotas; the sugar from the South; the fish from the Atlantic Ocean; some of the fruit from Spain or Italy; the spices from Africa. These vegetables, too, were fed by showers where they grew and the rain came by evaporation from distant lands and seas. The substance of that which made up your last repast was scattered a short time ago just as widely as is the ashes of any of

the departed. Is there anything inconsistent in believing that the same God who has collected the particles composing our bodies at this moment from the most distant climes and built them up and made them what they are will collect their particles again and bring them together once more as He has already done? When the resurrection will call together the ashes of Wickliffe wherever they are now scattered, it will only be doing what was true of his body every day that he lived upon the face of the earth. When we have the same miracle constantly enacted in life, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should repeat it and raise the dead?

Another scientific objection is that some of the substance of the bodies of those who have departed, passing, for example, through vegetable life, may enter into the bodies of others, and then, the question is triumphantly asked, whose shall this be at the resurrection, for they both had it? There are many simple answers to this. Identity of matter is not essential to personal identity. When Cranmer held his hand out into the flame before him, exclaiming, "That unworthy hand," he knew whatever change may have taken place in its substance that it remained the same hand with which he had written the recantation in the gloomy tower. Every few years the substance of our bodies changes, and is replaced



by other particles, but we recognize ourselves and everyone else recognizes us as being the same. So this difficulty vanishes also.

Why should we hesitate for a moment in accepting in its fullest and completest integrity this whole glorious doctrine? It is taught in the most explicit terms in the Word of God. The very word "resurrection" signifies a rising again of that which was buried. Those "that sleep in the dust of the earth," "all that are in the graves," in a word, "your mortal bodies," shall be quickened and come forth. It is sown in corruption and it, the same "it," is raised in incorruption. In all those who were brought back to life in the Bible it was the identical body which died that was resurrected. It was thus with Jesus. The very marks of His agony were still traceable. If Jesus died and rose again He will "transform the body of our humiliation into conformity to the body of His glory." So that what was true of His body will also be true of ours. Christ came into the world and took upon Himself our nature to redeem not a part of it, but our whole manhood, body, soul and spirit. When God is so mighty that He created the universe out of nothing and hung the vault of heaven with myriads of flaming lamps that nightly burn in glory there, think you, cannot this Omnipotence raise the dead? We know He wrought the vastly greater wonder. Why falter before the lesser one?

Nature is full of hints and prophecies of life beyond. Every seed that drops into the ground "is not quickened except it die," but from death it comes forth into a newer life. This is Paul's own illustration (I. Cor. xv. 36, 37). Every harvest on every field waves golden promise that we shall rise again. Every blade of grass, thrilled with the pulses of spring after the long, cold winter, is a prediction of things to come. All the flowers that bloom upon the earth are, as Longfellow has it, "Emblems of the resurrection, emblems of the better land." The worm passes into its chrysalis tomb, and at the call of God comes forth with its glorified body, a beautiful butterfly. Night is but the death of day and morning its resurrection. And here is the argument: When resurrection is so insignificant a matter with God that He gives it to the faded leaf and the shrunken seed and a worm in the ground, shall He refuse it to us, who are the purchase of Christ's agony and who are joint heirs with Him to His resurrection glory? Nay, more, if He can take an unsightly bulb or a shrivelled grain, or a dry, withered root, take even the filthy mire beneath our feet, and transform any of them and cause them to break forth and bloom in robes of beauty fairer than all the splendor of Solomon, if that marvel takes place here before our very eyes—what must the glory of our resurrection be when we shall be

like Him and see Him as He is? "We shall shine forth as the sun by and by."

I lay my dearest earthly friend, my brother, in the tomb. What is this death? Oh, cruel grave, thou hast robbed me, thou hast bereaved me, thou hast crushed me. Must I never see his face again? Back from the Christian sepulchre returns the radiant answer: "Thy brother shall rise again." "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

"Grave, the guardian of our dust,  
Grave, the treasury of the skies,  
Every atom of thy trust  
Rests in hope again to rise."





**Main.**



## Nain.



*"And he came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."—LUKE vii. 14, 15.*



Twenty-five miles to the southwest of Capernaum there is a ridge of hills running east and west, known in modern times as Jebel el Duhy, known anciently as Little Hermon. It is about seven or eight miles southeast of Nazareth; about five miles south of Tabor, and situated on the eastern end of the plain of Esdraelon. On the southern side of this ridge was the village of Shunem, whither Elisha came from Carmel, sixteen miles to the west, and raised to life the only son of his noble hostess. On the northern side of this range, reposing like the nest of a bird on a hillside, was situated the city of Nain. The word Nain signifies lovely, or pleasant. The city overlooked some of the most charming and historic scenes in beautiful Galilee. Not only beautiful for situation,

but beautiful it doubtless was itself, with its walls and gates, its rich gardens and its laden orchards. The site is undisputed. A few huts of mud and stone among heaps of ruins are all that are left to speak of its former importance.

