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To Mother

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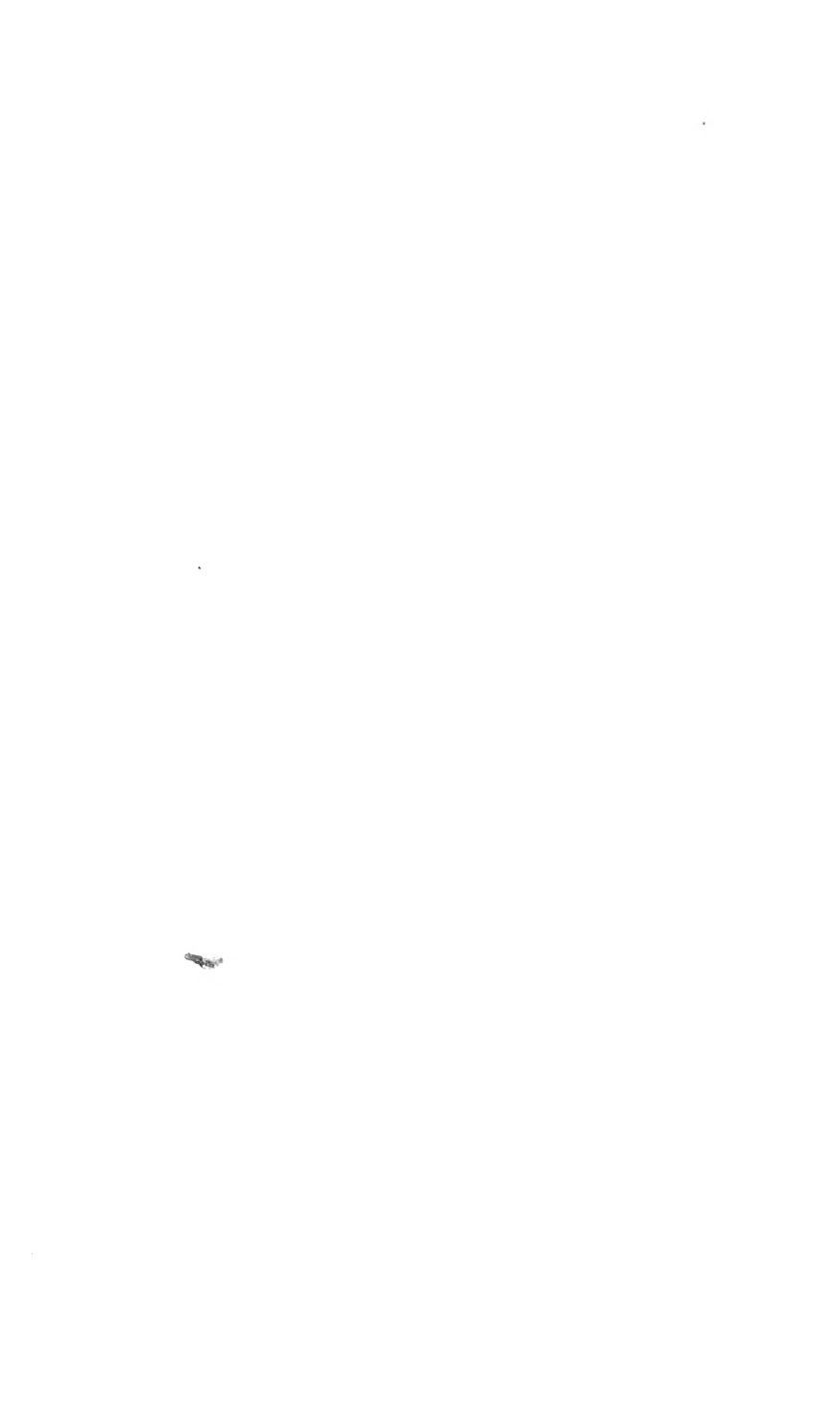
May 22nd 1911

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LEAVES

FROM A

FINISHED PASTORATE.



LEAVES

FROM A

FINISHED PASTORATE.

BY

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SALUTATION.

To my Dear People of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco, California, with whom I have lived and labored for fifteen years in happy fellowship, and from whom, in the service of the Gospel, I am separated now, through the interdict of occasional debility, I dedicate these "LEAVES," whose voices they have heard in the course of this now finished Pastorate.

And as sharing in such a memorial, I would turn back also to a remoter Past, and a longer Pastorate, and include as well the households of Park Street Church, Boston, Mass.

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I.

FOR THE NEW YEAR.

PRESSING FORWARD.

“ . . . This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—PHIL. iii. 13-14.

THESE are fit words with which to inaugurate every new era of our natural life. If this be done, each epoch of the natural will become, also, an epoch of a more advanced spiritual life. Our earthly pilgrimage has its various reaches and stages, its inns by the wayside, places of pausing and resting, where we linger a moment, not to give over the journey, but to bind our sandals more firmly on, and gird our loins afresh. One of these transition points meets us here, on this first Sabbath and first day of the new-born year.

It is not well to pass these mile-stones of our way, without taking time, at least, for a glance at their inscription. We need not make a full stop, as though the mile-stone were our journey's end, as though we had done enough for man's good and God's glory, and might sit down and repose on our laurels.

This is not at all the spirit of our text. If we take on our lips these words of Paul that breathe such heroic ardor,

such an untiring zeal, we shall not indulge in self-complacent views of the past, and feel like putting off the harness of active service. Rather, because we have heard another chime of our finished years,—because the number of our years of toil on earth is diminished by one more unit taken away, should we be quickened to the resolve, “This one thing will we do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we will *press toward* the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

But, what is meant by “forgetting those things which are behind”? Is the past of our life to be blotted out, and to be as though it had not been? Are we violently to separate our future selves from our former selves, as by a bridgeless chasm? Are no tender, inspiring, thankful, disciplinary recollections to follow on from the years that are fled? Is the dimming eye of age to have no more any glimpse of childhood,—to lose sight forever of joyous, impassioned youth, to gather in its harvests without any abiding thought of the seed-sowing? Is all that God has done for us in mercies and chastenings, all vows we have uttered, all lessons we have learned, all sanctifying forces whose vitality is a stream issuing out of some fountain of by-gone days,—is all to be wiped out with an utter oblivion?

None of us have any such intelligence of our sins.

We are not to forget the DIVINE GOODNESS in the past. Very frequently are we to review all the way in which God has led us, for the sake of keeping fresh in our heart the memory of His great mercies. Hear David’s continual chant, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!” “We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O

God, in the midst of Thy temple.” We are not to write the record of providential blessings on the sands, whence the next advancing wave of Time shall blot it out forever. Rather are we to write it, as with the point of a diamond, on the tablet of grateful hearts. It is God’s due that we remember all His kindness. No view of His providence is complete or correct without it, no estimate of His character, no measure of our deep indebtedness and heightened obligation. It were a great violence to the thankful spirit to deny it the privilege of returning often along the track of its mercies, to build its monuments to their Author, to weep tears of penitence over its own poor returns, and to tune to sweeter music its notes of Praise. Let them still shine upon us from the full round of the year,—all its sunny hours, its bright pages of *rescues, healings, preventions, interpositions*, every endowment for soul and body ministered by that Fatherly hand! All these we may, we must, we shall remember!

We are not to forget *our Chastenings* of the Past. This is a part of all Christian experience. “Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” If the story of humanity itself could furnish any exceptions to this experience, the story of *Grace* can not. Many of the most precious lessons we have ever been taught personally were under this tutorship of Grief. Here we learned more than we knew before of God’s paternal faithfulness. Here we made deepest discoveries of the idolatries of our own heart. In this night of sorrow the glorious Heaven was seen in clearer vision, and longed for with intenser ardor. Some of the dearest bonds that unite us to the Hereafter are seen in this retrospect. The blessed mean-

ing of special Scriptures has been thus lettered to us in mourning type. Hours of tenderest intercourse with Jesus rolled beneath that shadow. God's hand touched us then more sensibly than ever, and the everlasting arms enfolded us. We can not afford to let all this go; it is too precious; it were a loss of richest treasures! No child of God is to forget his spiritual birth-hour, his introduction into the Family of the Redeemed.

We are not to forget *the time of our conversion to God*. Often are we to look back to "the rock whence we were hewn, to the hole of the pit whence we were digged." Often are we to sing with full heart and tremulous lips:

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed, with precious blood."

We are not to forget as individuals, or as a Church, the *Times of Refreshing* from the Spirit's presence, when, after long drought and weary waiting, the *little cloud*, "like a man's hand," has appeared on the far low horizon, and the breath of prayer, fanned by the wings of hope, has rolled up the cloud till it covered the heavens, and the great rain descended. Then every drooping plant lifted its head. The parched places became pools of water. Seed long sown felt the reviving life, and shot up its tender germ. Blessed seasons in the Church! We have known something of them. Here and there we have reaped and gathered in our sheaves in such harvest months. God has enlarged us from time to time, and in these months now gone, by bringing in converts unto righteousness. It were ingratitude for chief mercies, it were defrauding our souls of happiest inspirations not to

remember, here and now, what must be, in its blessed issues, eternally memorable.

And, *the Teachings of God's Ordinances*, we may not forget—how many Sabbaths we have sat together in His presence, and within His house, through all the round of the passing years! Oh, how sweet to my own heart this bond of the Past! How many Scriptures have thus become to us personal messages! How many utterances of the Holy Ghost have thus unfolded their meaning to us in sacred hours,—how many have guided our thoughts and quickened our devotions in hours of social prayer! These lessons ought to linger with us. They should connect themselves in our memories with a growing intelligence and deepening love of God's Truth, and still keep sounding on to us voices of Doctrine, Correction, and Reproof out of the by-gone days.

There are other *mutual experiences*, through these years, we can not give over to forgetfulness. We have crossed the threshold of one another's homes, under every sky that has brooded our household life. By the side of *sick-beds*, in the chamber of the *dying*, over the open *grave*, in the narrowed circles of bereavement, beneath the heavy hand of providential calamity,—and, again, at the domestic festival, in social reunions, by the bridal altar, in the kindly interchange of daily greetings, we have met and mingled. Changes have chased each other across the stage with agile feet. Youthful hearts and hands have wedded; babes have smiled into proud glad eyes; *childhood* has shot into youth; *youth* has taken on something of the sterner look of manhood's gravity; *manhood* has worn on along its midday prime; *age* has bowed itself lower toward its rest; and not a few

from all these ranks have "fallen asleep." It were not wise to forget that such things have been, that Life stands still with none of us, that we are on the stream floating along, now between flowery banks, now under the shade of cypress boughs. Especially can I never teach my heart to forget your manifold kindnesses to me and mine. Never have we had occasion to draw upon that kindness, either in individual instances or in your collective capacity, and have found the draft dishonored. And never, while Memory remains, shall the mantle of Oblivion fall upon these accumulating Records. So the Past will live with us yet. We can not, if we would, dissociate it from our present and our future, and we would not if we could.

Still, we can not abide in this Past. The end is not yet. Not one of Life's earnest calls is silent. The sun is still above the horizon. Each hand of Duty beckons us onward. The inspired voices speak with varied and quickening accents, "Gird up your loins like men!" "Run with patience your race!" "Work while the day lasts!" Yonder, not here, is the goal. Yonder hangs the crown. Myriad eyes of witnesses look on. We have traversed a part of the course,—but look before us, not behind. Ask not, how far we have run, but what remains to fill out the course. Bend to it again! Press forward for the prize, full in view!

We must not sit down *amid the blessings* of the past, to tell them idly over as a miser counts his hoarded gold. Goodness must quicken, not paralyze; we must not linger over the story of our afflictions, and enervate our strength in weeping tears. But, gathering the new-born tenderness in our hearts, leave the sepulchre behind for duty to the living. We may not be content with past harvests of grace, but with fresh faith

in the Lord of the Seasons, sow in tearful hope. We have not learned enough of the Truth of God. We have only picked up "a few pebbles on the shore"; out there rolls the great ocean. We have taken a jewel or two from the shaft, but the deep-branching ore veins the Finite and the Infinite.

Let us, then, challenge and provoke one another to a fresh ardor in the course that remaineth; our Life is yet to live; our Race is yet to run; our Work is yet to do.

Let us press forward in the study of God's Word! This one volume is not yet, with us, exhausted. The students of all ages have not mastered its lore of heavenly wisdom. We are associated to search this Book. The chief function of the ministry is a TEACHING function. We have lifted here this sacred tower that the true Light may shine forth from all its reflectors; that whatsoever life-voyager looks hither may, by friendly warning, and guiding ray, be able to lay his course for the haven. We may pledge ourselves anew, to-day, to the fearless, faithful, uncompromising exhibition and reception of what the Holy Ghost has taught concerning our lost estate, and the only way of recovery. The Truth, the truth *as it is in Jesus*, the humbling, self-denying truths of the Cross, we renew our covenant together to declare, by whatever lips, to welcome and to abide by.

We have this truth *to express in Christian Lives*. That is its most eloquent utterance. It silences gainsayers. It does more. It conquers their *convictions* and wins their *heart*. This unanswerable vindication of our Gospel from all reproachful imputations, to show that it is not a system of license, that it does not wink at wrong, that it does impart a new vitality to souls dead in trespasses and sins, that it renews and sanctifies, as well as expiates and pardons, we

must establish by Godly and holy living. This testimony is a new demand for every day. Once to have borne such witness is not enough. The evidence must shine clearer, fairer, more irresistible, as we come more under the influence of our Faith. Here, also, let us "press forward," discontented with past attainments, and reaching forth to a more effective witness-bearing.

Let us, also, as God's Redeemed People, renew the consecration of "*our means*," to the one cause of Christian Charity. We have given and given, given largely perhaps and constantly. We have sent no call away empty. The sum total of our annual benefactions is not a small figure. "*Forget*" that, my brother, my friend! Let it go! That is one of *the things that are behind*. We are to press forward in this type of beneficent action. Still the sighing of "the Prisoner" comes to our ear, the wail of the Orphan, the cry of hunger of body and soul, the pleading of nations sitting in darkness. "Forward, onward, upward" in this good work!

And oh, for the prosperity of this Church let us engage anew! God has written His name here. He has cast our lot within her walls. Let these walls be dear unto our hearts! Let her very "dust" be precious to us! Here we dwell as a Christian Family. The whole fraternity of the Redeemed we are to love with a brotherly love. But in this local fellowship we are a single compacted household. We know one another, in the intimacy of domestic ties. We become acquainted with one another's peculiarities, with individual traits, with the daily story, the temperament, the temptations, the trials, and all that enters, as warp and woof, into the texture of one another's life. This Home-Church

must be embalmed in our heart. Night and day must our prayers ascend for her, and our tears fall. For one another's spiritual growth and peace, under whatever leadership, we must count nothing too dear to bestow. That God would dwell in the midst of us, and Christ be our life and light, must be our hearts' ceaseless burden at the shrine of intercession. Pause not, to recount "past" labors, to remember "past" sacrifices, they are "the things behind." Look "forward!" Renew the vow,—

"If e'er to bless thy sons,
My voice or hands deny,
These hands let useful skill forsake!
This voice in silence die!"

And, what are we doing to secure the conversion of those in our own families who have never given their hearts to Christ? What effort do we put forth to bring our business confederates and our social acquaintances to the gate of Life? How often do we take our unconverted kindred and comrades by the hand, and express the tender wish that they were one with us in Jesus? We have sacred and thankful memories of the power of God's Spirit, in those special visits when souls are gathered in like sheaves in harvest-time or "as clouds and doves to their windows."

Are we wrestling with the faithful Promiser, for such an outpouring of quickening energy upon the word preached and to be preached, and all its confessors, and waiting, with anguished desire, for the great rain from Heaven?

Oh that we might press forward upon all this pathway of human rescue from the bondage of sin and condemnation!
Oh that we might share the mighty passion that brought the

Prince Emmanuel from the throne of Glory to seek and save the lost! and find, under these new moons of the opening year, abundant reaping for the garner of the Lord, and so find it, to every one of us, in sweetest earnest, a *Happy*, HAPPY New Year!

II.

CASTING CARE ON GOD.

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”—1 PET. v. 7.

HOW few faces wear, in the mirrors that reflect them, the stamp of a settled and abiding Peace! The current and characteristic expression of the human countenance is that of *anxiety* and *solicitude*, *worry* and *trouble*. If there be in glowing eyes and parted lips the inspiration of Hope, it is *Hope* shadowed by *Fear*; for the very eagerness of Hope trembles, lest, instead of the prize, we draw the blank of Disappointment. It is a pertinent as well as a tender call that comes to us, to-day, in this voice of our heavenly Monitor, and speaks to this habitual unrest of our hearts.

We make to ourselves most of our burdens. Some of us are exceedingly fertile and ingenious in this matter. We are objects of admiration to our friends, for the manner in which we persuade ourselves we have the weightiest loads to carry. Start a man with such a train, and there is no end to the freight he will take on. One care, of course, begets another, and the progeny is soon a legion. Begin to ask questions about contingencies and consequences, challenge the future of any interest with a nervous “what if?” or “what then?” and the spirit is instantly at sea, “driven of the winds and tossed.”

Now a feeling of *Responsibility* is good for us. It is well for us to understand that there are natural laws grasping the health and soundness of our material life, and our intellectual development; and spiritual laws controlling our spiritual health and vigor; and providential laws carrying the assurance of a definite providential outcome. But the sphere of our responsibility is that within which our personal duties are to be performed, and our personal force exerted. And obedience to natural and spiritual laws is the very course to relieve us from care, giving us the peaceful and glad conviction that, having been careful to be faithful and reverent to those Laws, we may lay aside all other care. The zone of our responsibility has its bounds. We are not responsible for the orbit of comets, the changes of the seasons, or the course of Supreme Sovereignty. And to trouble ourselves about the forces of Nature, or the methods of the Divine administration, is going beyond our sphere. And this is precisely the way in which many hearts bow themselves down to the ground with burdens too heavy for their necks, and never intended for them to lift at with so much as one of their fingers.

This is the weight that makes men stoop so soon toward the grave. This plows furrows deeper than the share of time. This strains the spirit till its elasticity is gone. This brings premature gray hairs, and cuts short the vigor and comfort of life. *Care* more than *Duty*, more than *work*, more than *want*, Care with Duty and labor and want, the bitterest ingredient of all, this it is which presses a soul quite beyond endurance. How foolish, how needless, how unbelieving! And what a voice of music is that which calls to the child of God, nay, to each burdened one of earth, who is

freely welcomed to the same relief, "Cast all your care upon HIM, for *He* careth for you!"

1. It will help us to do this if we consider that *God has a plan*, which includes all that can touch our personal experience. Enter a shop of human artificers; what a scene of confusion! There is forging, and welding, and molding, and casting, and riveting, and all apparently disjointed and fragmentary. You can make nothing of it. No man, so far as you discern, brings anything to pass. He turns out no completed product. Is it fruitless industry, therefore? No. You feel no trouble about it. You have confidence that, however limited and local the art and the knowledge of the individual workmen, at least *one Master Mind goes by a plan*, understands the relation of each fragment, and the necessity of all the fragments to a consummate whole; can put together these scattered and diverse bits into some admirable piece of machinery that shall match and save the sinews of a hundred men, drive a floating armament of National power across leagues of Ocean breadth, or thunder over the expanse of a Continent, with scores of lives and millions of treasure in its train. The thought of this plan, the knowledge that it exists, is an instant relief in the survey of the shapeless medley. It is all needful, we say; everything has its place; there will be no loss of material or labor; the minutest link and rivet are numbered with the specifications, and are not less essential to the symmetry and strength of the whole than the stateliest and most elaborate portion that shows worthy of some magnificent design.

This, now, is the way to be assured and comforted concerning the materials and agencies with which Providence works. That Headship is not changeful in its schemes and

ends. It does not shift its purpose with each shift of currents and tides. It does not take up new ideas and receive new inspirations with the fresh incidents of every day's story. It does not accommodate itself to unexpected exigencies. There are no unexpected events, no insubordinate forces, no surprises nor defeats. All that occurs belongs to the one wise and perfect plan by which the Infinite Designer works. That plan includes these varieties and opposites. It is an all-comprehending scheme. Each event has a place and a part in its unfolding. Each startling fact, flashing suddenly into the field of our human vision, like a flaming meteor, astonishing the night, had its precise orbit marked out before it trailed its pathway across the firmament. As observers of Providence, we are looking in upon God's great Laboratory. We see a few of His workmen; fragmentary products of their toil lie scattered around; draughtsmen, gilders, swart athletic Vulcans come and go; there are heating and cooling, and softening and hardening, and confused and contradictory processes begun and broken off, and nowhere in sight is there any model to guide this busy, aimless swarm. But the MASTER MIND knows that something is being accomplished, and what that something is, and how each day's labor and each workman's stroke tell on the outcome of that grand mechanism, for which, under his control, they are all toiling together.

Ah, if we had the faith to say, when we are surprised, when things go at variance with our wishes and expectations, when baffling and inscrutable forces move across the stage, looking not like champions for truth and righteousness and the better civilization of a golden future, but seeming to lead the age and the race straight back to a dark and dreary Past,

“This, too, is a part of the scheme; all is provided for in the plan, and shall in some way serve its bright unfolding,” how tranquilly should we look on; in what a perpetual calm, not of indifference, but of trust, should our spirits dwell.

2. Again, *God only has* CONTROLLING POWER, and upon Him, for this reason, we may well cast our care. How pertinently our Saviour reasons, in this vein, with His disciples: “Which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?” “Care” is in itself so impotent in reference to the objects of our anxiety that it would seem as though any well-conditioned mind would at once pronounce it irrational. “What shall the morrow bring forth?” Well, Care is not a prophet, and can not foretell, so it can not hasten or hinder the birth. If it could, to-day, read the morrow’s scroll, it could not change the record; what is written is written. “Do not yonder clouds portend a storm?” Well, what if they do? We may close our windows, gather our flocks and herds within their folds and stalls, and our little ones beneath our roof, but we can not avert the storm. “How wayward and perverse are the hearts of men,” we sharply comment; “why can not they see as we see, and act reasonably and righteously?” Well, we can not make the crooked straight; we can not force men to look with our eyes and drive in our rut; we can not help their acting weakly, wickedly, and perversely. “If we could only see ahead!” Well, we can not. “If we could have the management of affairs for a little while!” Impossible. “If we could make one hair white or black!” Not one. “If we could get hold of the helm and steer past yonder point!”

But our feet are not admitted on the quarter-deck. Ah, my friends, is it worth while for us to muse these vain and fruitless desires? Shall we hug Care to our breast, as the young Spartan the stolen fox, only to gnaw our vitals? What a strong Hand holds the helm! What a controlling Power presides over all movements and changes affecting the affairs of this life! The Power concerning which the trembling and rescued Disciples exclaimed as they neared the shore of storm-lashed Galilee, "What manner of man is this, for even the winds and the sea obey him?" All hearts are in His hands, and He turns them as the rivers of water are turned. What force oppresses us, what dear interest is imperilled, what loss threatens, what disaster impends? Powerless and helpless, how wise and prudent and comforting to carry the fateful question and submit it to Him unto whom all power in earth and heaven belongs!

3. Moreover, *God has taken our care upon Him already.* It is no burden to Him, and He knows it would crush us, and He has assumed it. He understands our shortsightedness and weakness and frailty. He knows well how liable to err in our management we should be, even with the best intentions, and for interests dearest of all to our hearts. These interests, all that can affect our happiness, peace, and welfare here and hereafter, enter into His great scheme of universal Providence—that scheme which is to subdue all evil, enthrone right for an undisputed eternity—and are there and thus provided for; not apart, indeed, from our loyalty, our prayers, and our obedience, but in connection with them, and so made forever secure. He has arranged and provided for all, as our Father and Friend, guarding our treasures against the time of our glad inheritance.

This is a reason, surely, for leaving our care in His hands. He has taken it already. Why should we be eager to get the load back upon our own hearts? Every crisis of our personal history has been met by Him already in anticipation of its coming on. For Abraham's extremity on Mount Moriah there was a ram caught by the horns in the thicket; and since that time the name of Abraham's God is written "Jehovah Jireh"—the Lord will provide.

Fugitive, friendless Jonah is cast into the sea, far from isle or shore. But God has prepared an ocean voyager to navigate the deeps with that solitary passenger and discharge him upon the dry land. "We have no meat," complained the wandering Israelites, and the quail sailed up over the camp, a dense, continuous cloud; "no bread," and the heavens rained down manna, and man did eat angels' food; "no water," and the solid rock, touched by the rod of Faith, gushed with living springs. The boat's crew, in the wild night on Gennesaret, is spent with rowing, and still the terror and fury of the gale increase, and then over the white-crested waves come the feet of Jesus walking on the water. We need not say, in our straits, "The Lord *will* provide." Faith may take a bolder flight and repeat a more tranquil and assuring word: "The Lord hath provided!"

There is no "care" left for us. When we are shut up to a blank wall, high and solid, and then spurred by some imperative need, we shall not cry out querulously, "Can we fly?" "Have we wings?" "How may we surmount this inexorable barrier?" That, indeed, is our "*extremity*," and is equally God's "*opportunity*." The wall will open with some rift of deliverance. An earthquake will level it with the ground sooner than God's rescue fail. In this

confidence we may rest. GOD HAS TAKEN CARE. Behind us are the pursuing, hostile chariots and horsemen; on our flank the mountains; before us the sea. "Here, then, we die at last!" Not so. We shall take up timbrel and harp on the far shore and chant forth our praise: "Sing ye to the Lord, He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea!"

One little word in our text is emphatic: "ALL," *casting ALL your care*. This is infinite and tenderest love, unstinted mercy! Every hair is numbered; every want foreseen; each peril linked with some agency of deliverance; each night of gloom lighted from above with some star of Hope.

There come seeming *Reverses* to the cause of Truth and Right. Their hard-won triumphs are suddenly wrested from them. Will they not fail in the conflict? We tremble for the Ark. It shakes almost to its overthrowing! God is looking on. His hand can steady it. Uzzah need not be distracted, nor rush forward with irreverent hand to lay hold upon the symbols of the Divine Presence and Majesty. The Most High needs no human defender.

The business of some strong "house" ceases to be profitable. The tide of custom and trade ebbs away. *Gains* turn to *losses*. All is *outgo*, with no return making *income*. Capital, experience, enterprise, diligence in this wonted channel prove idle investments. Whence, now, shall be gathered supplies for the manifold personal and household demands? WANT shall be master there and rule with tyrannous sceptre. What sad, questioning eyes look into the pallid face of this failing man of business! Is there anything better that he can do than to take himself away from such pining glances, and from all harrowing conscious-

ness? Let him hide his drooping head under the turf, as many a man has done in such extremity! But stop. Has he exhausted Divine resources? Has God but one harvest-field that this man can till? "Give us this day our daily bread." Yes, but the granary is empty. What granary? Whose granary? God's? Does He measure His fullness and His beneficence by this one narrow channel, and if this be closed must Hope die and the dependent perish?

The beloved and honored HEAD of some full home is stricken down. All the needs of that little community were met by the hand of this one provider. His life was the fountain from which flowed all the copious streams of supply. So steady and satisfying were the streams that the sense of dependence was scarce expressed or even felt. The ministries of comfort were almost like the laws of nature—regular, constant, abundant. Suddenly the streams have failed and the fountain is dry. The clinging fingers, torn from their hold, upon *whom* or *what* shall they fasten? The empty hands—who shall fill them? Well, is there nothing written for Faith and Hope against such an hour of gloom? "A Father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows is God in His holy habitation." "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." These desolate ones are not left unprovided or un comforted. The very ties that seem to have withered offer still their sweet utterance to their lips—"Husband!" "Father!"—and, casting their care on Him, they can never again be widowed or orphaned.

The success of some beneficent Reform seems imperilled. Appetite, selfishness, cruelty, and cunning have rallied in triumphant vigor. In some great debate, they have won

their point. Shall the friends of good morals faint and lose heart, for one reverse? Shall they yield the day to error and wrong,—desert the helpless, and suffer unbridled rapacity to ravage as it will in all the fields of human life and hope? Or, calling again upon their Infinite Ally, shall they renew the strife in His strength who can give them the victory?

There is no massive obstacle to the coming of better days, no great mountain in the way of Human Progress, before which some lowly Galilean fisherman shall not stand up in the name of the Nazarene, and say: “Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,” and it shall obey Him.

Oh, how lightly weighted we might go through the changes and revolutions of earthly times and seasons, burdened only with loving duty and casting CARE ON GOD! Light sits the yoke of *Love*,—and that is the only yoke with which God, in His Gospel, or in His Providence, or in His Law, lays upon our necks.

“Love is the fulfilling of the Law.”

Rise up to this calmness of Faith every day! Take hold, brethren, of the joy of this your heritage! Let no look of habitual solicitude sit, at home, on your face,—no frequent, long-drawn sigh from your heart proclaim your distrust, and dishonor the God of the promises! Let me look at your faces. Be cheerful, tranquil, and hopeful under all the strain of circumstances. It is not for one of you, calling yourselves *children of the Highest*, to go about mournfully and in gloom, with your heads bowed down like bulrushes, under whatever dark cloud hiding the blue of Heaven. Such an attitude and such an aspect question the

truth and faithfulness of the reigning, providing, covenant-keeping God. Trust Him and be at peace! Those eyes are always open. They see your every need. The relief-trains will come in, in a good though unexpected time. "Wait on the Lord,"—that is more than praying,—"*Wait!* be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart! WAIT, I say, on the Lord!"

III.

LITTLE TRIALS.

“Take us the foxes—the little foxes, that spoil the vines.”—SOLOMON'S SONG ii. 15.

THE most insidious and mischievous marauder against which the Jewish husbandman and vineyard-master had to contend, was the sly, subtle, devastating fox. He did not run in noisy troops, like the gregarious barking jackal, but slipped softly and silently out of his burrow, and glided with swift and noiseless footfall to his waiting repast. For the young vines and their tender fruit his relish was especially keen, and his most frequent incursions were, of course, in quest of this, his favorite esculent. It was not easy to fence him out or guard in any way against his ravages—he came so stealthily, he insinuated himself so easily through the smallest openings in the hedges, he sat so hidden under the leafy shelter of the plant he was stripping of its clusters. Some great Behemoth of the forests or the marshes had been a far less formidable enemy.

So the most disastrous influences to undermine and destroy character are by no means those that approach with broadest and boldest front, sounding their defiance before them and bearing down upon us to crush us by main strength.

It is well that all of us be warned that the greatest peril to our purity and constancy, in whatsoever relation, may lie in our encounter with the *little trials of life*.

When any stronghold of virtue within us — when any interests we esteem most precious and sacred, are menaced by some grand assault, our fears take the alarm at once; we gird on our armor; we summon all our prowess and resolutely join battle. The grosser onsets of temptation coming of set purpose to betray and ruin us seldom win victories over us. To the forces that lay direct and open siege to us, our defences are for the most part impregnable. It is not the storming party that wins the fortress, but the sappers and miners.

Let us see if there be not some discerning vision possible to us, by which the peril of those infinitesimal influences upon character shall be made palpable to our apprehension.

The fundamental element of danger from these influences is our *sense of security* in their presence. We look down upon them as beneath our notice and regard. The idea of being worsted by them, actually overcome and smitten to the earth, we treat with disdain, as Goliath the shepherd-boy that championed the host of Israel. They may ripple around our feet like waves that wash the base of some tall promontory, but above their lowly crests the rocky rampart frowns in secure and solid strength. If we yield to them, their whole force expends itself on trifles. If they govern us, it is only in the unimportant incidents of life, those trivial matters of conduct that are to the sum total of character as “the small dust of the balance.” Our reservoirs of virtuous principle can afford this little drain.

Taking a step or two from the highway of honor and right, the departure is not worth magnifying—we have not lost sight of the true road, our direction and progress are in the main the same. This little irregularity, if it troubles any one, is easily mended, and all is still well. No sense of danger disturbs our fears. And yet the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem slew the Philistine of Gath; the waves that beat at the base of rocky headlands wear away the supporting pillars and down rush the proud heights into the whelming sea; the little drain that wastes drop by drop the capacious reservoir, widens to a rill, a torrent, a broad running breach through which pour the main floods.

One may feel altogether superior to these minor failures, as one who has a great reputation for learning may think he can afford to be inaccurate in common things, or as a great artist may fancy he can support his fame if he overlook small imperfections. So that we meet the great trials of life in a becoming manner and approve our steadfastness therein, we may think it not very essential to rally our strength in these feebler crises, our standing being always safe, however these uneventful encounters turn. But that famous artist won his niche by perfection in trifles, and will lose it again if he reverse the process. That scientific reputation will go by the board if its lesser problems need rectifying; and there is no character so invincible to evil that the victories of foes despised will not weaken all its defences.

Now, a man may not be a spendthrift, judged by any signal acts of extravagance; he may not lavish thousands upon a painting or a piece of statuary; he may be able to resist the temptation of jewels and silver plate, but he may

indulge so many petty fancies, he may part so freely with his small coin in trifling purchases, he may so thoughtlessly drain himself by dribblets, as equally to outrun his income.

Take, now, that phase of character which we call *the disposition*. On great occasions, and in what appear to be the more important tests of its tempering, it may come through the ordeal with flying colors. Whenever any of its demonstrations attract the public eye or court a public verdict, it may hold the reins of the passions with a strong hand, keep down insurrection, and wear a face of such calmness and sweetness as it should seem nothing could ever ruffle. In social life it may express itself only and always in smiles and pleasant words. It may take for its costume such gracefulness of manner and cordialities of tone that every observer shall be charmed. And this may be its habitual exercise in this more noticeable sphere—kind, gentle, and winning. But suppose there is a more secluded sphere in which it watches itself with less care and vigilance; suffers itself to be surprised into outbreaks of harshness; glooms over its out-of-door sunshine with the sullen clouds of frequent ill-humor, under the domestic sky! What if, in the little trials of these more private relations, the disappointments and perplexities of household cares and intercourse, it express an irritable, quick-tongued peevishness, overcome by any and every small domestic vexation and cross! What if, amid these unpublished scenes, any disturbance of accustomed arrangements, any postponement of habitual gratifications, any coming short of exacting ordinances, any untoward accident restricting wonted conveniences, be allowed to act upon this temper like sparks of fire upon gunpowder—a flash and an explosion, and a lingering, low-

ering, sulphurous cloud! Of what so great significance and worth are those public sweetnesss and amiabilities compared with this other portrait? Tell me what look a man wears when he enters his home and shuts the street door—when he addresses dependents and inferiors, and sits down at the family board; tell me how a young man or a young woman speaks the sacred names of father and mother and meets delays or perversities in those who serve their needs and comforts, and I shall have the most reliable data for a judgment as to the real quality of their temper. Ah, these little trials do more stoutly prove the temper of us all than the greater and rarer where we appear to such advantage. And Christian character fails in consistency, symmetry, and self-possession scarce anywhere more signally and lamentably and with more disastrous consequences than in these lowly and familiar walks. “Take us the foxes—the little foxes that spoil the vines.”

If we look upon the friendships of life, strongly and firmly cemented, seemingly and really, by equality of age and circumstances, sympathy of tastes and pursuits, experiences of mutual tenderness and helpfulness—histories that have gathered precious and lasting memorials of their unchanging truth and steadfastness—we shall find, commonly, that the influences that rive them asunder are, in their sources and causes, very trivial and unimportant. The breach is not caused so often by any demand made from one heart upon another for some great self-sacrifice, some arduous and difficult service, some costly bestowment. These drafts are likely to be honored to the extent of the just ability, and even beyond. It is not that one is *said* and needs so much more of the comforting presence of the

other, or that one is *sick* and would be watched over by loving eyes, or that one is *perplexed* and leans heavily for counsel and guidance. The tie is proof against all such strain. Nay, it grows stronger and dearer under such stress, and clings closer and more vitally to the souls it encircles and binds together. The cause of the rupture will be a foolish jest, an unmeaning but hasty word, a little, thoughtless slight, an idle pique, a piece of silly pride that could not say on the instant, "I am wrong—do excuse me," and so could not say it at all, the difficulty of a frank overture growing with every hour's delay; and the fellowship of years is dissolved, not without later and long-lingering regrets. And so neighbor shall look coldly upon neighbor and pass as strangers, not because the one has inflicted upon the other some atrocious injury still persisted in, or refused some great act of kindness in its fit occasion, but because of a shrug of the shoulder, or a light remark forgotten as soon as uttered, or a small piece of criticism upon the face or the apparel, or some other indivisible nothing, tiniest molehill puffed and swelled into an Alp sheathed in glaciers and topped with perpetual snows. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes!" Let every *Christian disciple* pray this daily prayer!

In matters, now, of Trade and Business, propose to some honorable firm, under the necessity of large profits to meet its rents and clerk-hire, and the charges of the household establishment, and exposed, as every candid man knows, to the inevitable temptation to take whatsoever advantage falls within its reach; propose to these gentlemen to break open their neighbor's store and transfer his goods by stealth to their own warerooms, to forge his name on a blank check,

to abstract from his safe a certificate of so many shares of stock, and your mission there will be likely to come to a sudden and bitter end. If they could do all this and escape detection; if, upon detection, there were no laws to bring them to Justice; if it were a matter alone between their right hand and their conscience, they would shrink with most nervous recoil from the *thought* of it. This isn't the way in which temptation approaches them; they are not tried by such ordeals. The special peril to the honesty of business men is this: that qualified methods of doing business, of securing bargains, of influencing markets, will come gradually, silently, and universally into vogue, governing with so absolute and ubiquitous a control the interchanges of all mercantile life, that any non-conformist must go out of business or out of the world; which methods are not grossly dishonorable, but when thoroughly sifted and strictly tested by the immutable principles of justice and truth, are found to be *off the track, oblique* to the straight and true course; and that each trader, each artisan, each producer, will in his own walk yield, point by point, the little deviations about which he can not help the consciousness of some scruples, which he is almost afraid to look at in too clear a light, but which are so sanctioned and sustained by this common law, that how to draw out of the sweep of the current he can not see. Dare any man confidently affirm that a rigid application of the divine law, the precepts of Christ, to this sphere of life, would not necessitate a recasting of much of the standard code? Oh, will not Christian]men beware how these slight departures, these trivial but gainful obligations get currency with them, and to plead before the world the sanctity of Christian indorsement? "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines."

Take the case now of *young men amid the temptations of life in a great city*. The danger is not that they plunge at once into all the vices and excesses for which there are in the midst of us such abounding and perilous facilities. No man jumps from the top of the ladder to the bottom at one leap. However seemingly sudden, transformations of character in this direction are always gradual—with a secret if not an open history that exhibits the sliding scale of its progress. The danger is that these imperilled ones yield to inclination and solicitation by little and little; that they learn by degrees to look upon the bold, inflamed visage of vice without disgust and shuddering. Invite one of them to the gambling-house, to bathe his soul in the tides of the fierce excitement that ebb and flow in those silent chambers. You are quite too fast. He has both the conscience and the courage to say “*No!*” But ask him to take a quiet game of cards in your room with a few pleasant companions, just to pass away the time, and a trifling stake just to enhance the interest, and he will see no harm in that. He will be kept in countenance by comrades above suspicion. No harm may come of it, and yet it may be that the first light grasp of the fatal passion shall be laid upon him in that such seemingly innocent interchange. He will, at all events, have learned, as carpenters say, “the use of tools.”

You will hardly draw him into one of those vile dens reeking with the mixed fumes of the intoxicating cup and resonant with voices of blasphemy and rioting; but ask him in some festive evening party to pledge you in a glass of wine, and he may venture upon that little courtesy and no harm may come of it, and yet the first dim fire of an unappeasable thirst may thus kindle upon his vitals.

And so it may be with the Sabbath sanctities, and so it may be with the fascinations of evil companionship, and so it may be with the entrance paths of dishonesty, and so with all the circle of the vices. His peril is that the initial steps leading down these steep and swift declivities may be lightly and thoughtlessly taken, and without misgiving, and so the bands gather force and tightness upon him that shall by and by drag him down the abyss. Oh, here, too—and many agonized voices out of the old homesteads join the prayer: “*Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines.*”

So, also, in the more specific sphere of the *Christian life* itself: there is the same momentous interest hanging upon the issue of the little trials intercepting the way of advance. The first risings of *sinful desire*, unbidden, involuntary, unwelcome, who shall dare to trifle with them, or because we think they are never to be cherished, never grow into passions and ripen to purposes and prompt to deeds, look leniently upon them? The first spray of the cold waves of *worldliness* falling on the fervors of a pious heart, upon the ardor of young, fresh love—ah, if the Soul retreat not instantly from the chilling surge, the frost of a deadly winter sets in upon its spiritual life. A slight interruption in the regularity of our daily devotions—how many exigencies may seem to justify it; but it is a first step away from God, and so from hope and peace and safety. Propose to a Christian any open denial of his Lord, a distinct renunciation of his service, and his answer flashes back upon you: “Get thee behind me, tempter!” But suggest that it is not necessary that he parade his religious notions in purely social gatherings; that he need not be more conscientious than other men in business and politics; that it is not a part of the old Adam in him, but only a decent self-respect, to resent injury

and insult; that Christianity must be made attractive to the world by softening down its high and unfaltering rules, and though that may seem to him here but a shade of declension from the loftiest ideal of his name, if he yield to you, he is already deep in treason to Christ and His kingdom. The danger is not that he fail in great trials, the hand of God is so visible there, his own weakness so conscious, his gracious discipline so obviously involved. To the stroke of bereavement he will bow without a murmur, chanting the soft melody, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Over the loss of earthly riches he will sit down in submission, whispering to himself, "We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Job was not crushed under the triple avalanche of calamities rolled down upon him by his persecutor—the fire of heaven, the Chaldean robbers, the great wind of the wilderness, the sweeping off of his flocks and herds, the ravaging of his estates, or the death of sons and daughters. In all this the Patriarch "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." But the boils were too much for him. And so the Christian's peril now is, that, in the small but varying cares of his daily experiences, in the trifling crosses of domestic and social life, which break no bones and shed no blood, but only goad the spirit, he speak unadvisedly with his tongue, lose his self-control, suffer the rule of impatience to get the upper-hand, and so bring the reproaches of many lips upon the religion he represents. Oh, brethren and friends, need is there of incessant vigilance in all these lowly levels of our earthly way, and this prayer for continual intercession, which I would leave in your hearts and on your lips: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."