One single event is enough sometimes to make a place renowned forever. Waterloo and Gettysburgh have been lifted out of obscurity, and will always remain illustrious by reason of a single struggle which occurred at each place. So of other localities. So, too, is it of Nain. We know nothing of it before or since. At its entrance the widow's son was brought to life. Once only the clouds parted, and the light of heaven flashed down upon the little city, and lighted it up with immortal splendor, and then the clouds closed, and the darkness over it has remained unbroken ever since. But we would not give that glimpse for half the history of our world. The eyes of all the centuries of Christendom have rested upon this spot, and the hearts of the remotest nations down to the end of time will throb faster and their hopes grow brighter because of this one vision which breaks upon their view at its gate.

It would be toward evening when the procession which followed Jesus approached the scene of this miracle. After healing the centurion's slave, He came down the well-marked road from Capernaum. He was accompanied by many of His dis-



ciples, and a great throng of people. Those strange commotions, "those wondrous gatherings day by day!" They passed the city of Endor, famed in the Old Testament story. They looked out on the hills of Gilboa. The road here turned sharply toward the west. As they approached the town perched yonder on the verdant mountain, suddenly a wild lamentation from within its walls broke upon their ears. As they drew nearer, the gate opened, and a solemn procession came out eastward to meet them. Once before this gate had opened, and a grief-stricken widow, bowed in sorrow, followed the form of her precious husband to the grave. Then it closed, and weeks or perhaps years of silent grief went by. She had a son, an only son, on whom all her hopes and affections were now centred. The morning of the day of our text there was heard again a loud blast from a horn, and a hush fell over the village. Under these blue summer skies death had once more visited the town, and the widow's son lay lifeless in her home. We know the forms of Jewish burial in the time of Christ. The interment took place usually at evening on the day of death. The hot climate made this necessary. The body was washed, anointed, wrapped in linen, and prepared for its last resting place. The bier would be made of wicker, or willow basket work. The face was usually uncovered. The bearers walked bare-

foot, often pausing as the slow procession moved out, while others relieved them and took their places. In Galilee the women walked before the dead, the mourners immediately followed, and then came the sympathizing multitude. The mourning women indulged in their wild chants, accompanied by flutes, and the melancholy tingle of cymbals. The whole throng would join in outbreaks of grief. It was deemed the solemn duty of every one to accompany the funeral procession. In this last act of reverence none would be wanting. So that this miracle was wrought not only in open day but also before two vast multitudes.

What words could ever portray this thrilling scene! The great procession of mourners bursting with wild lamentations through the gate. The lone, stricken widow walking after—with faltering footsteps, weeping her very soul away. Advancing to meet them along the road from Endor, the great multitude of dust-covered travellers down from Capernaum. Throng meeting throng, multitude meeting multitude; life meeting death; hope meeting despair; the resurrection meeting the tomb. Which is the mightier? Which will have to turn aside and make way for the other? What a picture!

I. We have the Master's treatment of the bereaved mother—"And seeing her, the Lord had compassion on her, and said to her, 'Weep not.'"

The word *compassion*\* in the original is far stronger than with us; it is a mother-word, and means the inexpressible affection that a mother bears for her child. So sensitive was Jesus' heart that He felt every pang of suffering that came before Him, and made it His own. "In all our afflictions he is afflicted." He sups with us, and we with Him. He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Her bereavement became exactly His. Remember, too, that the last time we saw Joseph, His reputed father, it was when Jesus, at the age of twelve, was at the temple. This was over nineteen years ago. Mary is often seen after, but Joseph, never. The belief is that he was dead, and that the mother of Jesus was now a widow. The sight of this widow would call up memories of His own humble home at Nazareth. Soon, too, His mother would be weeping at the cross over the death of her first-born son. The whole incident touched His heart most tenderly. It is hard for us to know what to say when we visit a dwelling where death has wrought its ruthless work. The utter desolation that meets us, the hopeless despair that fills the riven heart, seal our lips. We ask the bereaved ones to be brave; but how can they? We tell them that it is the common lot, but that makes it no easier.

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\* σπλαγχνίζομαι.

We assure them of the wisdom and love of God, but they cannot understand. We picture to them, if they are Christians, the glories of heaven, and speak of reunions beyond, but this does not restore their loved ones now. Oh, Grave, thou art a frightful thing! It is not wrong to weep. Jesus wept. Gethsemane and Calvary teach us that we are not to steel ourselves against sorrow. The heart must cease to throb and the mind to think before tears will stop flowing at the grave of affection. Thank God, there is one who could write "WEEP NOT" over the gate of Nain; One who stands beside the grave, omnipotent; One who says, "BE COMFORTED"; One who can give the solace which we need. This same blessed Helper is by us in our bereavements!

II. Christ's restoration of the dead. "He came and touched the bier." Now there was a deep meaning in this. From the side of the weeping mother He walked to the side of the lifeless form. He took the initiative. He always does. By touching the bier He became Himself ceremonially unclean. So with other things. Leprosy was a type of death. To touch the leper was to be ceremonially defiled. Yet Jesus did it. To take Jairus' daughter by the hand was to become dead Himself in the eye of the ancient law. It was therefore a typical act. It was by sharing our uncleanness, becoming sin for us, that Jesus has

taken our sins away; by sharing our sufferings He expiated our guilt; by sharing our humanity that He redeemed it; by dying our death that He abolished the power of the grave. So that the Sinless One becoming defiled was a sign of the cross and a type of the whole history of redemption.

How hushed and still the scene! The bearers instinctively stand still. What is coming? The painful stillness is broken by one short command: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" Southward across the hill from this it was that Elisha, hundreds of years before this, had called the Shunammite's son to life. As Massillon pointed out, it was with a great struggle that the prophet brought from death its prey. Reluctantly and slowly the iron gates of the grave, creaking and groaning, rolled back! You can see Elisha on his knees in prayer, in the closed death chamber. You see him cast himself upon the child, his mouth to his mouth, his eyes to his eyes, his hands upon his hands. Then you see him, in the intensest agitation of his soul, walking to and fro, up and down throughout the room. Again he stretches himself upon the child, and breathes his very life into him, before the heart of the child began to beat, and the lungs to move once more. But Elisha was only a servant. It is the Master who is here at the gates of Nain. "I say unto thee"—in His own name, by His own authority,

through His own innate power, with a single word of command, He turned outward the portals of death. One mighty word is flung upon that evening mountain air, and the machinery of life starts on again. "Egertheti"—arise, said Jesus, and the young man sat up on his bier and began to speak. There is the calm dignity of conscious power; the composure of one who has only to speak and it is done, and to command, and it stands fast. With Him it was all one, to still a storm, or to raise the dead. This is the ego of omnipotence.

There are some who assure us they can call back departed spirits, and get them to tell all about themselves or our loved ones, and what they are doing now. This young man, when he sat up, "began to speak." Whatever he said, he told nothing of the mysteries of the spirit world. When Jesus was with His disciples after the resurrection, He told nothing to them of what He had experienced during the three days that His body had laid in Joseph's tomb. Lazarus had nothing to say of where he had been during the four days he was in the grave. You remember how Tennyson sings :

" When Lazarus left his charnel-cave  
And home to Mary's house returned,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

“ ‘Where wert thou, brother, those four days?’

There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Has surely added praise to praise.

“ From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were filled with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crowned  
The purple brows of Olivet.

“ Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.”

Now, then, if the dead came back always with sealed lips, if none of these who returned to life in the Bible ever broke the silence, think you, do the departed come back in spooks and ghosts in darkened rooms to rap with tables, and play on tambourines and jingle bells and write twaddle on slates, and tell with well-known accent what they are doing in the spirit-world? I am sorry for the spirits of the departed if they are capable of speaking the idiotic dribble that is imputed to them. No, no, the lips of the dead are sealed. What Christ did for His disciples after the resurrection was this: He opened their understandings so that they understood the Scriptures. Do you want to know where the sainted dead are, and what they are doing? Read the book of Revelation; read the fourteenth chapter of John;

read the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians; read the fifth chapter of second Corinthians; read Paul's letter to the Philippians; read till your eyes are dimmed with tears of joy, and your heart beats with a transport of wonder. Let those fraudulent table-rappers and this whole race of deceivers alone.

III. It has been observed that there is an instructive gradation in the miracles of Christ. The three raisings from the dead were the three mightiest wonders which He wrought. They tower up like three mountain peaks, and all the other miracles are like steps leading up toward them. When we see water changed into wine we see only what God is doing every year in every vineyard. The water of spring is changed into the wine of autumn. When we have the bread multiplied, we have only what is taking place in every harvest field.

“ 'Twas seed-time when He blessed the bread,  
'Twas harvest when He brake.”