IV.

EASTER SERMON.

THE RESURRECTION.

“ The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. . . . ”—JOHN v., part 28 and 29.

DEEP is the sleep of those that rest in the Grave. None of Earth's voices can produce an awakening. Tenderly the voice of sorrowing affection may call over the beloved dust, summoning it back to take the vacant place by hearth and board and altar; adjuring it by names that used to thrill through all the fibres of its being; but it stirs not in its narrow cell; all is motionless and still. Urgently the voice of *Repentance* may address it, shedding bitter tears upon the turf that covers the victim of many wrongs; vainly imploring pardon from the unconscious day, which, living, it caused to quiver with anguish; beseeching it to return but for one moment to hear that penitent prayer, and speak one word of forgiveness; and the marble lips keep their unbroken silence. The voice of *Panegyric* may rehearse high praises, with tones which once had been sweetest music to that ear; and now its deep insensibility is undisturbed. And loudly the world's voices may peal along,—the shout of *ambition*, or *hate*, or stern *resolve*, the song of the *reveller*, the wail of *grief*,—and no accent pierce that unbreathing slumber. And fiercely the clarion of *war* may wind its blast, the roll of the

drum, the trampling of hoofs, and the booming of cannon may sweep by,—all these are unavailing to break that dreamless sleep. Over the dust of buried generations years and ages have winged their flight, the shocks of contending kingdoms and falling empires have resounded, and still the bolts of the charnel-house are unwithdrawn; still that dust is locked in its long repose.

Well might the Saviour hold up the announcement in the text as the chief marvel of a wonder-working Omnipotence. "The hour is coming in which" a sovereign voice shall wake a hearing beneath the sod, the ashes of the sepulchre shall move and flow together, and the earth-mingled Dust shall stand up, arrayed again in living humanity. Fittingly, on this Easter morning, does this theme invite our thoughts. Not only does the soul live, but it shall come back to reclaim its material investment, which shall present again to human vision its remembered identity of old. Man's reappearance for Judgment shall be from the opening Grave. At that great Scene two multitudinous arrays shall approach each other: the Judge and His retinue of angels coming through the parted Firmament, in the clouds of Heaven, and the Throng to be judged coming up through the parted sod, out of the tomb. For this, our mortal race, there is to be a GENERAL RESURRECTION.

We may note, *in the first place*, that this is not a doctrine discovered by Reason. But for a whisper from the Deity man could have had no guess that "*this corruptible*" should ever "*put on incorruption.*" It passes from our sight into darkness and dissolution. It is blended and lost with the common dust. It rises in aerial vapors. It comes up in Earth's verdure and harvests. It passes into the far

rounds of "the elements." It mingles with other animate existences, which in their turn decay and are reproduced in new and ever-varying combinations. How could we conjecture that from this scattered and appropriated materiality the being that laid it aside should be again constructed, and live and move, to all beholders, the undoubted Original? The heathen sages arrived at no conception of such a destiny for the body. With some faint echo of a foregone revelation, in Patriarchal times, lingering on their ear, they might catch at the idea of the *soul's* surviving the shattering of this, its tenement. The voice of this deathless spirit was eloquent within them, pleading for an assurance that *It* should sometime be emancipated from its thralldom of clay, and rise to a freer and nobler life. But there was no such aspiration of the flesh, or for the flesh; there was no prophetic reaching of the Material forward to a more refined organization, and incorruptibility. They inurned its ashes as a relic, not as a pledge. Easily, and by the sight of the eye, might they arrive at the knowledge of the primal sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!" but never could Reason, if God had not spoken it, have published the announcement, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth."

But, *secondly*, having heard this utterance, whether as yet it be proved or not, *Reason gives it her clearest sanction*. The soul has had a most peculiar and intimate connection with this body. It has been its home for years. In it it has passed through all the scenes of its probation. In it and by it it has sinned. In it and by it it has suffered and rejoiced and received life's varied discipline and wrought out its drama. The influences of this connection have been the

governing influences in forming character. The soul passes forward with its character to meet the law of retribution. It is fitting that it should take its award in *the body* of its trial state, which colored so controllingly the issues of the trial. Reason pronounces the decision just which reserves the body, refitted for such a destiny, to an eternal fellowship with the soul in its bliss or woe.

Thirdly. Having intimation of this fact, we can find most suggestive analogies for it in the walks of Nature. Go forth under our Northern sky in the leafless December; behold the forests stripped of their foliage; look abroad over the brown, bare fields. Where is the lively green of the spring's starting blade? Where the waving harvests of the summer? Where the yellow corn and blushing vintage of autumn? A universal death has passed upon the vegetable creation. The mournful gale, sighing a requiem, strews withered leaves over the corpse of Nature, or the driving clouds weave for her a winding-sheet of snow. All her pulses are still; her vital currents are stiffened with the unrelenting frosts. She gives not one sign of life. Who that had never seen the winter pass away could be made to believe that Nature should, in a little, arise from her tomb in the freshness of a rejuvenescence, put on a new and living beauty, and walk the glad earth with her song of birds and melody of streams? And having seen this, looking upon this annual miracle of Nature's resurrection, we are the better prepared to admit the marvel of man's. There is a still closer analogy to our doctrine with a certain class of insects—a transformation which would almost seem to have been prepared on purpose for a type of Immortality. At first we look only upon a feeble and loathsome worm.

Proscribed and repelling, it moves slowly about for a time in the humblest state of being. Its short, dull span of life at an end, it lays itself down to die. For its poor remains it weaves, as its last act, a decent tomb. In this narrow cell it shuts itself up, dead and buried. Within this sepulchre, all silent and unseen, a wondrous change is wrought. From the dissolving frame a new, agile, and brilliant form is evolved. With a struggling fullness of life it bursts its inclosure and leaps forth on many-colored wings, a thing of airy beauty. Upborne in its new element of being, it creeps no longer in the dust, dishonored and defiled, but disports itself in the fields of the atmosphere, feeds on the sweets of flowers and revels in the possession of new and glorious powers. Here is a Resurrection almost literal, and, for its sphere, no less wonderful or antecedently incredible than that which transforms corruption to incorruption. The one we behold with our eyes, and it may help our faith in the promise of the other.

Fourthly. But turning from these dim prefigurings, let us hear now the testimony of Him who brought life and immortality to light. "The hour is coming" (it is our text; how clear, how unequivocal its declaration), "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear *His* voice and shall come forth." Four times in the compass of the next chapter does the same voice add assurance that all the Father had given Him He would raise up at the last day. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus to the weeping sister of Lazarus four days after her brother's death. And herein is not only the assertion of the doctrine, but the revelation of the arm by whose prowess the grand victory over Death and Corruption was

achieved. "Since by man came Death," writes an Apostle, "by man came also the resurrection of the dead." As the first man, Adam, standing at the head of the race, intrusted as its representative with its destinies, brought by his sin the sentence of mortality upon all who should spring from his loins, so the Second Adam, taking our nature upon Him, and acting also as the representative of humanity, wrought for the body a final deliverance from the captivity of the Grave. Nor is this connecting the Resurrection with the work of Redemption inconsistent with the fact that both the righteous and the wicked shall rise. It was the human nature that had come into condemnation and under bondage to the worm. The Son of God took upon Him this ruined nature, and whatever He wrought in His work of suffering and of sacrifice He wrought of necessity for this whole nature. In His work there is no narrowness. Bearing thus our nature, He descended with it into the realms of the Destroyer. He confronted the King in his own dark domain. He carried into the very court and citadel of Death a humanity which He was to bring away again by His own overcoming might. Oh, what a conflict was there! No noise of the strife broke the solemn stillness of the lonely chamber; but the result could not be doubtful. The tomb heaved and rocked to the swelling of an energy it could not restrain. Its bars and bolts were shivered like frostwork to the stroke of iron. Its marble walls were rent asunder, and forth strode the Conqueror, bringing with Him in triumph the rescued humanity; and standing over the rifled grave He gave His witness visible and vocal: "I am the Resurrection." It was *our nature* that then rose in Him. A far-reaching vitality has gone forth like the first

awaking life of Spring through all the bosom of the earth, quickening the ashes of dissolution; from moldering dust educating living germs that shall one day, after long inaction, the winter past, spring into countless harvests, the vast congregation of the dead swarming forth to the day of the Lord. So it is that Christ is the "first fruits of them that slept"; and how triumphantly an Apostle adds: "If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Thus we have *the fact* of a resurrection, not discovered or discoverable, indeed, by Reason, but cordially approved by her when attested, shadowed forth by her analogies, and assured to us by the wondrous victory of the Man of Nazareth.

But the questions asked in the days of Paul are still on doubting lips. "Some man will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?"

If it be the identical body of the former life, which of those bodies shall it be,—for every seven years, the constituent particles of the body undergo a renewing, so that one who has reached his "three score and ten," has had, in substance, ten different bodies. Which of these is the type of the resurrection body? The departed have left us in all stages of being—gray with age, in manhood's prime, in infancy's budding morn, and youth's bright summer. Will the new, changeless body be the counterpart of that borne to the sepulchre? Will the old man rise, an old man; and the babe, a babe? By what *standard of years* shall that resurrection body be framed?

How shall the lost dust of Humanity be found and gathered on the morning of rising? It has gone up in the

martyr fires; it has sunk to the ocean-floor; it has been scattered to the four winds of heaven; it has risen and waved in the trees of the forest; it has roamed with the beasts of the field; it has soared with the birds of the air. Shall it be called back, in its own identity, from all these comminglings? A Poet has sketched for us a vision; shall this vision become fact?

“Now monuments prove faithful to their trust,
 And render back their long committed dust :
 Now charnels rattle ; scattered limbs, and all
 The various bones, obsequious to the call,
 Self-moved, advance ; the neck perhaps to meet
 The distant head ; the distant head the feet.
 Dreadful to view ! See, thro’ the dusky sky,
 Fragments of bodies in confusion fly :
 To distant regions journeying, there to claim
 Deserted members, and complete the frame.”

Are we to take this as a Poet’s dream, or the sober view of Reason?

And how is the restitution of the body to its original possessor possible? It has become the property of other Lives, and been portioned out among many heirs. The savage cannibal has made the flesh of his victim his own; which shall wear it, when both shall rise together? The harvests, that waved with such unwonted luxuriance over WATERLOO, were green, by more than the husbandman’s art; they were nurtured by the dead humanity of that bloody field. Whose shall be the particles thus put again into corporeal structure; shall the Belgic farmer call them his, or the slain soldiers of the mighty havoc?

“How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?” Can we do better than give again the Apostle’s

reply? "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed His own body." This Scripture settles it, that the new body is not to be composed of the particles that reared the old. From earth, and air, and sea, we need not call back these wandering atoms, and disentangle them from their myriad alliances. That which is sown is not that body that shall be. What more do we want of such a body as has been our tenement on earth? Is the soul to be so imprisoned forever? "This I say," continues our inspired instructor, "that *flesh* and *blood* can not inherit the kingdom of God." And yet the New must be in some sense derived from the Old, else, there is no "Resurrection." What is this resurrection body? It is called a "*spiritual body*," a contradiction in terms. But language is poor, on such mysteries. A spiritual body, of so subtle a materiality, so refined, so aerial, that, while it is a body, it is well-nigh a spirit too. What new form of matter is this? Have we ever seen its like? Out of the old, cast-off relics, this incorruptible body shall somehow be eliminated, as the butterfly from the worm.

What is this ANIMAL LIFE of ours, this sentient being which we possess apart from the Life of the soul, this vitality that beats here [pulse] and here [heart] and dances through all the veins?

It is not of *the flesh*, nor of the bones, for flesh and bone are yet perfect when this life has ceased its demonstration! Not of the soul, for brutes possess it! but it pervades us.

Who shall say this is not the germ of the new finer structure, called a "spiritual body"? Does not the figure of the Apostle shape such a conjecture? What is it that starts up in the new forms of vegetable life? Not the old sown as seed, but the principle of vegetable vitality that had a sweet and mysterious being in the seed, itself intangible, its essence, its nature unknown, set free from the old substance in which it dwelt, by corruption, and reappearing in new forms, but the same vegetable life it was. So, the *Physical Life*, which almost like a second soul inhabits our physical frame, may be the contribution of the old decaying body to the new. For aught we know, it may have a delicate and intangible materiality of its own. There may be, in this complicate Trinity of human life, a being within a being, to come forth, in the body's dissolution, and form a new vesture for the soul, its spiritual incarnation.

It may cleave so tenaciously to this dust in all its transformations, that no violence can sever the connection. It may be so subtle as to elude the stroke of the steel, the search of the fire, the conquest of corruption. It may dwell, like a vegetable germ, hidden beneath the brown, bare soil, in the coldness and barrenness of the sepulchre, till the Almighty mandate shall call, with trumpet blast, "arise!" Upon this risen body the *identity* of former times shall be impressed. And this identity, you will observe, is independent of the years and changes of a human life. We know, in age, the *likeness* of the boy we first looked upon. The outward marks of identity are undisturbed through all the wasting and reproduction of life's periods; and the chief element in identity may be the presence of this same subtle essence of animal life, which I have supposed the germ of the Resurrection-body.

Ah, my friends, to what a scene does this Doctrine point us forward! No human hand can paint it. Then shall the Son of Man be revealed from heaven, and the voice of Power, the voice that called by the tomb of Lazarus, "COME FORTH!" shall speak once more. Death shall hear through all his dark domain, and unbar his cells. Forth, from the green church-yards, the sleepers shall come innumerable; up from the caverns of the sea, the uncounted victims of the battle and the storm; up from the sands of the desert in giant columns, where the caravans trailed their march; from mountain passes and perilous defiles; from the plains, where nation thundered against nation in all-devouring war; blackening with dense multitudes the long untrodden shores of extinct kingdoms, filling the solitary wilderness with a swarming life; marching on, all marching on toward "the throne of fire and of cloud."

In that mighty rising, we too shall wake and stand up. Our dust may lie afar from the graves of our Fathers. The heats of tropic climes may slay us; we may breathe our last upon the ocean wave, as strangers in a strange land our life may go out; but we shall be found, the call shall break our slumbers, and we shall come forth incorruptible. Sire and son, husband and wife, brothers and sisters, companions and friends, the old laid reverently by, they who fell in their strength, and the infant of untimely end, all shall stand together, arrayed in Immortality, and waiting the opening of the JUDGMENT-BOOKS.

Oh, in the hush of this calm Sabbath day, before this altar of Mercy, yet above the green sod, that shall be greener still over our graves, let this question search our souls, like the glance of Omniscience, "To what shall I awake in that Resurrection Morning?"

V.

RETRIBUTIVE PROVIDENCE.

“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”—MAT. vii., part 2.

THE Scriptures fully reveal the doctrine of a superintending Providence. They assert a sovereign personal pleasure ruling in every province of the Universe. “He doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.” They declare that this Supreme Mind is concerned with the minutest events that transpire. Not a sparrow falls without our Heavenly Father, and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. God’s hand controls the elements, guides the car of Revolution, holds the reins of State, feeds the improvident ravens. This doctrine has in it a mighty practical force. There is a Providence in this world. It walks and works in the midst of us. God is in human history. His purposes go forth on all the tracks of creative agency. There is, indeed, no visible throne, there are no manifest symbols of royalty. His footsteps are in the sea; darkness is His pavilion. There is nothing but the result, unveiling itself from the secrets of His councils, that tells us God is working. When and where He will interpose, by what instrument, and for what ends, subordinate and ultimate, it is not given us to know. This secrecy baffles resistance, strengthens Faith, and leaves on men a deeper awe before the Power that, unseen and untraceable, manages all human affairs.

But the Scriptures, that teach us this general doctrine, take us farther on in the science of Providence, keeping these secrets, but disclosing other matters of vast interest and moment. They announce the Laws by which Providence is administered, giving us to understand upon what principles its visitations are sent, and warning us for what it will visit with rebuke. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Here is one of these revealed laws of Providence, pointing us forward to the inevitable consequences of each action of our lives, bidding us remember that each period of life is a time of seed-sowing for coming harvests, instructing us how youth may provide wisely for age, and intimating that our whole probation is scattering seeds for eternal reaping. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Here is another law, taking away from the heart that meditates a wrong all hope of impunity in committing it, declaring that all guilt, however veiled from the light of day and the sight of men, shall come out and attach itself to its perpetrator and hold him responsible. "The companion of fools shall be destroyed"—a third Law, holding us back from companionship with the wicked and unprincipled, testifying that such association will bring upon both a common fate—a grave warning to that facile disposition that allies itself in daily intercourse with those who make light of the word of God and the sanctities of religion.

And here comes our Text also, announcing another stern and inflexible law by which Providence is administered: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." This, too, as the connection intimates, is of the nature of a warning, rather than a promise. It holds the wrong-doer in the grasp of coming retribution. It declares

with an absoluteness totally unqualified that the injury he does another shall return in kind upon his own head; that each pang he causes another to suffer shall in due time make his own nerves quiver. It is a sort of counterpart to the *golden rule*, teaching that whatsoever things we do unto others to harm and afflict, it shall be done even so unto us. It refers in the first instance to uncharitable judgment, declaring that the bitter, censorious spirit in which one reviews the conduct of his fellows and speculates upon their motives shall be paid in its own coin. He shall have harsh judgment in return, his motives shall be maligned, and his character be soiled by the handling of detraction. Then it refers also to acts of inhumanity and injustice. He who commits them shall suffer them—God shall do so to him. He shall feel the weight and sharpness of the stroke he has inflicted. By the measure he has meted it shall be measured to him again.

The doctrine we do not undertake to prove. Here it is on the unerring page, and all history, public and private, sacred and profane, stands for confirmation.

Let us, in the first place, briefly indicate the Law, and then speak of its applications and practical working.

And, *first*, the Law is *JUST*. It is a statute of Him to whom the hosts of Heaven sing, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." But, more than this, the judgment of every man is convinced; the heart of every man feels that it is just. The punishment is proportioned to the offense. The criminal is treated no worse than he has treated others. It is *eye for eye* and *tooth for tooth*. It is an exact recompense, and he can not complain. It may be that he deserves far more than the identical infliction he made another

suffer; for it is the value of the law broken, and not altogether the act that breaks it, that gives character or guilt. A small breach of it may argue as utter disregard to the interests it protects and the authority of the Lawgiver as a wide one. And the matter of complete spiritual retribution, entering into all the intents and thoughts of the heart, is reserved for another state. But this providential requital of bringing back upon the head of the originator the very evil he laid upon another is, as far as it goes, even-handed justice. The measure of the penalty is just the measure of the criminal act. Were the penalty, though in reality not too severe, something else—something totally different in nature from the crime—the convict might institute a comparison and in his self-flattery fancy he was hardly dealt with. But this award of pang for pang, loss for loss, hurt for hurt, shuts his mouth; he can not impeach it, he is dumb before the balanced scales of Justice that have weighed him out retribution by the counterpoise of his own deed.

Secondly. It is a *fitting* punishment for the wrong. Some other punishment might be equally just, but what could be so appropriate? With its whole effect, it speaks of the divine displeasure against that one transgression. It is manifestly the fruit of that act. The intention of it can not be mistaken. It comes not by chance. It is not a general calamity in which each must bear his part. It is aimed directly and meaningly at the thing done, which it reproduces for suffering. Multitudes of providences are blindly received. The mind will not understand the lesson they were designed to impress. As ministers of mercy and rebuke, their voice is unheeded because it is not perceived to what instances of ill-doing they speak. But here the recompense

contains the indictment for which it visits. The accusation which has so awakened Heaven's wrath appears on the face of the manifested wrath. The tribunal of the human conscience pronounces the requital not only just, but most fitting and appropriate. If one has put out his neighbor's eye, or if he has injured him in any way implied by that figure, putting out his light, his hope, his joy, removing from him some right or possession as essential to his peace as the eye to vision, and a Providence strikes him which puts out an eye for him or maims him of the same right and good he has wantonly violated, all lookers-on must see the eminent propriety of such a chastisement. It "serves him right," they will say. Nothing strikes home so nearly. It was well thought of by Providence. It is just the punishment they would wish to see inflicted. It is so exactly adapted to the offense. Such providences commend themselves to all intelligence and all moral sense as the sort of retribution meet for the provocation.

Again, the Law is wise and good because it is calculated to produce conviction and repentance. The heart of the injurer may be insensible to his criminality so long as *he* is exempt from suffering; and if he be made to taste some suffering very different from that he has inflicted upon another, he may still fail to perceive the true nature of his conduct. But let him who has thrust out his neighbor's eye lose his own as a penalty; let him feel how exquisite the pain when those sensitive nerves are invaded; let him experience the sadness of such bereavement and know what it is to roll a disfigured and sightless orb, and his heart says to him: "This is what I have done; such was my neighbor's smart. The agony and sorrow I bear are what I im-

posed. Ah, I feel how cruel it was." So let the slanderer who has wantoned with a good name, defaming by innuendoes and surmises, imputing unworthy motives, or charging with base intentions—let him find his own good name the plaything of idle calumnies, his own motives and aims impugned and misinterpreted, be looked upon with the cold, averted glances of suspicion and distrust, or passed by with undisguised contempt, and as his blood boils and his cheek-crimsons and his heart aches he will be likely to feel the wickedness of his own backbiting, and learn how dear and sacred character is. Such punishment will, if any can, bring the offender to contrition and reformation.

This Law carries with it, then, a very effective and preventive warning. Once recognized, it will deter men from injuring others. When one understands that every hurtful act he puts forth may return in Providence upon his own head, he will be careful what sort of Providences he thus invokes. This assurance will arrest his uplifted hand, suppress the half-uttered calumny, soften the flint of his inhumanity, and plead as loudly as self-regard can plead for justice, mercy, and brotherly love. He will ask himself, before laying an unjust burden on another, "How will this feel when I bear it myself?" While preparing an anguish for another heart he will not be able to forget that his own is yet to feel all its keenness. And this is the design of this great Law—to hold men back from the perpetration of wrong, lay a nerve of iron on their hate and malice, and make them feel the ties of a common nature, a common fortune, and a common interest.

1. This Law, then, applies to individuals. Let us take home, then, to our hearts this unchanging statute of the

Divine administration, that we may make it for each of us, in all our personal relations, a practical guide.

The application of the Law to individual life can not be questioned or doubted. There are impressive instances of this retributive Providence in the sacred record, and we may learn to lay to heart the lesson as we read. You remember how Jacob, by one act of deception, cheated his blind old father, and obtained by fraud and lies the blessing Isaac designed for his first-born. The fraud was completely successful. The paternal, prophet-voice pledged to him a glorious inheritance of power and greatness. He went his way exulting, he and his mother, over the deceit that so enriched him at the expense and loss of his elder brother. Does Providence sleep? Seven years he serves, an exile from home, Laban the Syrian, for the maid whom he loves. The bridal eve finds him rejoicing in the fruit of his patient labor. The morning comes, and lo, he has wedded Leah! Seven years more must he serve before he can call Rachel his bride. He won by deceit, by deceit he has lost. Far on in his old age there came to him a bitterer trial yet. Joseph, his best-beloved son, though the envy and hatred of his brethren, is sold into Egypt. The craft of the conspirators cheats him into the sorrowful belief that Joseph is dead—torn and devoured by a wild beast. His gray head is stricken very low. He can not be comforted. For years he carries about the burden of that bereavement. *Joseph is not* is the thought that preys, an unsolved grief, upon his heart. Ah, he deceived his father once. Will he not think of it when he understands this Providence fully? He is requited according to his deeds. And the youth of every age and time who heap indignities upon a parent's head, who

refuse them reverence and obedience and embitter their last days, are preparing the same bitter cup for their own lips when they shall be old and forsaken. Again and again has the history of families been monumental of this truth. It is a light thing for a headstrong, high-spirited young man to cast off his old father's control and have his own will and way, however it pain that aged heart. But it is not so light a matter when his own locks are gray and his comforts few, and failing nature craves soothing and kindness, to have *his* sons lift their heels against him. As in a mirror, he will see then his own rebellious youth and confess that God is just. Let me recall to you, also, the strange, pathetic narrative of Haman and Mordecai. You tremble at each step over the powerful wiles of the subtle courtier to effect the ruin of the man he hates. Your heart sinks as he gains one advantage after another, and as you look upon the gallows fifty cubits high, you feel that the next scene will be the tragic triumph of malignity over virtue. And when the revulsion takes place and Haman himself is hanged upon the gallows he reared for the Jew, you are well pleased with Providence. This, you say, is right retribution. And so it is; and it is the type of God's dealing with all of Haman's successors.

Look upon the man who is hard and rigid in his relations with his fellow-men; who is a merciless creditor; who oppresses and grinds the poor; who exacts of suffering penury the last farthing he can legally claim; who holds his neighbor bound to hasty pledges, and acts himself only as held by strictest legal obligation. Does he forget that overhead Providence watches him? He may use such measure if he will, but as God is true it shall be measured to him

again. It is a part of his punishment to be estimated at what he is—to have men say, you must bind that man by written contracts before you can depend upon him; to have them caution one another how they put themselves into his power. And then the day will come when he shall seek mercy and mercy shall be denied him. God's Providence will bring him into some strait where *his* plea for forbearance shall be disregarded, and the same harsh gripe he has laid upon others he shall feel on his own sensitive flesh.

So when an *unforgiving* and *vindictive temper* enters into some breast of a social circle, or sets itself against the peace and harmony of domestic life, determined to secure its ends, though it outrage natural affection and common humanity; steeling the heart against prayers and tears and the mute appeal of the cheek pale with sorrow and suffering; proclaiming an eternal memory of some hoarded wrong, not to be expiated by penitence, but by suffering, our minds turn with a terror of anticipation to this dread Law: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Oh, there shall be retribution for this. God beholds. He will remember. That unfeeling heart shall itself know the stings of unalleviated anguish. A cup full of bitterness shall be wrung out for it. Sharp reprisals lie in wait for it. For a little it may walk tranquilly forward; how far we know not; what arrest it shall encounter we can not predict; but we hear a terrible whisper from the throne whereon Providence ruleth: "I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh." God does not leave human selfishness, pride, and craft in this world to riot at will on their chosen spoil. He reigns to execute justice and judgment. And ever and anon He

thrusts his scepter before us and exacts visible recompense.

And now let it be written, as with the point of a diamond, upon our minds and hearts that we shape the ordering and administration of God's Providence over us by the measures we adopt and the methods we pursue toward our fellows. Men forecast the measures of the Divine retribution upon their own heads by the unpitied hardness with which they bow down a neighbor's head under sorrowful burdens. All our harsh and selfish demonstrations are prophetic, setting up the type of the requital laid up in Providence for our own sensibilities. Let us be warned, coupling with every trespass upon another's rights or comforts or peace, in each relation of life, the assured expectation of a reprisal in God's dealings with us that shall make us know in our own quivering nerves the sharpness of the injury we have inflicted. And let us crave for ourselves the high privilege, for which we have in the words themselves full warrant, of turning the *warning* into a *promise*, illustrating the inflexible rule in beneficent action, sowing in generous deeds the seed of a gladdening harvest, and reaping only joy and blessing under the fiat of the Will Divine: "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

Of course, the lesson is as good and impressive for communities and states, and for the fraternity of Nations, as for individuals; and its illustrations in history, on the broader scale, are open to the world's reading, for the tuition of mankind. But upon this larger field of evidence we can not now enter. The volumes of all the past show in their illumined pages the instructive and warning fulfilment of the great executive Law.

VI.

FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

“And took upon Him the form of a servant.”—PHIL. ii. 7.

MY theme will be, *the Humiliation of Christ in assuming our Nature*. This particular view will by no means include the total height of that condescension down the infinite spaces of which the Saviour traveled, to work out our redemption; but if we lose something in comprehensiveness by this restriction, we may gain as much in distinctness and unity.

This Humiliation was not the least trial-task of the Son of God. Think of it for a moment in human relations. Can you propose anything harder to Rank and Fortune than that they should give up all their state and consideration, and pass out into obscurity and want? Is it an easy thing to approach one whose feet have been along the eminences of human condition and make him willing to forego the splendors and honors of such a position, and take his lowly way through the vales? Many a man would sacrifice health, principle, conscience, almost life itself, before he would consent to such a transition.

By the testimony of all history, there is not a nobler passage in the life of our stainless Washington, than that

wherein he appears before the Congress of his country with victory on his helm, the proud affection of the army, the idolatry of the whole nation, the sword of his battles in his hand, and laying down his commission at their feet, retires to the unambitious walk of a private citizen in the quiet shades of Vernon. What other conqueror like him, what Bonaparte of human greed would have let slip such an opportunity of seating himself on a throne, and building up an Autocratic Dynasty for his house?

Such illustrations do only feebly prepare our minds to approach the reality we have undertaken to set forth. It is making the Finite a stepping-stone to the Infinite.

This Humiliation of Jesus is seen, first of all, in His taking a *CREATED nature*. I do not now distinguish this nature as *the human*. I speak of it as a subject, creature nature, under Law, owing obedience and service. What if it were the rank of the highest Archangel, wearing the crowns of heaven's principdoms, excelling in might, swift as thought! It were still a subject nature, that must bend the knee and veil itself before the brightness of the uncreated glory, and cast down its crown at the feet of the only King and Lord. It must hearken to commands, go and come at the voice of authority, render account of its ways, and be shut up always to the will of another bearing rule.

Think what a transition this were! Apply it to Him who was "in the form of God," enclosed within that Supernal radiance, that was called of old "the Divine similitude" when Deity was revealed to creature sight; thought it no robbery to be equal with God, by whom all things were made that were made, before whom through the broad spaces of the universe, the shining spheres wheeled their marches

at His bidding! Lead Him down from the pavilion of God-head to take even the Seraph's place, to put on *livery*, to wait for orders, to stand till the great monarch say "Go!" to fall prostrate in time of worship, to be "*charged* with folly!" If this were all, it were still an infinite humiliation. Though this angel nature be so exalted, yet the mole hill is not so lowly beneath the arch as these dignities below the feet of Jehovah!

Let us take another step. This Humiliation of Jesus consisted in His *coming into Humanity*. It was not the angel nature which He took, but one that ranked lower yet. Had He stooped to the Heavens, that were stooping; but He passed by Seraphim and Cherubim and descended to earth and man. It is dishonor enough, if you will think of it for a human spirit to be linked with perishable clay, The soul with a clod! The ethereal, soaring, God-like nature put into the bondage of the flesh! Made to look out, like a prisoner, as through grated windows,—to gather its perceptions, not by roving abroad on the quick strong pinions of a spirit over all the fields of truth and space, but within the close-circling horizon that bounds the ranges of sight and touch! The soul sprung from God, His breath, with a body built of red dust! The soul made in God's image, with a body whose organism is essentially like that of the brute! The soul with powers of intelligence challenging all reaches of knowledge, with dull unreasoning matter! The soul, with a destiny of endless progression, a wealth of life Eternity can not exhaust, with a mortal brother, which to-day throbs with animated life, to-morrow shall feed the worm! This is an alliance strange and humbling enough. But think of the eternal, uncreated

spirit coming into such bonds to *the earthy*, to know its feebleness, bear its infirmity, quiver with its anguish, shudder and gasp with its death-throes! But it is a still lower depth of this Humiliation, that this Humanity is *sinful* and *ruined*. Once it had visits from angels and daily companionship with God. But it is now a defiled and dishonored nature. Shame sits upon its brow. It is in grossest disrepute, throughout the loyal realms of the Great King. Its history is one of rebellion, of foulest vices, of deepest corruption, of horrors of crime! To take such a nature, is to come under the shadow of its infamy, even if one keeps the purity of an unfallen spirit.

And yet again, the Saviour came into this nature, as we do, by *being born into it*. This might have been otherwise. He might have put on Humanity in the glory and perfection of its full-developed manhood. He might have stood up in it, as our primal Father,—the first Adam, leaping from the dust to the symmetry and stature of earth's Lord. But He humbled Himself *to be born of a woman*. He took the infant's feebleness and dependence. He tried the weak and tottering steps of early childhood. Oh, look upon the burdened Mary as she enters the streets of Bethlehem! Look upon the manger-scene! Ask, who it is that was borne beneath that mother's heart; who it is that is laid to His cradled rest, where "the horned oxen feed," and hear the angels answer above the hills, singing to the Shepherds, "Christ, the Lord!" the Lord of life and glory, and say if such an entrance into humanity was the least of this humiliation!

And we must add now to this cumulative argument, the *lowly condition* of humanity to which the Saviour conde-

scended. With equal clay, the *CONDITION* makes a difference almost like another nature. What a state and majesty does human Lordship put on! How regally it sits amid the splendors of a Court! How proudly roll its chariot-wheels amid huzzahing crowds! How many tremble before the Conqueror's march! The great ones of the earth, titled and flattered, how diverse their sphere of life from the lot of starving penury! But when Jesus came, He stooped past all this imperial pomp, "and took upon Him the form of a servant!" More homeless than the birds of the air! More shelterless than the foxes of the field! Bearing hunger, thirst, cold, weariness, friendlessness, desertion, persecution; treading painfully the sharp flinty path of most portionless poverty! Companioning with fishermen, eating with publicans and sinners, with a poor Magdalen only to wash His feet with her tears, behold the depth of the Saviour's humiliation!

And bring suddenly into contrast His own proper exaltation and glory,—the glory He had with the Father before the world was! Heaven His throne! Earth with its riches His footstool! The worlds near and afar His tributaries; and as you see Him bending beneath angelhood and kingship to the stable and the cornfield, learn anew the meaning of the Scriptures,—“Who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor!” Making “Himself of no reputation,”—taking “the form of a servant.” “Made in the likeness of men!”

I go no farther now in this demonstration. My theme finds its limit here. The Humiliation of Jesus in His one act of taking our nature upon Him is the sole picture I hold before you to gaze upon. And oh! that the Spirit may illu-

mine the dim canvas on which I have sketched, that its lights and shades may be daguerreotyped on our hearts evermore!

And now the same view which illustrates the Saviour's condescension suggests also the honor put upon our nature. We have spoken of it as a ruined, defiled, dishonored nature. But Jesus has put it on. It is in historic, eternal alliance with the reigning God. Here is a grace and glory for our poor, lost humanity outshining any other in all the ranks of created life. Nothing comes so near to God nor the bright angelhood as man—God in the likeness of men!! Heaven knows of it and looks down admiring, amazed. The studious angels pore over this wonderful mystery. The distant ages of immortality shall hear of it and celebrate it. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!" But for the Sin, the Fall, this had not been; man had lived his happy earthly lifetime through and then been translated; kept always, as at the first, "a little lower than the angels!" Now, elevated by such union as far above them as the seat at the right hand transcends their level before the throne.

And here is the assurance of sympathy for us in the heart of Christ. 'OUR HUMAN BROTHER—oh, how we cling to this name, how comforting to speak it in sorrow, bereavement, and doubt! All our feelings He can understand, not now because He is omniscient, but because He has had experience of them. How this conviction wins us to Christ! What a pity for us there! What a sheltering tenderness! What a full, throbbing sympathy, that could not be more real if it could fall upon our neck and weep with us, or mingle smiles and songs with our own in our happy hours!

Here is the love of Jesus magnified. There are no such benefactors of an earthly sort that come into the very place of the sufferer and take his hard lot upon themselves to lift him to their opulence and luxury.

Howard *visited* the dungeons of Europe. He did not take the captive's cell as his home, the captive's sentence upon his head. This grace of Jesus stands alone. The visible and touching memorial of it is again before us. Come to the feast adoring our Saviour, the Son of God, clasping to our hearts our Saviour, the Son of Man!

VII.

FOR A TIME OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

PRAYER IN DANGER.

“And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow; and they awake Him and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?”—
MARK IV. 38.

THE chief interest of this scene, to one seeking for its spiritual lessons, is in what it discloses concerning our intercourse with God in prayer, and the instinct of prayer to God in time of trouble.

It is good, in tranquil hours, to gather tuition for burdened to-morrows; to store mind and heart with practical wisdom for coming days of excitement, fear, and peril. What lies behind the forward horizon, we never know. We may be sure it can hardly be all clear sky. There will be some clouds lifting there, red-veined and with the thunders in them. And the soul is wise that gathers under its feebleness, before the strain comes, the supports of a plighted Omnipotence, and learns the secret of abiding peace while its peace is yet undisturbed.

We see, first of all, in our Scripture how *trouble brings men to their knees*.

Jesus and His disciples had spent the Sabbath in Capernaum. The Jews kept their Sabbath so rigidly, from evening to evening, that they would not within those hours seek even the healing of their sick, and deserved in their ritual

self-righteousness the Saviour's reproof, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." When the sun of this Sabbath had gone down, the multitudes gathered around the Great Healer, thronging Him with those who were diseased with natural maladies and those who were possessed with devils, "and He cast out the spirits with His word and healed all that were sick." He seems to have lingered by the seashore as long as there was one needing His care, one miraculous cure to be performed. Then, as the crowds thickened and His work was ended—it being no part of His ambition to draw and detain the gaze of men—He gave the command to depart to the other side. And the disciples spread the sails of their little fishing craft, and, with their Master on board, glided down the quiet lake toward the coast of the Gadarenes.

Quiet and serene was the Lake at their starting. But the sea is proverbially treacherous and deceitful. And of all deceitful and treacherous seas, that sea of Galilee bears the palm. Deep-basined among bold hills, with valley gateways between, shutting in by day an intense and sultry heat, with chilly nights descending from the hilltops upon its bosom, up and down those valley passes sweep often, after the day is done, blasts whose fierceness and fury are indescribable. One moment all is still and calm, and air and sea seem to be pulseless. The next, roaring through the ravines, sudden and savage as a beast of prey, the tempest leaps upon the waters. The mariners of Gennesareth need to be wary and bold and strong. The Galilean fishermen who followed Jesus were familiar with the perils of this inland navigation. But on this Sabbath evening they suffered no special apprehension. Their Master, weary and worn with the intense

life of the day, crowned with the busy work after nightfall, had laid Himself down in the stern of the boat and was resting the overburdened humanity. And why should He be disturbed? The sailors felt no fear. They had no need of His aid. Let Him sleep. They were sufficient for all the demands of the hour. So as they floated out from Capernaum they uttered no call upon His protecting power. They confided in their own strength and skill. Ah! but that was a vain confidence! The treacherous elements suddenly combined their forces. The wild tempest awoke them from this dream of security. The sea wrought. The waves lifted themselves up on high. The wind was boisterous. Dark night was round about them. The small open boat labored hard. At oar and helm and sheet there were strong and accustomed hands, and hardy frames, and the contest was joined. But this was no common and short-lived gust. Blacker grew the gloom, more troubled the Lake, fiercer the storm. "The waves beat into the ship," testifies Mark, "so that it was now full." "The ship was covered with the waves," says Matthew. The craft was beginning to sink. The sailors had come to their extremity. Their art, their courage, their endurance were exhausted. Now, then, their eyes turn toward that slumbering form. The time has come when they must have help or perish. The danger has shown them that their last hope is in prayer; that they must look for supernatural aid.

So it was in that storm on the Levant that beat on the vessel that carried Jonah. As the gale increased they lightened the trader of her wares; seamanship and care could yet win. No! they could not bring the ship to land. Then they began to cry every man to his God. The Danger made them men of prayer.

So when the *voyage of life* goes smoothly with us, when the bark that carries our fortunes rides on calm seas and our rich ventures are unimperilled, we feel confident and secure. If we pray, it may be formally and drowsily. But when calamities thicken, when our utmost fortitude is beaten down, when there remains no more that we can do to insure deliverance and safety, then our eyes look away earnestly heavenward, and our pale lips begin to call aloud on God.

Many a man who utters no prayers in the days of his prosperity, who is erect and self-sufficient when his "mountain stands strong," Adversity humbles; the heavy pressing hand of misfortune brings him upon his knees, and want and pain and grief extort his suppliant cries. Men stripped of property, or left lonely in bereavement, or tossing without relief in dangerous sickness, find it in their hearts, perhaps for the first time, to pray. All their blessings, the bright days and fruitful seasons of their life, never prompted one address to their benefactor; but deep sorrow and sharp imminent exposure put words of anguished entreaty into their lips.

So a slumbering conscience is silent and prayerless. Men live for years in unrepented sin and selfishness, without a thought of propitiating that God who has declared that He is angry with them every day. But when conscience awakes under some light flashed from eternity, when the storm of Divine wrath seems about to break on that guilty head, when the doom threatened by Divine justice discloses to the suddenly-opened vision its nearness and its awfulness, and the soul sees that the hopeless grasp of retribution is tightening upon it, then it finds a secret place and lifts up the Publican's plea, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The time of trouble is thus the time of prayer. And this throws light upon God's dealings with men, and families, and nations. He sends trouble to make men see their weakness and feel their need of Him, and call unto Him for help and rescue. The 107th Psalm recites these fluctuations of God's providence and of man's confidence, and reiterates with every illustration this historic burden: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses."