When we see the storm hushed, we have only what occurs on the Atlantic every week. As we pass from the material world up to our physical nature we have the same series continued on a higher plan. The healing of the sick by Jesus was only in an abbreviated process that which takes place in every home. As we rise higher still to



the realm of spirit and the demons are cast out, we have only that which takes place in every conversion. On the plane of physical nature, on the plane of body, on the plane of spirit, we have, in concrete, condensed example, only that which is constantly taking place yet in the world. But we have no analogy where the chasm between natural life and death is bridged. Evolution must start with a miracle. Life can never come out of death. Life must come from life. It is a creative act. It is the direct power of God. There are three raisings from the dead in the Old Testament: the child raised by Elijah, by Elisha, and the man whose body was cast into Elisha's sepulchre. Three raised by Jesus: one, Jairus' daughter in the bed; one, the widow's son on the road to the tomb; one, Lazarus, who had lain in the grave four days. Two in the Acts: Dorcas, raised by Peter, and Eutychus, raised by Paul; there was also the resurrection of Jesus Himself, and of those saints who arose at the time of His resurrection. Three stars shining in the night of the Old Testament; five stars shining in the night of the New Testament. A constellation of stars seen at Calvary and Christ Himself in the centre, the bright and morning star. All these were prophecies and foretastes and presages of the dawning of that glorious day when all that are in their graves shall hear the Voice which spake at the gate of Nain,

saying, "Arise," and shall come forth, they that have done good into the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil into the resurrection of damnation. "Our life as Christians is not therefore like the march of prisoners sentenced to death, led irresistibly along to the fatal spot where all shall be ended forever; but, having overstepped the grave, it is an Emmaus journey, a walk with the risen Jesus, and the sepulchre is left behind us, and the great stone rolled away from its door." Ours is not an evening walk from twilight into night, but a morning walk from darkness into day. Not a procession from life to death, with muffled drum and funeral marches, but a procession from death to life eternal, with the songs of angels and the music of the skies. We are not passing from joy to sorrow, but from sorrow into joy eternal.

IV. There is another thought. All those who are described in the Bible as brought back to life were young, at least not beyond their prime. In the Old Testament we see this in the son of the widow of Zarephath and of the Shunammite. The term applied to the man hastily laid in the prophet's tomb is one descriptive of the vigor of manhood as opposed to the infirmities of old age (II. Kings xiii. 21). In the New Testament Jairus' daughter was twelve years of age. This widow's son raised by Jesus, and Eutychus brought

back to life by Paul have the same term applied to them. They were both young men. We know not the age of Lazarus or of Dorcas, but the impression that the story of the life of each leaves is that they were yet in the vigor of active life. Not the aged pilgrims with tottering steps, and silver locks, and trembling hands, are awakened again in time. The old have passed through all the storms and sorrows of life. Too bad to call them back to fight these battles over again after they got through with them. Let them rest from their labors. Let them enjoy their crown. Leave them with their blessed reward. But the young, who had not borne the burden and heat of the struggle, let these be called back to this world. And this has suggested to many a further thought, which may be stated thus: Diversity is one of God's great conditions of beauty and enjoyment. We meet with diversity everywhere—in scenery, in plant, in creature, in every human face and form. One of the charms of this life is that childhood and youth, and the prime of life and old age intermingle here so delightfully. It is the same God who rules on earth that reigns in Heaven. Heaven is not going to be "one fixed monotonous age." All decay, all deformity, all sin will of course be taken away. But there will be no progression from childhood to youth, and from youth to the decrepitude of old age in eter-

nity. White hairs will never come into our heads in the skies. The child in Heaven will always be a child; the youth in Heaven will always be a youth; the middle-aged will always be middle-aged; the old without any of their infirmities will have the serenity and beauty of age. Always advancing in Heaven, and yet always preserving those differences of years which made life so delightful here. God knows when to place the stamp of immortality upon each of us, and then He calls us into our fixed abode. The differences that arise out of the time when we die will always go with us in eternity. And this explains why God calls persons away at different ages. "Around the throne of God in Heaven thousands of children stand," and your child is one of them; changed and beautified, we know, but yet a child. She will meet you as such at Heaven's gate. And that ripe old saint who went home to Heaven, glorified indeed, yet he will have the rich maturity of these riper years about him when we meet him above. Your fair young daughter will be your fair young daughter forever. As Dr. Hugh McMillan, to whom I am indebted, on this subject says, "God fixes the stamp and seal of their immortality upon them at the time when He calls them home, and Heaven knows no change. All ages are taken here that all ages may dwell there."

“The lily is as perfect as the oak,  
The myrtle is as fragrant as the palm,  
And Sharon’s roses are as beautiful  
As Lebanon’s majestic cedar crown.”

And so we have partly anticipated our closing thought. Jesus “delivered him to his mother.” The young man did not wake from the “iron sleep of death” to gaze upon wastes that he never saw before, but he awoke to old faces, old friendships, old acquaintances. And when we are called by the same Christ back from the same death, we shall open our eyes to behold our loved ones, even as did this youth of Nain. This is no strained interpretation. Everything that Jesus did was full of meaning. And they shall know us, too. We shall not be poor, ghost-like, sorry counterfeits of our old selves. This son that Jesus gave back to his mother had not lost his identity. Martha and Mary knew Lazarus after his resurrection. Jairus’ daughter was the same daughter. The disciples knew their risen Lord. In all this God is teaching us.