The next point is that in trouble, though men go down upon their knees, they are apt to lose their faith in the Supreme One. That is the time when they most need *faith*. Sight is darkened; by what light shall they walk? The lamps of earth are put out; are the stars shining still? But when the storm is loud and the deep waters are round a man's soul and threaten to go over his head, and in helplessness he cries to the Supreme Disposer, though he cries, yet he doubts. He prays, yet it is with accents more than half despairing. This time he will certainly perish! All is lost. The boat will swim but a little longer. The next wave may fill it and sink it. This is the mid-sea. The shore is distant. Companions are in the same strait. The end is come. Will God suffer it? Yes, it seems as though He would. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" There is not much hope in that voice. But Storms are obedient to *His* will. They come and go at *His* bidding. No billow can rise higher than *He* permits. He has *His* own all-wise and gracious purposes to accomplish. But a little while ago we thought we could trust Him. Is *His* power less, less *His* pity and faithfulness now? Oh, we of little faith!

How often a good man's way seems utterly hedged up. A step more and he touches the impenetrable wall beyond which there is no advance, and Destruction is close behind him. He is in such straits as never before. Now, then, God's deliverances have exhausted themselves. So Israel stood with the Red Sea dashing its spray in their faces, the mountains on the right, and Egypt's power sharpening its crescent wrath behind.

How often, in a good and holy cause, we are tempted to say the work is too arduous, the obstacles too many, the adversaries too mighty; we must give over our endeavor. But is it a good and holy cause? Then Jesus is embarked with us. There is one on board who can not sink. The ship carries not Cæsar's fortunes, but the person and life of the Son of God. Low and deep, the storm-filled vessel swims heavily on, just ready to founder. But Jesus is in the ship. Are we about to perish? But we can not perish with Him. Why should we doubt? Our faith, how small!

Another point in this prayer of the Disciples is *the confession of their own helplessness*. We may be sure they did not overrate their danger. They were not likely to be panic-struck by a little freshening of the wind. They were men inured to hardship and familiar with the sea. They had braved many a storm on those waters and weathered them in safety. No ordinary peril could shake their nerves. But this time they knew and felt that they were on the brink of destruction. The next wave might carry on its white crest "the pale horse" and his rider. There was no more that they could do. "Master, we perish."

The hand of Providence or the tuition of grace must bring us to such extremity before our prayer will include

this essential element of *surrendering self-confidence*. We must be stript of self-reliance, or our call upon God is not one which He will regard. So long as we feel we have expedients that may prevail our strength holds out; we have not tried the last desperate measure possible to us; our summons of supernatural aid is qualified. It is calling for a partner to join his capital to ours, rather than for a deliverer. The spirit of the prayer must be "Lord, save or we perish." So, in the discipline of life, God puts us not merely into danger, but pushes us on to extremities; He takes away our last hope; He leaves us sinking, and then our call is unqualified. If we are saved then, it will not be our hand that has wrought the rescue.

Again, *Prayer in danger*, if it move God, must appeal to Him as *the only possible Helper*. We are at the end of our personal resources, but there may yet come help from some other quarter on our own level. *We* can do no more to keep afloat, but our more fortunate companions may bring relief. A larger craft, more strongly manned, may bear down to our assistance. The storm may relent, the wind may have nearly blown itself out, and some favorable change may be near at hand. Now, so long as we are left to revolve such hopeful peradventures, though ready to confess that our own hands are powerless, our prayer to God will hardly magnify Him as our only Hope. We must feel there is but one eye that can now effectively pity, there is but one mind wise enough to devise, there is but one hand strong enough to execute. God alone can help. If He do not, our fate is fixed. This conviction affects all the quality of our prayer.

There is another point connected with this midnight prayer in peril. *The Saviour, though present, was asleep.*

Certainly, His bodily senses were locked in unconsciousness. He seemed altogether unobservant of the distress of His followers. The howling of the wind, the rush and roar of the sea, the voices of doubt and fear, He seemed neither to heed nor hear. When would He wake and cast His own eyes abroad upon the storm and discern for Himself the imminency of the peril, and, self-moved, bring in His mighty interposition? How silent He is still, how profound that slumber! How can He thus rest amid the loud tumult? Oh, if He knew the jeopardy of lives so dear to Him! But still His eyes are veiled and His form is motionless. Yes, He will wait till they can wait no longer. He will not rouse Himself till they rouse Him with their touch and call. It is strange and trying, this apparent unconsciousness of, and indifference to, their danger; but it has its purpose. It brings those imperiled ones, in the last anguish of breathless haste, close to His side, and lends to their suppliant voices a desperate urgency.

And amid the fluctuations of our earthly life God in Heaven sometimes seems to slumber long, while our need waxes sorer. We have adventured for Him in some good undertaking; our voyage is for His service and glory. Will He not see us safely through? The storm rages unrebuked. Where does He hide Himself? We have leagued our strength against some evil which He hates. He must be in sympathy with us. But the struggle is too hard for us. Will He suffer us to be overcome? Will He give to wrong and violence the victory? He shows no sign of interference, His chariot wheels delay, He launches no thunderbolts of power. How trying is this silence! Is the boast of the wicked true, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge

in the Most High?" This calmness, this undemonstrative patience, this seeming indifference of God when a just cause or a child of God is brought into deepest straits, how unaccountable it is! Why does He not arise and gird Himself and shake terribly the earth? Are there couches of repose in Heaven? Does God sleep? "The Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary," has He a pillow on which He lays His head in unconsciousness? How could His silence and inaction be more profound?

Ah, He waits in these methods of His discipline to try our faith. He waits to exhaust our strength and hope, and with them our tenacious, vital spirit of self-dependence. He waits till the conditions of prevailing prayer are nurtured and fulfilled in us by our extremity. He waits till we can wait no longer, till the feeling becomes sharp, with painful acuteness, that we can not do without Him. He waits till we go to Him to rouse Him, till we pierce His heavy ear with keen supplications, till we clasp His listless hand as our only hold upon life.

How often and grievously we misinterpret God's silence and delay to answer, wronging Him and our own souls! If we do not need God, He will maintain His distance and silence. If we do, we must go to Him and make sure of rousing Him. He sends Imperious Danger as a friendly messenger to lead us, when we can wait no longer, all earnest and hurried to His presence, that we may fall into the shelter of His arms.

We have only further to observe that the call of the Disciples in their extremity brought them relief. They did not perish. The hungry sea was robbed of its prey. The winds

that conspired with the waves were baffled. The sinking boat floated safely to shore. The mariners received no harm. They came out of the jaws of the devouring peril without a wound and enriched with a great and memorable lesson of faith in their Lord and Leader.

When they went to Him and woke Him, then He stood up. There went forth all-controlling power on His word. "He rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

He was honored as Master of the Storms, Ruler of Tempests. He asserted thus for Himself, the old divine prerogative which the Psalmist ascribes to Jehovah, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea."

And thus Jesus is proclaimed, amid earth's wildest commotion, the sure and strong Deliverer of His people.

Are any of us suffering under the weight and sharpness of any personal pressure? Have we a physical pain or infirmity or bondage that overmatches our strength and endurance?

Tell me your secrets! Is there a black cloud in our sky that hides the light from our eyes, broods our path in sable shadow, and drops down thunder notes of warning? It is God's gracious call to us to use the endowment of Prayer. It is His faithful messenger to bring us to His waiting presence for help and relief. It is our warrant to wake the sleeping Master with hurried voice and touch and summon His omnipotence to our rescue.

Are any of our beloved ones passing through the deep

waters of affliction, or through flames of fiery trial? It is not that their souls may be made desolate under such visits of Providence, nor that ours may drink deep with them of the same cup of bitterness, but that we may take up the office of tender and availing intercession, and pay our debt of love to them through the interposing mercy and consolation of a prayer-answering God.

Are we made to tremble for any great and good Cause, carrying in it the wealth of human hopes for the Life that now is, or the upbuilding of some portion of the walls of the everlasting Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness? It is not that we should despair of the Golden Age and doubt whether its dawn will ever brighten the Orient, but that we should look through and above the shadowed firmament to Him who sits on the circle of the Heavens and whose voice, "Let there be light!" precedes every dawning, and beseech from Him the omnific word that ushers in the new illumined eras of Time's lengthening story.

Ah, if we could understand the intent of these Divine Appeals in the changes of our Providential nurture, we should cease to tone our voices with complaints and to cast reproachful looks upward, and should feel that each question thus raised concerning any treasure of our hearts, for the present or for the endless Future, was a question which we were invited to carry on burdened souls to infinite Wisdom, Power, and Love, and wait its happy solution there!

VIII.

HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY.

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”—ROM. xiv. 12.

IT is reasonable that men should give account of themselves to God. He gave them Life, it is reasonable that they should report to Him what use they make of Life. He furnished them all the forces of their being,—it is reasonable they should show Him how they have employed those forces. He made them tenants in His manor of earth,—it is right He should call them, at the expiration of their lease, to a reckoning. He stationed them at their posts of duty,—He must know how they have discharged their appointed functions. He commissioned them as Stewards to one another, and their race,—it is to Him they must render account of their stewardship. They are *here* on trial, as probationers,—under discipline for eternity. How has the trial gone with them,—what are the fruits of the discipline? They must make answer. This probation has its limit of continuance,—it is reasonable in itself, due to the nature of such trial, and useful to all interested beholders, that its results should be gathered up and publicly rehearsed. Men have large liberty in the present life, they are free, they enthrone and act out their own choices,—God’s Moral Government is a Government of Law and motive over free minds; it is reasonable they should be

called to an account for this liberty, say what they have done with their freedom,—how they chose, how they willed, what they have wrought. On this choosing, willing and acting their Immortality hinges, and before they enter upon their changeless heritage, it is fitting that there should be a summing up and a setting forth of the grounds upon which the eternal issue is declared. So it is nothing arbitrary, but altogether coincident with reason and equity, that men's eyes should be, through all time, turned forward to a great day of Trial and Award. And this clear announcement of accountability and its issues crowns its reasonableness. Men are forewarned. They will not be taken by surprise. They understand, that every day, swift lapsing between its rising and setting sun, is to come up in review.

Let us seek, now, to make the conception of this fact vivid and impressive.

It teaches us that *every endowment* we receive, in Creation and Providence, is A SACRED TRUST. In this view, we can look upon nothing we are or have which is absolutely our own. Each material force, each faculty of mind, each energy of spirit, is to be administered by us, as a charge put into our keeping, for the full scope, and use, and revenue of which we are held answerable.

Our *feet* are made swift to run,—agile to leap and to climb. They are not an idle appendage,—nor mere servants of our personal convenience. They are *a trust*. Whither shall they run? On what errands? What path shall they beat hard with daily treading? To what use do we put their agile lightness? Is it *duty* or *pleasure* that quickens them? We must account for them.

We have *fingers* that are cunning in skill, sensitive of

touch, strong in their clasping. What do these hands handle through all the hours? What does their skill construct? What does their strength move? What toil do strength and skill together undertake? we ought to ask with the lapse of every day. The full answer will one day be given. Our *eye* mirrors every object within its scope of vision. The image of that object is painted on the visual nerve. From that image sensations travel swift to the brain, and enter with their subtle leaven into the intelligent, moral life of the soul. We can direct this eye as we please. We can look up to the sky overhead. We can look down upon the dust at our feet. We can look away over broad landscapes. We can gaze into human faces; upon the works of art; upon the record of man's thoughts, and of God's thoughts. We can look upon objects and scenes that shall fill the soul with corrupting images and kindle the scathing fires of passion. How do we use our eyesight? It is a trust for which we must give account. Within the guardian portals of the *lips* lies the most curious and wonderful muscle of our frame. It *syllables* articulate language. It makes thought *vocal*. It gives audible interpretation to the soul's subtlest fancies. The resolves of the Spirit march forth by this outlet. In soft whispers it utters the words of affection. Every challenge one mind would send another, or the world of mind, this faithful message-bearer conveys. What does it say for us? What voices do we give forth? We can speak holy words, in prayer or profanation; pure words, or words unclean. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." The tongue setteth on fire the course of nature, and it glows with seraphic fervors. "It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," and

it quivers like a harp to loftiest praise. It is a most solemn charge, and we are responsible for it to God, to whom we shall give account.

And *the Face* itself has with every man the power of silent expression. It gives out the pensive look of sadness or the radiant light of joy. It shows unconquerable firmness or yielding softness. It gathers to a frown of hate or brightens to a smile of friendship. It curls itself to scorn or breathes gentle approbation. It sharpens itself in suspicion or relaxes to the openness of serene and placid trust. Make the tongue a mute captive, and the face may still be eloquent of all the thoughts of the heart, and must answer for its record in the day of account. And there is the whole force of *Manner*, often a very mighty force, the most remarkable and potent thing, not seldom, about a man. It tells pre-eminently in social life. It repels with some; it wins with others. It fences about one with gates of triple frost; it conquers for another even the hearts of enemies. How do we use this power?

Within us are *Appetites* and *Propensities*, taking their parentage still from the flesh. We can indulge them as we will. This is our liberty. We can pluck every golden apple of desire that hangs within reach; we can fill ourselves with natural, sensual good to whatever excess. "But know thou," reads the clear-toned warning, "know thou, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

And it rests upon each of us to say how THE POWERS OF THE MIND shall be employed. They are given us in germ, and then they develop into maturity, growing with our growth and strengthening with our strength, *according to the nurture they receive*. To what discipline and exercise

shall we put the varied faculties of a reasoning soul? How shall we enrich ourselves with treasures of thought? What banquets shall we spread for the hunger of the mind? What books shall we read? What studies shall we pursue? What voices of living Teachers shall we hear? And the Life-story records every answer.

And, more explicitly, how shall we fill the chambers of MEDITATION? The Soul never sits alone within her retreat. She invites some congenial companionship. She is not altogether mistress of that retirement. Thoughts she can not welcome will sometimes obtrude their presence. Acquaintances she has made in her idle humor, and which afterward she would fain shake off, are pertinacious in their visits, and will not be banished. But, for the most part, she chooses her fellowships. She calls in the thoughts in whose silent circle she finds most agreeable communion. And then, in such alliance, a swift process of assimilation goes on. The Soul becomes like her chosen intimates. She takes on the hue and character of those objects with which she is most at home. And here is another item in the final reckoning: We must answer for these intimacies of thought.

And what an artist is *Imagination*! What a pencil is hers—what colorings, what creative power! What forms and scenes she paints for the Soul's great gallery of ideal things! Like other artists, she sometimes takes liberties with nature; frugal of drapery, dispensing with costume, in fashions preferring the meretricious to the pure and chaste. For the dalliance of the Imagination we are held accountable. In night-dreams we can not control her, though the habits of the day extend their sway with more or less sovereignty into the night. But we must take care

how we dream day-dreams, and into what scenery and society Imagination wanders when awake, for all her footpaths are to be retraced in the great review.

And with every *mental power*, every AFFECTION *of the heart*, and every moral sensibility of the soul will be put to the question: What we loved; what we hated; what moved our sympathy; what excited our indignation; what pleased, what grieved us; what was fair and sweet to desire, and what our lips pronounced *bitter fruit* and rejected as ashes.

And not only for what we ARE, but for what we HAVE, will the Great Day make inquisition. "You who have wealth," the call will come to you, "give in report how you have used it." And you begin (you might try a rehearsal now for a moment, to hear how it will sound): "I have fed and clothed myself," you say; "these natural wants I must have the right to supply." You go too fast. This account must be given in details. You must furnish the items. How have you fed and clothed yourself? What is your standard? Character connects itself with these departments of living. Here may spring and flourish Luxury, Pride, Vanity, Envy, Sensuality. You see to what points you must speak. Go on. "I have fed and clothed my family; I have built my mansion; I have provided domestic comforts." Specify as you proceed. Is this all? Are there no outside expenditures? "Ah, I have gratified my love of *music*, my delight in *art*, my interest in *foreign travel*, my relish of *books*." You stop again. You have not reached the end? All this is self-providence. Have you never heard the faint voice of penury? Have you never seen the outstretched hands of orphanage? Have you never echoed the widow's sigh? Have you never stooped your

brow beneath the low portal where Sickness, Vice, Famine, and Misery keep carnival together? And then the gloomy Pagan world, the floating population of the Sea, the benighted millions of Earth—what appropriations through these broad, deep channels? The books are kept *there*, if they are not *here*.

And the “strong box,” which, with some, like a child’s miniature banking-house, has no opening, save the chink at the top through which the gold slides in, always *receiving*, never giving out, close and dumb to appeals circling it on every side, that almost make the conscious eagles flutter forth, self-moved—THAT BOX will give in its testimony on the trial day.

And *you* have *Influence*, power to wield and sway others. It may reside in your official place. It may lie in your ample fortune. It may be the crown of an educated mind. It may be the homage paid to eloquent speech. It may be the bright and soft, but strong, attraction of a warm heart or a sweet face. It may be the iron scepter of a stern will. No matter in what it resides, it is another *trust* to be faithfully administered, and, however administered, to be accounted for.

And all of you have *Time*. And Time has its measures, from years down to pulsing seconds. And each second speeds away from us on electric flight to tell the recording Angel what we were about. Oh, solemn trust of Time!—the portal of Eternity, the seed-hour for an endless harvest season. No man can ignore this trust. A *Day* dawns upon you. You lift your head from the pillow with open eyes. It is morning, and your accountableness begins with that first report of sight. What are your earliest thoughts?

They freight these early moments. You go forth from your chamber. Pause yet on the threshold. Are you ready to go forth? Are you in haste? Not one moment for an upward look, for a bended knee! You have slept well; you are refreshed; God's eye has watched you. No breath of Praise, your morning incense, floating heavenward? Well, the moments will not stay. You greet the home circle, and your domestic influence for the day begins, with what auspices, under what sanctions? And your tasks call you. You bow your neck to the daily yoke—not alone—and your social influence for the day begins to fall silent as dews. And the long working hours, as each chime repeats their lapse, what do they say of you? They say you are "*diligent*." Yes. "Skillful," "successful." But what do they say of your *thoughts*, your *emotions*, your *purposes* and *aims* through all their rounds? The sunlight wanes, and work is over. What now? Amusement, self-improvement, sweet household converse, stupid drowsiness? And your head touches the pillow again, whether first bowed, or no, in the evening sacrifice, and that day is spent and gone, and lays up its story in full chapters for the great final day of review and publication.

Will you say then what you are, or what you have that is not a solemn trust? And as a Trustee, the supreme Proprietor, who gave you your commission, will call for your rendering of each item in the long account.

Every *Relation* of life into which you come voluntarily or involuntarily must be called up. As a *father* you must give account. Are you all a father should be? And as a *mother*, what does this peerless tie witness for you? As a *child*, owing such a debt of Love, Reverence, Obedience,

are you truly FILIAL? As *husbands* and *wives*, as *brothers* and *sisters*, as *companions* and *friends* and *neighbors*, as *schoolmates* and *fellow-craftsmen*, as a *citizen*, as a *magistrate*,—in whatsoever sphere and fellowship of all Life's confederations, the true and faithful Record must be filled out and voiced forth.

Oh! let us ascend some height of self-inspection, climb to some summit on which the light of Eternity falls, and glance over all the field of our current life,—the whole inner, the whole outer domain,—and listen as the voices go up, listen as though the morning of the last day were breaking to this witness-bearing of the present.

From this height we discern that nothing in our whole life is *unimportant*. Even every light word must be repeated and weighed in the eternal balances. Every step leaves a footprint, then to be measured and identified, and to testify *whence*, and *whither*, and *wherefore*. Every play of feature, every slight but meaning gesture, the curling of the lips, the knitting of the forehead, the lifting of the eyebrow, the shrug of the shoulder, has helped to guide the current of human destinies, has had its place in the day's story, and must come up to be estimated and passed upon before the final tribunal.

From this height of self-survey and of instructed anticipation we can judge ourselves *now*. The light of that coming day shines down upon all the track this side. What is the character of our present thinking, feeling, and acting? Hold them up to that distant but searching beam, and we get the true answer. Some purposed indulgence may be sweet *now* to the taste; how, *then*, shall we judge of its healthfulness and wholesomeness? The present gratification

of passion may thrill the senses with a delirious joy ; what will its *memory* do for us *then* ? Our eye sparkles with delight as some fascinating scene rises now before us ; how will this eye look back upon it from the portal of Eternity ? Applying this test to every step of life's brief journey we can hardly ever go *blindly* wrong.

And then we have, as it were, a portable tribunal, a kind of omnipresent Day of Judgment within our own breasts. We can know our standing in God's sight. We can now sentence ourselves on every count of our indictment. We need make no blunders as to Law, Evidence, and Equity. CONSCIENCE holds aloft her miniature balances, and, in mercy to us, writes now, over our sins and follies, the mystic "*Tekel*" of the Chaldean revel. Nay, she anticipates and forewarns us ere the act is committed, that we may keep clear of guilt, and so of condemnation.

And whenever we feel troubled by inequalities in the divine dealings, and our souls are visited by envies and jealousies, and we murmur that others are—in wealth or health, or place, or personal endowments, or in any nerve of influence—more favored than we, let us remember that we have here, in this graduation of accountableness, a grand and compensative rectifier of all inequalities. According to our gifts must be the reckoning. The crowned ones of Earth, the strong in whatever forces of being, bear before the waiting Judgment, the heaviest burdens of Responsibility.

So each of us goes forward to his account to abide its issue. And the most solemn chapter of Review will be that which includes directly the CARE OF THE SOUL,—that Jewel of great price,—and this especially with the dwellers in Christian lands, with men who hear the Gospel and who

have the Bible in their native tongue. A holy Law, a ruined Nature, a Judgment Day, a crucified Redeemer, evidently set forth; Sabbaths shining upon you, temples lifting up their gates, earnest voices entreating us, the Spirit and the Bride together pleading, Oh, my friends, if we neglect salvation how can we give account for these!

This Sabbath retires from us into the past. Yet a few hours and its departing footstep is heard, then heard no more. The day and its themes we shall dismiss from thought, and pass on to hail the light of to-morrow's sun. But we have not so done with the day, nor with this message of God. Each of these flying moments of which we take careless adieu or none at all, we shall live over again, more freshly, more vividly than *now*.

Oh, from henceforth, let this voice within our soul never be silent,—“EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD!”

IX.

LOVING AND KNOWING.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love.”—1 JOHN iv. 8.

INCONCEIVABLY the most impressive and controlling truth for the mind of man is the truth concerning God. The certainty of wreck is not greater for a rudderless ship on the sea, than for the man on the voyage of life, of whom it must be written, “God is not in all his thoughts.” It is one of the most exalted capacities of our nature that we are made capable of knowing God. There are indeed mysteries in His being the depths of which no finite intellect can fathom, the veiled heights of which an archangel’s wing may not scale. There are mysteries in all life. The strange union of flesh and spirit in our own humanity presents many a problem that baffles inquiry ; but this does not prevent us from knowing one another. Each little pool mirrors the sky with all its wealth of starry systems and all its blue breadth of immensity. Looking into the pool we see the whole majestic canopy ; and God has so made our mind and so adjusted it to the solar grandeurs of His own being that this small and darkened mirror gives to our eye the features of His glorious countenance.

But with this capability of knowing God, with this interior volume of revelation ever at hand, we may still remain in profound ignorance of Him ; or we may study Him

partially and perversely; or our mirror may be so discoloured and obscured that while we have His features, the expression that sits upon them may be lost to us in deepest shadow. It is then a question of the gravest moment—*when do we know God—how shall we know Him aright?*

Now it is not enough to try to conceive of Eternity and Immensity, and to call that idea God. God is from Eternity, God filleth Immensity, but to conceive of duration without beginning, without ending, to launch our thought upon the boundless sea of space, and find drifting past the isles of creation, or circumnavigating the continental universe, that this sea is without a shore, brings us no nearer the conception and the knowledge of a personal God. Duration itself is lifeless and that sea of space has no tides and pulses of consciousness. We want something more than the conceptions of *Time* and *Space* to bring out the portraiture of God.

Nor is it enough that we hear of His *Power*, and even see exhibitions of that Power, until we write it down Omnipotence; nor that we float like drifting atoms under the cope of His Omniscience; nor that we should discern His unwearying hand holding and guiding the courses of Providence; nor that the strength of His will, the absoluteness of His choices, the vastness of His plans, the ubiquity of His presence and vigilance and energy, should thus attract our recognition and reverence. We do not know God, just by knowing His natural attributes and His mental constitution. We need to know more of Him than to be able to say He is Designer, Creator, Presence, Ruler, and Lord. What is this Creator? What purposes does that autocratic mind bear up? What puts into action, and controls the working of these infinite forces of the Godhead; power, intelligence,

wisdom, energy, all unlimited. How do they combine? What end do they serve in God?

If, in human relations, we ask concerning the character of one with whom we are to be brought into intimate fellowship, it does not enlighten us on the main point to be informed how old he is, what his stature is, how strong of arm, how swift of foot, how cunning of skill; that he reasons well, that he plans sagaciously, that he has a fixed scheme of life. It does not satisfy our final and most controlling solicitude when we are told he is an honest man, a truthful man, a man of integrity, one who deals justly and uprightly by his fellow-men. He may be all this and yet not be the man for our choice. We do not know him, after all the testimony, until we know him in that nameless quality, or assemblage of qualities, which constitutes his DISPOSITION.

And the Scripture declares that we do not know God till we know Him in that essence of His character, that beginning, middle, and end of His being, that all-pervading quality which is His true self—"God is Love." We may know Him to be *strong*, but we are ignorant of Him yet. We may know Him to be *wise*, but He is still a stranger. We may know Him to be *unchanging*, but that tells us nothing of what it is that is so immutable.

The great Supreme One has not come into the light of our upward gazing till this inscription be legible above His throne—God is Love.

And now this further truth appears, that no one can know God as a God of Love, even when thus revealed, without first himself loving. We can conceive of power without loving, and of wisdom without loving, and of eternity and immensity and omnipotence, but none of these conceptions is

God, nor all together. We may study the manifold volumes of the Divine works and range to either pole of His orb'd dominions; Nature may unveil her mysteries and science yield up her secrets, and we might dissect the scheme of God's universe and show in detail all its articulated parts, and master thus His thoughts as Builder of Creation; and still the Scripture remains, "*He that loveth not knoweth not God.*" We can see why this must be so; for, *first*, it is only on the basis of what we are ourselves, as made in the image of God, that we can know anything of God, as *personal*, *rational*, and *moral*. Is God *personal*? Is not all natural Law a part of God? Is not *light* a Divine substance and effluence? Is not *heat* Divine? Is not *space* diffused Deity? Is not duration the mere ceaseless flow of God's existence? Is not gravitation simply a nerve of God's being? Does not God thus compose things that are?—His own life throbbing in the seasons, His own breath coming and going in gales and calms, His nourishing ichor coursing up in herb and tree, flower and fruit, His rationality stirring our brain, His sensibility working our heart, His energy acting all results; so that Nature and Man are but other forms of God and other names for God, and this unseen, wide-circling Divine force the only Reality? Why is not the Pantheist right? Because we know ourselves, as God's offspring, to be distinct personalities. We live and move and act within our own consciousness. We originate our own choices and doings. We are walled off from all other identities and walled up to our own identity. We know this; we know our thoughts to be our own, our feelings ours and not another's, and another's not ours. We are separated sharply from the lives that repeat our model and style of living at

our side. So we say we may be creatures of God, but we are ourselves. We are not Divine. We are personal, individual and distinct, and then we reason up to God. He who made us after Himself, who thought us before He made us, who planned and chose and purposed, must have a mind, a will, a consciousness, a being, a personality of His own, as we have. What it is to be such a personality we could never know, save as we know it from ourselves, our own constitution and consciousness.

In the same way we dissect this personality of God on the basis of our self-knowledge, as made in God's image. We *think*, and thus we know God to be a thinking being. We *reason*, and so we know He is rational. We *choose*, and He must be a voluntary being. We *feel*, with a wide variety of affections and emotions, and He can not be more restricted than we. We put forth energies to accomplish our designs, instituting long series of processes for some final end, and have our character, as we are perfectly aware, not in the individual act, which means nothing and reveals nothing taken by itself, but in that final end. And God must therefore have His schemes of operation, upon which He expends His working power and the grand and all-controlling sovereignty of His final end. All this we know of God by having ourselves and the truth that we are made in His image. We can not conceive of being, of any being, without looking first at ourselves. What is it to think, feel, desire, deliberate, choose, and act? Our consciousness is the only revelation here. We can not understand principles of action, nor elements of character, except as we are observers of self. And so it is irresistibly seen to be true that it is only as ourselves loving that we can understand what

it is for God to love. And if this be omitted on our part; if we need a distinct organic vision in us to discern every organ of God's spiritual life; if this one organism be in us crushed into blindness, and we know God to be a rational, intelligent, voluntary Power, but can not, for want of the vision in ourselves—the mirror here to display the truth there—see that He is Love, how we distort and misrepresent God. How ignorant we are yet of His true life! It must be so. What it is to love we know not till we feel it. What it is to forget self and to be absorbed in the life and good of another we cannot conjecture, unless we ourselves have had experience. We know God from the image, and we have blotted and blurred the grandest part of the image. We can sublime our ideas of power; we can make out an infinite thinker; we can carry up all the mental processes belonging to our nature and to God's into measureless heights, but what does this avail if we know not, because of our personal ignorance, because of the vacancy in our own consciousness, what *loving* is? We have not God, we know not God, for "God is Love."

Again: In respect to all passions and emotions, it is only by being in sympathy with them that we can understand them. This is true even with the sterner parts of character. Virtue itself, in the sense of loyalty to principle and right, is in great measure a mystery to those who are practically indifferent to its supremacy. They think, perhaps, it is a lofty self-respect, or a sense of what is decent and becoming, or a high appreciation of a peaceful conscience, or an unchanging fixedness of will, or the resolute maintenance of one's own opinion. It is a part of that conception that, if they could only name it, this virtue has its price—that

there are, if they knew just where to look for them, considerations that would outweigh this nameless, intangible thing and sweep it aside. That it has no price; that worlds could not buy it; that Death could not fright it; that martyr fires could not make it blench; that love, which is stronger than death, could not bribe it to be less; that it can not be other than it is, because it is what it is—this is a mystery to such observers. It must be *felt* before it is known. Who can understand a patriot's ardor that does not himself love his country? Who can appreciate a naturalist's enthusiasm that has no taste for natural science, or fathom the feeling that leads him on over wold and wild with hammer and microscope, or the studious vigils that keep him bending over some abstract problem through the still midnight, or the almost insane joy with which he leaps upon his discovery and shouts "Eureka!" so that the nations hear him? Is it not insanity? How impossible it is for the most of us to answer.

Who but a parent knows a parent's care, or can tell what feeling it is that looks out of a parent's eyes? Who knows a mother's heart but the mother herself; what she feels as she clasps her babe to her bosom or bends over its cradled nest? Any of us can see the embracing arms and the stooping form, but what eyes can read that which the heart itself can never tell? Who can walk by a mother's side in her lonely chamber, after bereavement, and share that deep, inner, sacred solitude with her? No mortal. One only can do that, and it is He who made the heart.

He who made a mother's heart! Ah, what must He be, then! He who breathed a little of His own tenderness into that fountain, what is the depth of that uncreated ten-

derness? A parent, from what he feels toward his children, has a stepping-stone by which he can climb toward the pitying love of the Great Father; but what is a stepping-stone, if one would touch the sky? Until SELF is slain; until all is laid on the altar of beneficent living; until our neighbor is enshrined in our affections, and has the freedom of our thoughts and hearts; until we look upon him with dewy eyes and kindling sympathies; until God's life flows in us thus—His the original fountained fullness, ours the distributing reservoir, and the blessed stream courses through our veins clear, and full, and sweet,—we can not know the God of Love.

Again: It rests with God to reveal Himself to His creatures. That is a Divine prerogative. The human heart may plead, like Moses in the Mount, "*Show me Thy glory,*" and unless that plea find favor with God, the longing must go unblest. And when that plea is answered, what is it that is revealed? From the cleft of the rock what was it that those privileged prophet-eyes beheld? He who passed by proclaimed "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow unto anger, abundant in goodness and truth." And what was this but the outraying of His essential Love? To whom, then, will He withdraw the veil and make this revelation? To those who love Him not, and who, not loving Him, can not love their fellow-men? To sensual, selfish, isolated souls who tread right over others' hearts and hopes to their own determined ends? Nay, indeed. Only the pure in heart shall *see* God; only those who love shall *know* Him. What if one say, in the pride of his intellect, "But I will find out this God, and master this great study, '*What God is*'"; can he accomplish it, as one sits

down resolutely over a foreign language, till every strange symbol there interprets its meaning? Ah, God will withdraw Himself from such bold explorers. He will drop about His presence the drapery of clouds and darkness, or with excessive brightness strike blind these too daring eyes. Only in the company of His children does He sit down at home as a father, and lay aside His state, and permit familiar approaches, and speak, all gentle and smiling, household words, and fill the scene with the light and fragrance of household love.

When we speak of knowing God, we mean more than what we experience when we look upon some earthly dignitary, some statesman or warrior or orator of whom we have heard, but whom we have never seen until on some festival day we gaze at last upon his equipage, and mark his stature as he rises and stands, and hear his voice as he addresses a public assembly. It is a personal and sacred intimacy of which we speak, a dear, confidential friendship, a knowing Him as we know the tenderest and truest heart on earth that gives back the throbbing of our own, a touching of His hand, a looking into His eyes, a hearing of His tender words, a consciousness of His nearness, the sunny warmth of His smile bathing us, the door of His sheltering bosom open to us in all hours of cold and fear and loneliness, His light shining upon our darkened path, His strength helping us over difficulties, His joy illumining sad hours, His sympathy bending over us when we droop in grief, His assured, unchanging and inalienable faithfulness abiding by us in trials and cares and wanderings till the world shall end. This is knowing God. We can not tell a stranger of this alliance; we have no language for those strange, conscious in-

interviews wherein Heaven and earth blend, those speechless moments when God and we come together, and down in the tongueless joy of our souls the thought throbs silently, "*It is good to be here.*" This is knowing God. But how could one get admittance to such a Mount of Transfiguration and sit with Him who is "God made manifest" unless he were a friend of God, had caught the spirit of Love and were living the life of Love?

No, the world knows not God. It may acknowledge the fact of His sovereignty, it may take His name in legal covenants and compacts as an omniscient witness, it may build Him temples; but, after all, the inscription there is what Paul saw upon the fane at Athens—"To the unknown God."

When God asserts His will in laws and penalties, how little the world knows His heart! When He calls in solemn Providences, who guesses what deep emotions pulse in those sounding accents? When He touches men's idols and dries up the fountains of their joys with His breath, and leads them out of the sunshine into darkness and solitude, and bids them walk down from the heights of prosperity into the shaded and lowly vale, and their voice pleads reproachfully, "Why hath He dealt so with us?" oh, how little they know Him! How near He stands, and yet how far off! How loving, and yet how severe! How clearly revealed, and yet how darkly hidden!

Our personal religion must be a religion of love if it have God in it. Our zeal must be a zeal not only according to knowledge, but according to *love*. It must be the overflow of a deep, deep fountain of tenderness. We must not set upon a man to do him good as a highwayman collars his victim.

There is a zeal that is hotly sectarian. There is a zeal that thinks of consistencies and appearances. There is a zeal that is mere *self-will*, and is, in the strength of this natural obstinacy, awfully indomitable. There needs to be a zeal that, like Christ's, shall glow and yet be calm, be earnest and yet soft-voiced and sweet-spirited and pleading and kindly. This zeal can say what it will, and lay prevailing hands upon its fellow-men, and bring into action the powers of a divine life, because it knows and serves that God who is Love.

To *advance in the knowledge of God* we must advance in Love. We must not be content with loving a little. To love without the anguish of loving is still to be ignorant of God, or to know Him only afar off. Love like His is a suffering love, a self-sacrificing love—love that hath its garden sorrow, its cross of Calvary. This is that sublime exhibition of God which most clearly shows the world His heart—God giving up His Son, God in Christ bearing the sign of shame and straining with fainting step toward the Hill of Sacrifice, and uttering Divine clemency when the pain was sharpest—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” To *love* and to *suffer*, so to love as to suffer, to suffer the loss of all for the sake of what is so beloved, this is to come into the secret of God's loving and to know Him by the freemasonry of kindred *Love*. Are *we* capable of it?

Can we love a trespasser and hate his sin? Can we see that an offending brother has done us wrong and yet love the wrongdoer? Can we be indignant at some gross offense against our holiest standard of Right, something that touches us personally where we are most sensitive, and yet cleave tenderly to this offender, with a pitying compassion all the deeper

because of this outrage, and fasten our heart upon him anew ?

Look upon your erring fellow-men ; go up to the height and heart of God and look upon them. Do you know how He feels, or is it hard for you to get that view and to gaze out with His eyes upon the perishing ? Does His heart quicken ours ? Are we in sympathy with Him ? Are the far wastes of earth and humanity a burden upon our souls ? Every day, before we think of our "daily bread," does this prayer rise in ever-growing importunity, "Thy kingdom come" ?

Oh, we want more of Love, and so more of God, and God is in Christ. Will God in very deed dwell with men ? Hear His own lips in response, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is *Holy*, I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones."

X.

FOR A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION.

“ . . . Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. ”—MATT. xxvi. 39.

LOOKING through the gloom of the Garden Shades, and of deep midnight in Gethsemane, we discern in one group the dim outline of three human forms reclining together in listless and dejected attitude, and lost in grief or sleep, or both.

A little way from this group, about a stone's throw, is another solitary form, evidently wrestling with some great anguish. This we judge from his gestures and motions, and from the groans that seem like articulate throbs of agony. As we look the form goes down on its knees, as if for prayer, and the hands stretch themselves heavenward. But the tide is not yet at its height; wave on wave surges over this strained and quivering spirit, and the form sinks lower, until it is prostrate on the ground, the face laid to the earth. Indistinctly we hear words—“ this cup ! ” “ this cup, if it be possible, let it pass from me ! ” We can not see any literal “ cup,” but we can understand what an expressive image this word is of some appointed grief. It is as though the hand held *a cup*, and into it were wrung, beneath our eyes, dark and bitter waters, drop by drop, drop by drop, more acrid, more pungent, more unendurable to the taste until it

is full—a potion to be drunk. It must be lifted to the lips. It must be drained to the bitter dregs. So we feel and speak, when some great affliction, like the death of one tenderly beloved, warns us that its hour has come; or when some sharp but just retribution overtakes a fault or crime of long ago,—that's THE CUP forced into the hand, to be put to the mouth. And that prostrate form in the Garden makes mention of "*a cup.*" It must be most bitterly mingled, if it be that which so crushes the very frame to the earth. We know it was bitterly mingled. There were gall and wormwood in it. It held the concentrated bitterness of earth's *sin and doom and woe.* The wrath of God was in it. The finger of Justice stirred it. We know that prostrate form. We know what that sufferer essayed to drink. We do not marvel that the flesh fainted and failed. We only marvel at the constancy of His spirit, at this unequalled submission, when nature was already past its strength, "nevertheless" in pauses of the panting breath, "nevertheless" "not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

The force of this struggling utterance is in that first word "NEVERTHELESS," and the key to interpret that word is this scene of the midnight in the Garden.

True Filial Submission to the Divine Will after this example of Christ, is my theme.

And it may be observed, in the FIRST PLACE, that *there is properly no Submission, except in the time OF TRIAL.* There may be a submissive spirit, a readiness to submit, but the act can not be until the occasion be furnished. There must be a "nevertheless," a most powerful natural choice of the opposite, a pleading of inclination against some revealed appointment of God, before this grace of the Christian

character can shine in its brightest lustre. The soul must first come into a strait where all its might of endurance is overtaxed, must hold in its hand a cup brimming with bitter elements, must send up *this cry*, forced out of its pangs, "If it be possible let this cup pass," before that great triumph of resignation which begins with such a "nevertheless" can be achieved.

When summer days shine on us,—the sky without a cloud, earth without a tear, the soft breeze without a chill, our path without a flint or a thorn, the plenteous harvest waving in our fields, all the tributaries of our comforts pouring full and free into our bosom, health blooming in our home, *gain* waiting on our industry, *honor* crowning our head, *friendship* faithful and warm, each *grasp* sincere, each *smile* flashed outward from the soul within, each *comrade* fond and true-hearted,—what is it then to say to all-favoring Providence, "as Thou wilt"? There is no "*per contra*," no negative, no "nevertheless"; the first clause, "*not* as I will" is wanting, or misplaced and impertinent, hollow and meaningless. "As Thou wilt!" But it is also as we would. Bounty streams upon us. Benefactions wait upon every want. No wish goes out and returns unfreighted. No desire is denied. There is no *pinch*. God wills as we will. The veriest worldling could look up and say, "I accept this Providential rule, I have no quarrel with the Supreme, I bless the Giver for these ceaseless gifts." Many an un-renewed man has such feelings at such times, and entertains them, and expresses them, and, in his own eyes, goes as far as any man in this fervor of a natural gratitude. But he must not call it "*Resignation*." Resigned to what? To the lavishing of the Great Father's goodness upon him! No

quarrel with a sovereignty which leaves him nothing to desire!