The joy in the glow of that sunset at Nain’s gate is only a faint picture of that above, when Christ will again work His miracle of resurrection, and we shall meet our loved ones beyond. “He will bring back the child to the mother, the husband to the wife, the brother to the sister, the friend to the friend, as truly as on earth He delivered the

young man of Nain to his mother, the daughter of Jairus to her father, and Lazarus to Martha and Mary." Luke does not attempt to describe the scene of rejoicing. The Evangelist only adds: "And there came a fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God had visited his people. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about." With this foretaste he lets the curtain of the night fall; it will lift again on the resurrection morning. A wounded soldier was picked up as he lay unconscious on a Southern battlefield. He was taken away by train some hundreds of miles. When he woke up to what was going on around him it was amid far different scenes. There was the old room and the old furniture, and out from the open window lay the old orchard, fragrant with the blossoms of spring, and vocal with the songs of birds, and beyond lay the familiar barn and fields. Wife and children were bowing tenderly over his pillow. Friends and neighbors were gathered around. He could not take it all in at first. His eye moved over these scenes once more. The truth at length dawned on him and a wondrous smile lit up his wan face. "Why, this is home!" was his first rapturous exclamation. He had closed his eyes amid the awful din and carnage of battle. He opened them in his own

peaceful, charming home, and with those that were dearest around him. So shall it be with us. One moment we close our eyes amid the conflict and struggle of life, the next we open them far beyond these scenes of strife, amid visions familiar and supernal, with those we love best flocking around us. *And this is Home!*

How sweetly Bickersteth describes the greeting which awaits a ransomed spirit as it reaches the celestial shore:

“ I was no stranger in a strange land there ;  
 But rather as one who, travel-worn and weary,  
 Weary of wandering through many climes,  
 At length, returning homeward, eyes far off  
 The white cliffs of his fatherland, and ere  
 The laboring ship touches its sacred soil  
 Leaps on the pier, while round him crowding press  
 Children and kith, and friends, who in a breath  
 Ask of his welfare, and with joyous tongues  
 Pour all their love into his thirsty ear.  
 Such welcome home was mine.”







“Mighty To Save.”



## “Mighty to Save.”



“*Mighty to save.*”—ISAIAH lxiii. 1.



The Edomites, or Idumæans, descendants from Esau, were among the first, the last, the bitterest, and the most formidable enemies that ever opposed the Hebrew nation. Refusing the Israelites a passage through their borders on the journey to Canaan, they also stirred up the bitter hostility of the desert tribes against them. Subdued by David, they sent ambassadors to excite the enmity of the Syrian court, and thus became Solomon's greatest and most troublesome foes. Joining league with the Chaldeans, they encouraged them to raze the very foundations of Jerusalem, and exulting over its destruction, they even slew many of the Jews who were spared by the latter. And the last time they appear as a separate people on the page of history was immediately before the Roman wars, when, through strategy, twenty thousand of them obtained admittance into Jerusalem, and filled the holy city with robbery and bloodshed. That bitter enmity which existed

between Jacob and Esau seemed never to have been forgotten by their descendants; and the first we know of Edom and the last we learn of Idumæa are by deeds of cruel violence and acts of implacable hatred performed against their brother Israel. Bozrah, the ancient capital of Edom, the residence of its early kings, was situated twenty-two miles south-east of the Dead Sea, among the rocky fastnesses of Seir. It was the great military stronghold of the nation.

In this sublime prophetic passage a mighty deliverer is represented as coming up out of Edom, the dreaded land of the enemy; travelling in the greatness of his strength from Bozrah, the city of its power, the centre of its ancient pride, after having passed victoriously throughout the land, overthrowing its strongholds, and delivering the captives appointed to death. In rapt astonishment the Hebrew seer takes his stand, as it were, on one of the hills of Judea, and exclaims in wonder: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" And the returning triumphant conqueror makes answer, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." It makes the figure more striking also when we remember that the word Edom signifies red, like blood, and some suppose the word Bozrah to mean the vintage.

Whatever the immediate and local reference, there is no doubt whatever as to the ultimate application of this passage. With a drawn sword in his hand, the captain of the host of the Lord appeared to Joshua, and took supreme command of the armies of Israel, when the conquest of Canaan begun. In the book of Revelation we find garments dipped in blood worn by Him who is called "The Word of God" (xix. 13). In these and other passages the imagery of our text is not only maintained, but they all point unmistakably to Christ. The very name Jesus signifies Saviour. The message of the angel was: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall *save* his people from their sins" (Matthew i. 21). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us that Christ is able to save "to the uttermost" (vii. 25), and Timothy is informed that the "chief" of sinners was made a trophy of his saving power (I. Timothy i. 15).