This is not SUBMISSION. There is no room for Submission, save in trial,—the contradiction of our choices, the setting aside of our will, and the resistless coming in of that Autocratic will,—to do its own pleasure with us and upon us. But for trial, then, this sweet and fragrant grace of the Christian spirit would never diffuse its odor along the rough paths of life. And that which assumes its name in Joy's bright hour, whether under a saintly or a worldly garb, is, so far, *a name* and nothing more.

It may be observed, again, that this Submission is not a mere *acquiescence* in the Divine will. There is some danger that, in our trials, we stop short with a silent sufferance of God's pleasure. A heart whose self-devotion has never been slain may attain to this. It may reason thus: "God is too strong for me to contend with. He will govern according to His own counsels. What He pleases to take from me I can not withhold. What He determines to lay upon me I can not throw off. Resistance, Complaint, Fretfulness, were of no avail. It is God; what can I do but submit?"

And even Christians may wear a type of Resignation which is altogether *negative*, and never passes over into the *positive*: which simply does not protest against what God appoints, yields the prize over which the two wills had held debate, lays aside its own choice under the sovereign interdict, and pauses there, as if the grace of Submission had its consummate exercise. But this, again, is to adopt but one part of that self-sacrificing utterance that pierced the silent gloom of Gethsemane. Even as a selfish soul, glad of its comfort while Providence smiles, may say, "*as Thou wilt*,"—and

omit the first clause,—so this acquiescing type of resignation says, “*not as I will,*” and goes no further. This is not the example of that garden sufferer. He gave up His own will, and against all the instinctive protest of anguished nature He chose the will that put Him to grief. This is the element that must enter into a true Submission. Whether we know or not what God has ordained, whether our affliction be a present *calamity* or a *fear* only, we must prefer to have God’s will done. It must be our free choice that after He has heard and weighed our plea, and notwithstanding what naturally we crave, that that which pleases Him, rather than that which pleases us, should be the reigning statute of the hour. “Not my will, if it conflicts with Thine; but Thine, though it crosses mine. Thine is so wise, so good, so infinitely more desirable, I choose it over nature and self. I desire relief, but more than freedom from suffering, *most* of ALL, I desire Thy blessed will to have its way.”

Again, it may be observed, the spirit of true Submission consents that *we ask relief, if it can be bestowed*. Else our Submission were *stoicism*. It were a hard, frigid endurance, braced against suffering,—steeling the sinews to it, and stifling every moan. This were not pleasant in God’s sight, nor healthful for our soul. The tender, confiding, filial Submission is of another sort. It will open its wounded heart to God. It will speak to Him with plaintive voice. It will assume that God’s ordinances are not coldly despotic,—but are the discipline of a Father. It will honor God as a *Father*, by asking of Him alleviation to our sorrow, if He see that it can, consistently with our healing, be afforded.

God is not indifferent to our pain. Our burdened sighs

make no music in His ear; and when we ask Him to assuage our sorrows, it is a testimony to His pitying kindness. Perhaps He can grant our petition. To have brought us thus to His feet, lowly suppliants, may have been the very object of His chastening, and our humble prayer may pave the way for His gracious interposition. It is not as though we knew certainly what He had decreed, and were importuning Him to reverse His own decision. "While the child was yet alive"—was David's self-vindication to his household,—“I fasted and wept, for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live.” Even Jesus, in the anguish of His human soul, uncertain how far those sharp atoning rigors must be pushed,—while He expressed His unqualified submission, “not as I will, but as Thou wilt”—prayed also, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!”

This, then, is the pattern of a true Christian Submission, which we are to carry through all the vicissitudes of life. This great trial of our suffering Saviour is to connect itself by dearest association as of a brother's example and fellowship with all our inferior trials, and teach us how to bear them, not sullenly and stiffly, not with dumb, powerless acquiescence, but with tender calls upon God, for His pity, and a victorious choice of His will over our own.

How manifold is that discipline of the Divine hand that furnishes occasion for the exercise of this submissive spirit! To one, God sends the loss of PROPERTY. From ease and affluence, he and his are dropped into the lap of *want*; a rough, harsh nurse for human frailty and dependence. Mute eyes, into which his eyes always smiled assurance of every fit indulgence, hang upon him for the comforts he can no longer

supply. Every day, in his better fortunes, he used to pray, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven!" Will he pray it now? His is not an exceptional experience. Many human feet walk that low narrow vale of poverty. Is he willing to walk there if God so appoint? Can he stand there, quite at the bottom of the valley, empty-handed,—with his dependent ones clinging to him,—and lifting his eyes to the great and good Sovereign, say yet,—"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt!"—"I have portion enough, when I have God only between me and extremities"? If he can, then he illustrates the lowliness and patience of Christlike Submission.

To another, God appoints the *loss of health*. He does not stand alone in life. There is a household group dependent on his industry. They fare well while he is able to toil. But he lies now, feeble and hollow-eyed, on his couch. What he had saved by his earnings in better days, is quickly consumed. He is not a producer any more, but a burden upon the family means. It looks dark ahead. There is no star of morning in his earthly sky. Come in, and stand by his bedside, and ask him, if he can leave himself and those dearer than self, cheerfully in God's hands. Ah, what a triumph of grace it will be, if he can look up steadfastly, and with this tender care weighing on his spirit, take from the lips of the Man of Sorrows this sustaining utterance, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt!"

And one is misunderstood, misappreciated, misrepresented; another is taxed as the price of a good conscience, with the alienation of friends and the scoff of foes, or is threatened with the loss of place and the frown of home; another follows to the sick-chamber and then

to the narrow house the dearest face and form of earth; another follows to a deeper and sadder grave a dead hope, a scheme of life so beautiful and stately, and strews over its cold corse more withered leaves than Autumn flings earthward from all her woods: "nevertheless,"—can we say it, under all these brooding clouds,—“not as I will, but as Thou wilt”?

Will you let HIM appoint all your earthly lot? Are you satisfied that He should arrange it as He pleases? When He says to you, “You have had pleasant and sparkling mixtures,—take now this bitter cup, because I will,”—do you assent, “Yes, Lord, as Thou wilt”? When He says, “You have been carefully and tenderly reared, and softly ministered unto,—come here now and grapple with rough, coarse need!”—do you, even as you shrink from that rude contact, reply, “Nevertheless, as Thou wilt”? When He says—“Your feet are tender, are they; come tread this flinty path,” and you step where He leads,—can you say, looking up, in uncomplaining acquiescence, “My feet are bleeding, Father; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt”?

My dear friends, here is the true secret of contentment. Here is our insurance for stormy and troublous times, for dark days, whatever breadth of sky they shroud in gloom, for panics, reverses, and ebb-tide in all hope and toil. In the strength of this, we may go beyond the old Scripture formula, “Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content”; for we may say, deprived of all things, “Thy will be done!” Nay, we may catch that most triumphant burst from an elder saint, out of the ashes of utter desolation, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

So, out of the gloom of the garden and the midnight, let a light shine along all our earthly paths, no matter how darkly shadowed; and ever, in deepest anguish, let that prostrate form teach us, repeating after His quivering lips, to say, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt!"

"**THY WILL BE DONE!**" In devious way
The hurrying stream of life may run;
Yet still our grateful hearts shall say,
"Thy will be done!"

"**THY WILL BE DONE!**" Tho' shrouded o'er
Our path with gloom, one comfort, one
Is ours: to breathe, while we adore,
"Thy will be done!"

XI.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”—1 Cor. ii. 14.

IN this humanity of ours we have two natures, and we live a double life. One is of *Sense*, the other of *Soul*. In the one we see and hear and touch and handle with fleshly organs and instruments. The objects with which we thus become conversant are material objects. In the other, the faculties that perceive, inquire, search, and apprehend are spiritual organs, and their objects are qualities, truths, ideas. The two have their distinct and widely-contrasted means of growth and nourishment. One must be fed and clad and warmed and sheltered and comforted as a material being. The other feeds on knowledge, is sheltered by protection from fear and sorrow, warmed by love and sympathy, comforted by hope. Their needs correspond accurately with these natural and spiritual appetencies. Their enjoyments range in the same contrasted spheres. Their alliances and distinctions are separated by even grander distances. One is brother of the clod and will presently crumble into dust. The other is a child of the Infinite, and its pulses of life will throb as long as the heart of God shall beat. As to the worth of these two natures, we need not undervalue the one to set forth the exalted and immeasurable price of the other.

The body is a piece of cunning and masterful workmanship, but it is of no finer, of no other clay than that which builds the frame of the beasts that perish. It has a higher dignity and grace by its erect and balanced attitude—its face looking heavenward, not earthward—and chiefly by its wondrous partnership with an indwelling intelligence. It is this which crowns its brow with the regal diadem of thought, which wreathes its lips with the sweet grace of smiles, and veils its frame from head to foot with delicacy and refinement. This bond of union is the exaltation of the flesh. Its true honor is that it is a servant of the soul, an instrument and helper of the spiritual. This is that real manhood which is filial to God, made in the Divine image, a spark of immortal life, a flame to burn on when stars and suns are ashes. The one abides for a season, and then there is nothing of pain or pleasure that can affect it any more forever. The other has an undying capacity for joy and sorrow, and will have an experience of this or that as an eternal portion.

Notwithstanding these strange diversities and these broad contrasts, there is between these two natures a close and lively sympathy. One can not droop and the other be unaffected. Whatever enters the domain of one to bless or injure, the other also, for the most part, counts it in like manner an enemy or a friend. And yet, in their fortunes and condition there is often the most wonderful contrast of all. The body may be poor as the poorest and humblest, be coarsely lodged, scantily fed, and draped in want, and the soul boast itself an heir of imperishable riches, revel in daily plenty, feast on joys that never satiate and that are inexhaustible, and look with glistening eyes upon a hope

bright as a morning star, and as surely ushering in the glory and splendor of an unsetting day.

Now, with some men the *first* and the *lower nature*, the life of sense, is all in all. The grand questions are those which the senses ask: "What shall I eat?" "What shall I drink?" "Wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Their planning and toiling are for the coronation of these earthly desires, the improving the condition, and the hoarding for the comfort of the body. The body *has* its imperative need. There are in it a hunger and a thirst which will not be denied. But its relation is always that of a servant, and its care can never properly or wisely be a final end, as for its own sake; but it is always to be regarded as a stepping-stone to a grander end—the highest welfare and the largest usefulness of the interior and nobler life. There are those who become so absorbed in this material care that the other, with all that is involved in its problems, ceases to press their thoughts and engage their attention. It is exactly and literally true, that they live for the present. The changeful tides of joy and sorrow with them are the fluctuations of their earthly prosperity. The things that affect this interest are near and impressive objects of vision. They tower up as great mountains. The things that concern the other interest are dim, hazy, and far off. The one class of objects are clear and sharp to sight; the other dreamy, shadowy, unreal to faith. Every appeal from this natural life that concerns its famishing and enriching finds the whole manhood keen and sensitive. The appeals from that invisible sphere of being are so remote and subdued that the ear altogether fails to catch them. It becomes, in fact, with this devotee of the visible and the present well-nigh impos-

sible to appreciate or understand the pressure which is sometimes urged upon him from that other hidden life. The objects of chief regard in that shadowy sphere are invisible to him; the matters at stake not among those he is pursuing as his most stimulating prizes; the questions held to be of such momentous consequence not the questions he is accustomed to raise. In this whole direction his perceptions and his sensibilities are quite blind, dull, and paralyzed, while on the other side he is most intensely alive and earnest. So that the natural man finds himself at length incapable of apprehending the things which are spiritually discerned.

I am not speaking of the gross sensualist who has imbruted his whole nature in the animal degradation of shameless lusts, and who can hardly say whether there is anything in him that differs from the "spirit of a beast which goeth downward"; nor of the dullard who gazes vacantly about him and leers and winks, satisfied with food, and sleep, and idly basking in the sun; but of the intelligent and acute man of the world, who devotes his intelligence and his acuteness wholly to the life that now is. The sphere of his living, and thinking, and feeling is that which bounds these earthly continents and oceans. The sky that bends over him is this canopy that gives him light for his day's work, and curtains the couch where his weariness reposes, awaiting thus its fresh anointing for to-morrow's task. He may be an intellectual man, and his daily labor may not be in the open fields of nature, nor upon the problems of trade, but in the fields of science, upon the problems of art, invention, and discovery. He recognizes, indeed, other forces than the muscles of the arm, other walks than those of the mar-

ket-place, the harvest plain, and the vineyard slope; but still his world is Nature, his divinities those that sit enthroned in her mystic halls; he feeds the lamp of his devotion with earthly oil; his proudest joy and richest reward are when he shouts aloud "Eureka!" to his fellow-laborers through the dim laboratory of earthly science. Beyond the crystal walls that inclose the range of his studies all is emptiness or "foolishness."

He may even be a *humane* man and a *philanthropic* man, and yet have no citizenship and no interest in the *spiritual*, his humanities and philanthropies taking as their burden and their care visible and sensible sufferings; the pains that afflict the body; the famine that consumes its strength; the chill that creeps along its veins; the servitude that bows its neck and exacts its sweat with stripes. The spiritual conditions and relations of this sufferer—the spiritual life, as related to himself and to every other man—may still be a "terra incognita," an unknown land, amid whose dusky continents he never explores, and from which no arresting voices ever call to his hearing.

What we say and what we wish to illustrate concerning this type of character is that it has cultivated the senses, and is quick and vital on the side of its being that looks toward the visible, the sensible, the present; but the other faculties of discerning that look off upon invisible and eternal realities lie dormant, torpid, and undeveloped. The material and all that directly affects it lie close to its understanding and its fountains of emotion. The spiritual can not be discerned nor comprehended. The life that is vital and intense in that direction and in regard to those interests is a mystery to this mind. The things that are natural are in clear,

sunny, and sharp relief beneath his eye; the things that are spiritual are hidden behind a veil through which no glance of his pierces. *Naturally*, gifted with most penetrating eyesight; *spiritually*, blind.

Test him. Let this man look in upon one of the sacraments of the Church. There is a simple table spread with bread and wine only. But the covenanted ones hasten to be present. The aged and the infirm will not fail of this. The ranks, not always full, are full at this feast. There is a sweet and solemn hush upon the scene. A holy Sabbath calm, almost like the calm of that heavenly rest which shall never be broken, broods, as with visible dovelike wings, the assembly. There are evidently working in many hearts deep and strong emotions, whose tidal depths and currents stir all the soul. How little this observer can understand of this scene! The absorbing interest, the intense still life pulsing through the silent throng. So silent are they that he might suppose them lost in slumber, only the attitude confutes that supposition; and in the eye, if he would gaze, eyes that are half-curtained by the drooping lids, he would discern such far-retreating vistas of rapt contemplation, as should convince him that the mind was never more busy and absorbed. But how mysterious it is to him! There is certainly nothing very splendid in the entertainment. As an earthly banquet, he has often seen it surpassed. There are no distinguished guests present as far as he discerns. It is only their family circle. What lends such an interest to the occasion? What sweeps with such a wondrous touch the chords of their hearts?

Ah, there is a presence there for which he has no vision; there is an interest the tenderness and force of which are

enigmas to him; he sees not the ranges their subdued yet rejoicing spirits are taking over the field of memory, and the far past of sacred history. As they withdraw themselves more and more from the senses, sitting as though they were present in the body, but absent in the Spirit, he sees not what steep adventurous flights faith makes up through the parting arch and within the golden gates, and out along the mighty avenues of Immortality. Simply that which is visible is what he reads and all that he reads. But the key to what is thought and felt is the invisible, the spiritual, and this is hidden from his gaze.

Let him single out some faces of the crowd and inspect them more narrowly. There is one in which the tide of joy has risen to its full height, yet there is no overflow. It is like a stream full to the level of its banks, but keeping the channel still. The face is not laughing nor smiling. It is *transfigured*. As though a radiance from within, having filled the chambers of the soul with bright floods, were about to make the flesh translucent. What is the fountain of that radiance? What is the happy thought, the mute confession of which can not quite be suppressed? Has any great piece of good fortune happened to this man? Is he thinking of the accumulation of earthly gains? Is he anticipating a successful bargain to be closed to-morrow? How little can the observer know what sky is bending over that glad heart—what faces look out of it into his upward gaze, from what nether springs, which no frost can touch and which never know a drought, that joy is ever welling up!

There is another face that wears a distinct outward signature. The calm is all broken up. There has been perhaps

a struggle to maintain it. But some pent-up elemental forces have burst their bonds. The lines of the countenance are working. The tears are running quietly but copiously from under the brimming eyelids. The lip wears a strange mingling of expression, as though compounded of a smile and a sigh. Now the emotion seems to subside, and now it surges up again as though a wave had retreated and then lifting its crest once more returned as with the whole great deep heaving with it. Our observer looks on. "What's the matter there?" "Been bereaved perhaps!" No, that's not it. "Guilty of some great wrong then and his conscience troubles him." Well, he may possibly feel that he is a great offender, but before his fellow-men his escutcheon is stainless. "Some one has wounded and abused him—his feelings have been hurt!" Ah, my friend, you don't understand it. That emotion must remain a mystery to you. It is not sad. It is one of the sweetest luxuries the soul can feel. There are such thoughts of the Saviour's goodness, of His gentleness and patience, of His interceding love and His victorious grace, there are such near manifestations now of His presence—such a rising up of the whole soul to salute Him, and to lay its penitential and grateful offerings at His feet—such a bond, oh, such a bond of unutterably tender and sacred friendship between those two, that the heart can no more keep its cool equanimity than the sea can keep down its tides when the orbs of heaven roll over it.

This natural man may stand by, or sit or kneel when an earnest Christian prays. The nature of this service is obvious enough. The outward demonstration is intelligible. There are closed eyes to shut out the world, there is the audible

voice that other hearts may join in the utterance, there are reverent and affectionate names addressed to the unseen Jehovah. But in what a spiritual world that ardent soul is moving, what other vision it is that looks up and looks out upon glorious realities, what a light shines round about it, what a blessed and conscious gravitation draws it toward that celestial center of its hopes and its joys, only one who has had experience of it can know or say.

Two young men separate on the eve of the Church prayer-meeting. One is going to that meeting. The other is about to make a call upon some pleasant family circle. He invites his comrade to call with him, and is rather surprised to find how strong is the attraction that draws him the other way. Is there any comparison between the pleasantness of the two? Can it be as interesting and delightful to sit down for a dull hour among solemn people who are prosing to one another about the love of God, or the attractions and the obligations of the Christian life, to vary the same only by droning through a prayer or singing a psalm-tune, as to meet the bright faces of that other circle, to chat with lively wits and graceful culture, to hear the most exquisite and passionate music, and to feel bathed in the refining and stimulating atmosphere of an elegant home? This one can not conceive that his friend can really prefer the other; that it more delights, enriches, and elevates his whole being, and that his soul craves it and can not be persuaded to miss it. The real attractions there are only spiritually discerned.

Carry to this natural man an appeal from a case of want. There is a family who have no bread, no fire, no proper shelter, no warm clothing, no profitable labor, no means but the idle strength of their unoccupied hands. That case

touches his heart at once. His sensibilities are deeply stirred. He is moved to bestow without delay what relief he can. He would forego almost any personal gratification to put some better aspect upon the forlorn destitution of this wretched household. He thanks you for the opportunity and would do the like again. For he is a thoroughly humane man.

But lead up before him now another object of your care. He looks him over. What's the trouble here? Everything seems comfortable—a smiling face, the good things of this life in sufficient measure, hope, peace, plenty. What occasion for solicitude here? Well, *you* are not looking upon the outward man. But all is so dark and desolate within—there is no care for the soul, no apparent consciousness of its immortality, no acquaintance with the Word of God, no prayer, no repenting, no clinging to Jesus. All this interior state may be true, perhaps, of the poor family just relieved. It is true of unnumbered families of our human kindred who are sitting in the darkness of spiritual night. They are famishing for want of the bread that comes down from heaven, athirst for the living water, unsheltered from the wrath of God, portionless for eternity. Why is not our generous friend excited over this destitution? Is not this need as real as the other? Is not the soul more precious than the mortal body? Is it of first importance that the flesh be comforted, and a matter of no great moment or urgency that the spirit be brought to Christ for His great salvation? Oh, that these pitiful eyes, kindling and filling with such tenderness over the bodily wants, were opened as by a prophet and as by a touch divine, to look upon a parched and starving soul, upon the dreary way over which

it travels on, upon the blank desolation of its unprovided future, upon this one imperial, transcendent care that it be prepared to meet God in peace. But it does not see that. That is only spiritually discerned.

So all words and ideas that relate to his own character and prospects are interpreted by the natural man naturally, not spiritually. Honesty is a quality between man and man. It has no reference to the claims of God. "Fortunate" is an expression referring to earthly gain. "Rich and poor" exhaust their meaning within the limits of the earthly condition. Uprightness, integrity, fidelity, concern the principles of human intercourse—the discharge of trusts to which men only are parties, and not the state of the heart toward the great Supreme One.