The picture is a resurrection scene. Our world is the great moral Edom. Ever since the fall man has been the slave of Satan, led captive at His will.

" With pitying eyes the Prince of grace  
Beheld our helpless grief ;  
He saw, and oh, amazing love !  
He flew to our relief."

This celestial conqueror took His stand in the

heart of our spiritual Edom. His whole life was one long conflict with the powers of darkness. For forty days He met them in all their force in the wilderness; He struggled with them in Gethsemane; He triumphed over them on Calvary. Then He went down into the dark, gloomy Bozrah of the grave, and met the king of terrors there. He took the crown from his brow, the sceptre from his hand, and the keys of Hades from his possession. And on the third day all the bars and gates and fetters of death were thrown open, and Christ left the grave behind Him empty. He wrote "Mighty to save" on the rent rocks of Golgotha and ascended in resurrection triumph back home to His native skies. The angels, as they looked down from the heights of glory, cried: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" And the ascending Christ makes answer: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Again they wonderingly inquire: "Wherefore then art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" And He answers: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with me." Then they tune their harps anew and sing in exulting triumph: "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up,

ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

Taking this as the setting of our text, we notice:

I. That Christ is a mighty Saviour is seen in what He is in Himself. He is the God-man. There are many direct statements of Scripture which teach the Deity of Christ. The Word was God, and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. He claimed God for His Father among people who understood by the expression "making himself equal with God" (John v. 18). He said, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30). Paul writes of Him as "Christ who is over all, God blessed forever" (Romans ix. 5). The writer of the letter to the Hebrews speaks of the angels as being mere instruments and messengers, but the Son is solemnly addressed as God Himself. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. i. 8). Eternity is His. Christ was "before all things" (Col. i. 17). Creation is His. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (Col. i. 16). Omnipresence is His. On earth, and yet "the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). In heaven, and yet "with you alway" on earth (Matthew xxviii. 20). Omniscience is His. "Thou knowest all things" (John xvi. 30). Omnipotence is His. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew xxviii. 18). Equal honors

are His. "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John v. 23). Worship is His. The saints in Corinth "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (I. Cor. i. 2). In a word, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). Equally clear and strong are the direct statements which show His complete and sinless humanity. But there is more than this. These doctrines are taught by every implication and assumption of Scripture. They are woven into the very texture and fibre of the Gospel narratives. Only on these hypotheses can they become intelligible. When I see the Babe of Bethlehem resting on the bosom of His mother Mary, I am taught that He is human; but when I hear that burst of angelic song swelling through Judea's sky, I learn that He must be more than human.

When I see yon dust-covered traveller sitting wearily at noon on the stone which covers Jacob's well, I know that He is man; but when He unseals the fountains of living water, and saves that lost woman of Samaria, I know, too, that He is God. When I see Him sink down asleep in that little storm-tossed boat on the Lake of Galilee, I recognize His brotherhood to us; but when, with a word, He hushes the wind and stills the storm, I know that the King of nature must be here. When I see Him going weeping with Martha and



Mary to yonder grave, I know that He is man, touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but when I find Him flinging those mighty words of life down into the blackness of the sepulchre, and the sheeted dead starts forth, I discover that He is God. When I see the blood flowing from hands and feet and holy brow, I know that He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; but when I find Him snatching out of the jaws of hell that dying thief, and with a word rolling open the gates of Paradise, I know that He is the world's great Saviour. Oh, were ever such meekness and majesty, such power and pathos, such poverty and riches united in any one person as in Jesus! Poorer than the poorest was He, so poor that He was born one night out in a stranger's stable, so poor that they buried Him in haste in a stranger's tomb, and yet the Lord over all, blessed forever. Thus heaven and earth, and time and eternity, and the finite and the infinite were united in one to give the world its glorious Redeemer. Both Bible and nature alike were a dark, unsolved enigma to the poet until he grasped the two great facts that Christ is perfect God and also perfect man; and then everything became luminous about him. And these are the words that W. B. Robertson sung :

“ A lowly man—He takes my sins, and bears the heavy load ;  
A lowly man—He takes my hand, and leads me up the road ;

And when I know this lowly man is my Creator ! God !  
Oh, this hath solved me much dark speech ; and loosed  
tongues that were dumb !

For all creation round me now a Gospel has become,  
And what had seemed to me before *mere* wild confused  
Babel,

Is now a fire-tongued Pentecost, proclaiming—CHRIST IS  
ABLE.

The thunders, in the crashing skies, announce it as they roll ;  
The lightnings, on the dark storm wall, write it in vivid  
scroll ;

And stars repeat it, down the dark, in mystic, jewelled light ;  
The Urim and the Thummim on the breastplate of the  
night ;

And strong Orion shouts to me what slumbered in old fable ;  
And echoes from eternal night-vaults answer, Able ! Able !  
And comet, cresting bended heavens, waves echo to the  
word,

Like waving white plume in the star-mailed helmet of the  
Lord ;

For all creation its evangel utters forth abroad  
Into mine ear, when now I know my Saviour Christ is God ! ”

II. That Christ is mighty to save is seen in  
what He suffered for our redemption. Holman  
Hunt's great picture represents Jesus as standing  
in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, at the close  
of a day's toil. His arms are wearily outstretched ;  
and the slanting rays of the setting sun, falling  
full upon Him through the open window, cast be-  
hind Him a shadow like that of a cross. His  
startled mother looks up and sees the appalling  
suggestion. And this great painting of “ The

Shadow of the Cross" is true in the broadest symbol. Its gloom rested upon Him from the very beginning. Over every step of our future there hangs an impenetrable veil ; and this very limitation of our nature is one of our greatest blessings. Whatever of sorrow or disappointment our present or our past may contain, we know nothing of it in the days to come ; hope is ever filling up the coming days with pictures of ideal beauty. We are going to get out of all our trouble—it is all going to be well in the sweet, golden-hued "by and by." And so our sorrowing world lifts up its tear-stained face, and smiles and struggles on. We never could have gone through a fraction of what we have endured, had we known it beforehand. Were the veil to be lifted so that we could see a little ahead, there are faces now wreathed with smiles that would be blanched with fear ; there are eyes now merry with laughter that would be red with weeping ; there are arms that are strong and brave in effort that would drop helplessly at the side. One of our greatest blessings is that we do not know the future. The full sunshine of this hour is not darkened by the shadow and the storm of the next. Not so with Jesus. From every point in His whole life, the full pre-vision of the frightful cross stood out ever before Him. It cast its dread shadow over His cradle, over His years of silence, over every valley

and mountain and sea where He passed, over every hour, over every step. He lived under the penumbra of its eclipse throughout His whole life. Listen to those words that drop now and then from His lips, about a cup of sorrows to be drank, a baptism to be accomplished, an approaching hour and power of darkness, the scourge and the crucifixion, and the coming decease. You see Him taking aside His disciples and talking in whispers to them about it. You find Him alone in prayer with this thought uppermost. It is the theme of converse with the heavenly visitors on the Holy Mount. His whole life, from the cradle to the cross, was one vast Calvary, one constant sacrifice, one great atonement. Nay, more, the shadow of that cross rose up against the sky. He saw it ere He left the realms of glory. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 7).

Many persons, in discussing this subject, dwell upon what I may call the merely physical side of it. This is natural because it relates to that with which we are most familiar and can best comprehend. They tell us about the hammer and the nails, and the thorns and the wooden timbers of the cross. They point us to His nights of lonely vigil, and His days of ceaseless toil. All this is true, and more. There are elements even here in what Christ passed through which we cannot

understand. Our sensibilities have become so blunted that we cannot understand how a pure and sinless being would shrink from coming in constant contact with the pollutions and the wreckage of sin. The more pure, the more sensitive to impurity. The more holy, the greater the recoil from evil. The more loving-hearted, the more keenly would the surrounding woes and sufferings be felt. The missionary shrinks with abhorrence from the crimes and the squalor which are not even known to the blunted feelings of the degraded cannibals among whom he dwells. Now this principle applies in all its fulness to Jesus. His was the gentlest, purest, noblest spirit that ever visited our earth. How His heart must have recoiled from surrounding vice, and His eye from the misery everywhere present, and His touch from contact with the impure, and His ear from the "great forlorn wail of humanity borne to Him upon the four winds of heaven." How deep the burden of that heart as "looking up to heaven he sighed." To Him physical suffering meant what we, with our coarse and shallow natures, can never know. But this is the least of it. We are yet only touching the outer fringe of things. Have you ever observed that under bodily suffering our Saviour never once uttered a word of complaint? His hands are tied around that dark, blood-dyed whipping-post, and His

back is lacerated by the bloody scourge, but no groan rises from Pilate's Hall. The crown of thorns tears its way down His holy head, and the blood streams over His face, but no cry of pain escapes His lips. He sinks under the weight of the timbers, and they have *to bear Him* \* to Golgotha, but there is no word of complaint. The spikes are driven crushing through hands and feet, and He hangs quivering upon the accursed tree, but through it all He is dumb; as a sheep before her shearers, He opened not His mouth. But oh, it is off yonder in the garden where there is no spear, no scourge, no material cross, that we find Him tearing Himself away from His disciples, passing deeper into the shadow and darkness, casting Himself convulsively upon the cold sod, while the thrice-repeated cry rends its way through the olive boughs, in that solitary midnight, up to heaven: "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was during the three hours' darkness when His Father's face was hidden from Him, that the pleading of one lone spirit was heard going up out of the bosom of the gloom, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah, the old divines were right. "The sufferings of Christ's soul were the soul of His sufferings." "It pleased the Lord

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\* *Φέρουσιν αὐτὸν*, Mark xv. 22.

to bruise him." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He became "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I. John ii. 2). When we speak of the Passion of Christ, therefore, we are standing on the shore of an ocean which is boundless and unfathomable. Remember now who it was who suffered, and what that suffering meant, and then begin to know how heaven repeats, and earth echoes back from every shore the joyous, assuring words, "Mighty, mighty to save!"

III. That Christ is a great Saviour is seen not only in who He is and what He endured; it is also seen in what He has done—in the results of His work.

Mighty to save! This old world of ours has known many, alas, who have been mighty to destroy. Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon, and others, sailed to their gory crowns over seas of blood, and erected their thrones on pyramids of human skulls. They came to scatter misery and woe; He came to bind up the broken-hearted. They came to make of freemen, slaves; He came to proclaim liberty to the captives, and let the slaves of sin go free. These all fell in the midst of their triumphs; He triumphed in the midst of His fall. Earth's conquerors were all of them at last conquered themselves by death; Christ con-

quered death itself, and rose, the first-fruits of them that sleep—mighty to save.

Look at the frightful moral condition of the Roman empire at the beginning of our era. No pen dare write, no lip dare tell the monstrous vices that were then not only tolerated, but gloried in. Glance at the hints we have of the terrible degradation of other nations. Read in the Greek the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. That which cleansed this great reeking, poisonous morass, and raised it up to its present eminence, and changed it into a garden, is the power of the religion of Jesus Christ. Even when grossly corrupted, the salutary influence of Christianity can still be seen. So mighty is it, that if the principles of the Bible were only lived and obeyed universally, they would banish all evil forever from our planet. Nor has the story of redemption lost its primitive power. The history of modern missions is replete with thrilling wonders. Let the Gospel but touch the shores of India or Africa or Madagascar or the Fiji Islands or Greenland or China or Japan—whatever it touches it transfigures, and the moral wilderness breaks forth into beauty, and blossoms as the rose. There is no people so low but He can exalt; no nation so vile but He can purify; no tribe so lost but He can restore, for He is mighty to save.



But let us be more specific. I look through the pages of the New Testament. He saved Nicodemus the ruler, and Saul the Pharisee, and Luke the physician, and Zenas the lawyer, and Peter the fisherman, and Matthew the publican, and Apollos the eloquent, and Onesimus the slave, and Lazarus the beggar, and Mary of Magdala, the demon-tossed. And these are only specimens. The pages of history are filled with shining trophies of redeeming grace, even as the heavens above are gemmed with stars. Men like Waldo the merchant, and Zwingli the peasant, and Ambrose the teacher, and Arnold the monk, and Savonarola the reformer, and Milton the poet, and Bede the venerable, and Chrysostom the eloquent, and Melanchthon the timid, and Luther the bold, and unnumbered hosts beside, for He is mighty to save. I take my stand on that "lone, rocky isle of the sea," and gaze with the exile of Patmos on scenes of celestial splendor. More in number than the sands of old ocean are the vast multitude yonder with crowns of gold upon their heads, and harps in their hands, and songs on their lips. "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" From every clime and coast, from every tribe and people, from every grade and condition they have come, washed in Jesus' blood, sanctified by His spirit, cleansed from every trace and mark of sin,

made whiter and purer than snow. Redeemed by Him from earth, they are now exalted into the highest heavens, for He is mighty to save.

Go, then, thou herald of the cross, to every land, and make known the good news to every creature. Speak it on the plains of India, preach it in the valley of the Congo, publish it amid the snows of Lapland, proclaim it to the far-off islands of the sea, "waft, waft, ye winds, His story," till all the sinning, perishing children of men the world around shall know of Jesus, the mighty to save. He can save you, no matter who or what you are. Tarry not. Confide your eternal interests to the keeping of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand. Cling to Him "whose voice is in the marchings of the planets, and the rushing of whose melodies is in the wings of the morning." In all the changing and checkered experiences before you, in sunshine and sorrow and storm, in life and in death, always remember Him who returned so gloriously from Edom, mighty to save.

"Ere since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.

"And when this feeble, faltering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power, *Thy mighty power*, to save."







**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

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