Oh, THAT OTHER LIFE, above and beyond this, which runs parallel with it; that *other sky*, stretching its grand cope above this little visible dome; that Heaven of bliss, that world of woe, that God and Saviour and Sacrifice, that warning and all-preserving record, that day of final judgment, that dread and fact of retribution, that welcome and that sentence, "Come!" "Depart!" Would, oh, would to God that all these blind eyes were opened, these deaf ears unstopped, these earth-bound spirits could part the cords of their bondage, and these dim shadows of the spiritual life become to every one of us near, solid, weighty, and all-controlling realities!

XII.

RELIGION AND NATURAL AFFECTIONS.

"If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple."—LUKE xiv. 26.

WHO, then, can be saved? Obedience to this strange and harsh demand does violence to the deepest and strongest sensibilities of our souls, the most controlling nurture of our whole life. This condition of discipleship, if we must take it literally, is against the mighty voice of Nature. "Father" and "Mother" are sacred names. They are enshrined in our heart of hearts. In childhood there is nothing beside on earth so near, so dear, and so venerated; and in age we turn back to those well-remembered forms, with all that is tenderest and holiest in our affections clustering around them and clinging to them still. And who is the "wife" of our bosom, that we should come to hate her? Have we taken her from all other shelter, within our encircling arms, and made our breast her home and pillow, only to spurn her away? Our "children," *can* we forget whose life it is that veins their flesh, that mantles their cheeks, and looks out of their fond eyes into ours? "Brother" and "sister," our cradle-mates, twin buds with us on the parent stock, earliest confidants of our hearts, are they to be to us as strangers—nay, as foes? Hate our own life! But the strongest instinct the creating hand has implanted

in our being is the instinct of self-preservation. Crime, misery, and despair may cease to value life and long to barter it away for coveted insensibility, but can any healthful mind despise and hate life? Can any dutiful spirit cast away such a trust?

And this Scripture demand is just a specimen requisition. There are others in other directions equally sweeping, revolutionary, and unnatural. The religious life imposes terms that seem to necessitate a radical subversion of our nature, the shattering of our original constitutional structure, and a reconstruction, with all our present sentiments, instincts, and propensities left out. A change of disposition is a credible conversion. To cease to do evil and learn to do well is a regeneration that is reasonable and practical. But to blot out the domestic affections; to ignore all the appeals of the natural ties; to suppress the aspirations that seem to be the native wings of the soul, and to extinguish the tender sentiments that are the vital throbbings of the heart; to tread back into dust and nothingness the desires that spring from seeds of a Divine sowing, for elevation, advancement, knowledge, power, approbation, enjoyment—who can be born again by such an utter dissolution of his former self? This is to become “a new creature,” in the sense of becoming constitutionally another creature, another style and sort of being, not in spirit, temper, and aim, but in the make of the soul, in the powers and forces of nature. This is irrational, we say; impracticable, and all such exhortations fall idly to the ground. How can a man pull down the pillars of his being, change the whole model, set up the fallen columns and lift again the shattered dome by some new laws and to some new order of architecture; or, if he could

do that, retain through and beyond such a process any consciousness of identity?

I believe there is just here a real puzzle with many minds as to the conditions of Christian discipleship. The Gospel requisitions, they complain, are either unintelligible, or, if they mean what they seem to mean, they are beyond both human reason and human power. The protest which I have argued is on many a lip and in many a heart. The gateway of the religious life, if such be its inexorable limitations, must strip us of our proper manhood before ever we can pass through it. Then why are we furnished with such a manhood, or being so furnished, why are we required to relinquish it in order to be saved?

Now let us consider more carefully the requisitions thus arraigned, and see if they are open to the exceptions taken. We are to consider the relation of the Gospel requirements to our natural affections and sentiments. We may begin with the instance of our Scripture. Here, if anywhere, the objector feels that he stands on solid ground. He can not reasonably be required to trample these sacred natural affections out of his soul. It were monstrous, inhuman, a fall even below instinctive brute tenderness, to turn with the rancor of hate against the bosom that nourished him, the arms that first sheltered him. How can the gentle Saviour, author and lover of humanity, insist upon that?

. Consider, then, that this sentiment of hatred, whatever it shall prove to be, is *the sentiment of a Christian heart*. It is the state of mind which one is to cherish in coming to Christ, and which he is to continue to cherish as an accepted disciple. It can not, then, well be the unfilial and rancorous feeling which a willful and disobedient son visits upon a

parent's head. It is not the violent reaction of a spirit curbed strongly from vice and excesses, and resenting and hating such bonds. It is not the spiteful bitterness of one whose boyhood has been kept under a bondage grievous to his corrupt inclinations, and who, in the strengthening of his muscles, and his passions, and his will, has risen up to beat down the control which has been enforced so long. It is, in none of the relations named in our Scripture, a willful and wanton desire to inflict injury or impose neglect and suffering on any flesh or sensibility of kindred life; for obviously *none of these states of mind can characterize the spirit of the contrite sinner who is seeking Jesus*. It is a sentiment which that weeping penitent may retain at the moment he is pleading, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." This fact must stamp it as something very different from a piece of injustice, cruelty, and hard-heartedness, against which Nature herself cries out, and start the conviction that it is a state of the affections produced by some relation of those natural ties to the claims and person of Jesus, and somehow consistent with the utmost tenderness and humanity.

This suggestion receives force from the varying language of Luke and of Matthew upon the point we have before us. With the latter the interdict runs, "He that loveth father or mother *more than me*, is not worthy of me." It is evident here that the natural ties are brought into comparison merely with the claims of Jesus. It is not required in this view to hate father and mother. They may be loved. They may be loved fondly and tenderly. But there is another whose claim is higher and holier, who must be loved supremely, must be the first choice of the heart, must carry the affec-

tions above all other objects of endearment. If He be sought with an offer of love less in intensity and degree than that which is bestowed upon our fleshly kindred, He Himself is put below them ; they are honored with a higher place, and a stronger attachment than that of which He is deemed worthy ; and such an offer, because it misplaces, misappreciates and dishonors Him, He will not accept. The wooing which is worthy of Him, the only homage of the heart to which He will give Himself, must offer a higher and warmer love than that which we lay even at the parental feet. And to this we consent. This language of Matthew does not offend us. It does exalt Jesus. It puts a glorious crown on His head. It allows Him to stand amid the tenderest relations of life, to lay His hand upon the circle of household affections and say as of His right, "I must be loved more than these." But it does not forbid the human love and turn it to hate.

Now, if Matthew speaks of these earthly friends as *compared* with Christ, and so urges comparative degrees of affection, why can we not understand that Luke speaks of the same members of the household as *opposed* to Christ and so enjoins another sentiment ? Then the hating means more than a comparative and inferior style of loving. It recognizes these human kindred not as inferior in just claims and willing attractiveness to the Lord Jesus, but as antagonistic to Him, as rivals that seek to absorb our affection, as tempters luring the loving homage of the soul from Him to whom it is due. If even a father or a mother come in between our soul and Christ, if they would dissuade us from going to Jesus, if they hinder our prayers and our devotion, if they lay their commands upon us that we re-

frain from the service of Christ, and bid us by all the sacred authority of their name, blaspheme that other holier name, we are to forget in that that they are our parents, to look upon them as enemies of our Lord, as sinfully blocking our way to His feet, as selfishly and wickedly monopolizing and controlling our affections, and to address them as the Saviour addressed that disciple foremost in zeal and ardor, as though his name and discipleship were utterly forgotten, and all such tender expressions as the intercourse of years had witnessed between them were retracted for the stern and sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The beloved of the family, if they hold us back from our adorable friend and Lord, the master of our heart, are to be treated as any other obstacle that hinders our approach to those waiting arms. Such obstacles we are to spurn from our path. Whatever hands cling to us to detain us when Jesus calls, we are to strike down from us, to unclasp their hold though they were the hands which our infant palm first touched, which first led our tottering steps.

Whatever interpose to keep us from a disciple's love and duty is sinful. Sin must be hated. The sins that separate us from those wounded feet, our souls have a right to hate, ought to hate. We do hate them when we have a disciple's affection. A father may ambitiously and sinfully seek to constrain his child. A mother may make her own vanity and pride in a daughter the object of her regard instead of the union of that dear one to the heavenly wooer; and in this, father and mother are verily guilty and the filial spirit must resist this unrighteous interposition and by whatever needed force break from these detaining bonds.

The hate, then, which is thus felt is not exercised as

toward a father or a mother. It is not the father that is hated. It is not the mother whom we repel. It is the tempter, the evil art and influence, that draws us away from the One altogether lovely. The fact that these misleaders are the parents of our being can not override or palliate that other fact that they contend against the pleading voice of Christ. Their sin is the more heinous, their interposition the more criminal and unnatural, that they take advantage of a relationship so persuasive and influential to lure us from the only Saviour; to magnify their word above His who gave us life and then gave His own to redeem us from eternal death. If they insist that our love for them is to be the paramount sentiment of our souls, that we can not give our hearts to Jesus because of their more sacred claim, they are not wisely urging a parent's prerogative, they are setting themselves up as imperious rivals of the one only Being who has the right to say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength"; and such impiety, so dishonorable to our sovereign Lord, so detrimental to our spiritual fortunes, it is right for us to hate. What if there were one in earthly relations upon whom we sought to bestow our heart, who was every way worthy of our love and trust, and another, say even a sister or a mother, laid plans so to detain and absorb our affection, so to divert our homage, that we could carry no offering of our entire affection to that chosen one, how should we be likely to feel about such selfish interference? Nay more, what if our affections were already pledged, sacred vows had been exchanged and we were no longer free to withhold or direct our hearts, and against this rightful claim, the first upon our soul which any human

name could possess, some household voice were to plead its own demand and seek to separate spirits so covenanted, it would not be strange if our souls should gird themselves to resist this voice and with whatever emphatic needed firmness and positiveness, to contend against it, and we might use strong and conclusive language in such protest. But our hearts do belong to Christ. His claim is righteous and supreme. Then our first duty and tenderness, the fullest and sweetest services of our love are to be paid. Any opposing force, any hitherto exclusive monopolizing of our heart, seeking still to retain their supremacy, are wronging us and our Master; and dropping the tender titles by which we used to call them, we may bid them, as perilous foes to our eternal peace, "*awaunt from our sight,*" "*get behind us.*"

If this be hating them, it is not a monstrous and unnatural sentiment. It is they who are acting an unnatural part, and are to be treated, not as friends, but as enemies—ours and Christ's.

There is another key to this passage, by the aid of which we may discriminate as to its proper significance. It is found in the clause, "*and his own life also.*" "HIS OWN." It is the autocratic claim which is to be denied and put down. The natural heart pleads "Life—this life which beats in my heart, pulses in my veins, and permeates brain and frame, is mine. It is my own inalienable possession. It is mine to use, mine to enjoy, mine to enrich, mine to lavish. When any one threatens it, he threatens what is mine. When any one lays a finger upon it, he assails what is mine. Oh, how dear a treasure! Let me guard it, let me be jealous for it, let me endow it and replenish it with good, all for my own gratification and happiness." It is *the love of our own*

in our being that puts such a price upon it in our eyes. Life is sacred and precious because it is the citadel of our conscious self. When we feel and when we say in this spirit, *our own life*, we build the dreadful throne of self-idolatry ; we have crowned and sceptered a rival to Jehovah ; we have installed in castled security a Lord and Master of our being to whom all our powers and all our activities are to pay tribute, and that sole potentate is *Self*. This is the sentiment we are to quarrel with and hate and banish. We are to renounce our own selfish appropriation of life's vigor and glory and joy. It is instinctive to love life and to preserve it. But in our character as intellectual and moral beings we are to rise higher than the instincts. Life is not our own. Its uses, its forces, its joys are not treasures of ours. We are not our own. We belong, by creation, preservation, and costly purchase, to God. Life, in its power of thought, in the ranges of the intellect ; Life, in the strength of its deathless affections and the going forth of the heart ; Life, in the lordly will asserting its sovereign choices, in the tender sensibilities, the gushing sympathies, the command of sight and sense and speech and motion, the gathering unto it out of all the elements of earth's goodly levies, *is not ours, but His who made us and bought us*. This self-assertion, when we say "*my own life*," contradicts that Divine testimony, "Ye are not your own !" This usurping, autocratic setting up of *Self* is what we are to hate. He who would be a disciple must not, indeed, despise the boon of existence or disparage the processes by which his earthly life is nourished and made strong, and madly cast that life to destruction, but *his own*—that element of self-investment in life—*his own life*, as arrogating and appropriating its beauty and its revenue

to himself, he may and must *hate* if he come fully and completely to Jesus.

This, then, is the word and the thought that are to be transferred to those relations so near to our identity. It is not hostility to a father and malignant feelings toward a mother which the young disciple is to cherish, but his own supreme claim to those parental ministrations which he is to abandon, renounce, and forswear for Christ's sake. What is a father and what is a mother to him? Not beings over whose unfathomable fountains of natural tenderness he sits absorbed and wondering, as at some surpassing marvel of the Divine wisdom and goodness. It is as a source of comfort and kindness to him, as counselors in his ignorance, helpers in his weakness, comforters in his sorrow, protectors in his danger, guardians of all his imperiled interests and hopes, he prizes them. He calls them *his* as they wait upon him, make him more secure, more furnished, more happy. He sits thus as himself the final end of all this contribution to his growth, convenience, and enjoyment. Now, if he become a disciple, this style of gathering tribute is to cease. He is no more to call even father and mother by exclusive title *his*. He has no longer exclusive rights and personal possessions. The selfish investment in the dear ties of his being he is to cast away, to hate that word by which with an odious emphasis he has spoken of *his* father and *his* mother, *his* children and friends, and to make war upon all this self-indulgence and self-gratification in life's sweet alliances. Surely this is right. It is not mysterious. It is not monstrous. It is not unnatural in the highest and best conception of Nature's bounds. It is the dethroning of *self*, the abdication of personal dominion, making our will in Christ's

favor, giving over all to Him, and turning the full current of our soul's opposition and antagonism against the old cunning idolatry which made Nature's plea supreme with us. It is only carrying out in this particular department of the natural affections the universal, unchanging demand, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Meanwhile this demand, thus understood, provides for the proper and even the highest exercise of the natural affections. What we surrender as ours we receive back as precious trusts from our Lord. His name is written upon them. His approving sanction, adjusting anew the relation, makes it dearer and stronger than ever. Life is more sacred and eventful, its golden moments are of infinitely higher worth, because it is our day of work for the great Master whom we love. We love it, cherish it, and lavish it for its new uses with a recognition of its alliance with His glory and the unfading joys of ransomed souls. Our kindred are loved in Him. The whole investment, including the beloved objects and the heart's tenderness for them, is transferred to Him. Our own separate right and interest there being discarded, we look only upon these household forms as reflections of His goodness, channels of His beneficence to us, strands by which our life, as consecrated to Jesus, is braided into the life of humanity, and may hallow, serve, and enrich the influences and history of our time.

XIII.

ADMINISTERING REBUKE.

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend. . . .”—PROV. xxvii. 6.

THE surgeon’s knife draws blood ; but it is a friendly hand that holds it. It cuts out *the cancer* eating its way to the vitals. It removes the shattered limb which Nature could not heal ; which would have dragged the whole body with it into the grave.

Faithful Rebuke makes the mental nerves quiver, wrings the spirit, sometimes causes the heart to bleed ; but its object is to slay, not us, but our faults ; to divide off from us unwholesome practices, to heal by dismemberment.

But, as not every surgeon is skillful or careful, some marring nature more than mending, so they who administer rebuke sometimes wound without healing.

It is a most difficult thing to do well. Few social or Christian duties are more delicate and trying, demand a finer skill, or exact more grace in the performer.

Not every coarse spirit who hastens to the offender under a resolve to “free his mind,” determined to let him know “what one man thinks of him,” testifying to all concerned that he is not afraid “to speak out,” and “to call things by their right names,” is fit for the work upon which he adventures. And yet it is a duty that must often be discharged. In very many relations of life we are challenged in all honor

and fidelity to its performance. As fellow-Christians it is implied in our covenants with one another. And special considerations in a given case make it imperative with us personally.

It is, then, a question of great practical moment, *How Rebuke is to be administered?*

To discuss this question fairly and intelligently, we need to conceive distinctly at the outset the *proper object of administering Rebuke*. Certainly that object is not to vent spite, to drive home a barbed arrow to the heart of the trespasser, to feed old grudges, to triumph in the confusion and mortification of a rival, to indulge any ungenerous sentiment or malicious feeling. It may be sometimes the vindication of a cause or person maligned. It may be the answer of one wrongfully set upon, in self-defense against his persecutor. As we have to do with it in the relation of brethren and friends, it will be with us, for the most part, *the self-conviction and reformation of the offender*. The instances are not many in our common life, certainly very few in our intercourse as fellow-disciples, in which we are called upon to undertake the severities and fidelities of Rebuke for any other leading object than that of *the good of the patient*.

Let me say, then, as my first practical point, that Rebuke should seldom be administered *in immediate connection with the offense*. The reprover is seldom in a proper frame of mind then to bestow the reproof. The offender is seldom in a proper state to receive it. The circumstances are seldom favorable to a happy effect. Both minds, all the minds interested, will most likely have distorted and one-sided views of the merits of the case. Time is needed for the calmness and composure that shall clarify the judgment, the subsidence of emotion

that shall rectify the feelings, that recovery of the self-guard which shall wisely control the tongue. On one of those days in domestic life in which, perhaps, from the pressure of the special labor assigned to it, everybody's temper is crisp and short, there is a slight jar between mistress and servant. The part of the mansion occupied by the mistress has not received on this morning its usual share of attention, or the midday meal is badly served, or some little one strolls into peril or mischief, unwatched of its appointed guardian. The lady calls the servant to account. The servant appears, *flushed* with the severe toil of the morning, with the unwelcome interruption of the routine duties, with the hasty summons to answer for misdemeanors. The cause of complaint is laid before her. Her voice in reply is not soft and temperate. In both language and manner she fails of a proper respect. The lady can not put up with insolence and passion. She must assert her dignity and authority. If she can not otherwise check the unruly spirit she has raised, she must issue her edict of banishment. It is promptly accepted. And silence, desertion, and the annoyance of a new enlistment succeed the storm. *That was not the time to call the neglecter to account.* Her blood was in too rapid circulation; the sea of excitement within her too billowy and crested—a northeast gale blowing over it. Words of chiding, added to the pressure of the day's tax, would be more than she could bear. Had the thing been passed without notice *then*, and on the morrow, or the day following, when the fever had gone down, and the pulses were calm and the temper cool, and the general aspect of the domestic regions tidy and pleasant, the lady had brought forward the delinquency that had given her trouble, she would have won her victory gracefully, easily, and with beneficent results.

Sometimes higher up in the domestic sphere there comes a day when the sky is sombre and the spirit in sympathy with it. Some unlovely temper seems to have taken possession of some youthful bosom there,—a son's or a daughter's. A word of parental advice volunteered upon any not very grave matter, the costume for the day, a project for the evening, an outfit for a walk or ride, the occupation of the hour, delay in preparing for some stage of the day's progress that approaches with the next chime of the clock, falls upon the heart of the listener like a drop of water in boiling fat. The restiveness of the spirit expresses itself in lowering looks, or a gesture of impatience, or impetuous locomotion, or perhaps in most undutiful words. The whole of it is a most undutiful demonstration. Your suggestion was wise and prudent; if it were not, it was well-intended, prompted by affectionate carefulness and tender good-will. Though it were unwelcome, judged needless, particularly annoying, it should have been received with respect and deference. Your first emotion at the excitement produced is perhaps one of surprise. You had no thought of kindling such a heat. You can not suppress an exclamation of astonishment. That is still more unfortunate. For when one is losing self-command nothing completes the disaster more surely than to have it said, "You are getting angry!" The *red* heat is becoming *white* there. Your parental honor is now at hazard. You can not acquiesce in being so imperiously set aside. You can not pass over the offence unnoticed. All subordination is at an end, if things go on so. You feel that you must assert yourself at once, before the matter go further, and deal with that perversity on the spot. HAD YOU NOT BETTER WAIT? If the rebuke you are about

to administer is just the thing, well conceived and calculated to do good, it will keep. The stomach of the patient is too irritable to take the dose just now. Perhaps you might not weigh it out with a steady hand. As to the assertion of dignity, there is peril of some loss of dignity in having *a scene*. Silence and reserve are wonderfully conservative of dignity. Your dignity does not rest upon a very solid foundation, if against such a breeze you must stretch out your hand so nervously to bolster it up. The morrow dawns, and the clouds have cleared away. The sun shines. Rebellion has put off its cloudy look. Smiles play where there were shadows yesterday. Watch now your opportunity. In the calmest hour of this serene weather lay your hand gently on that other younger hand. With loving seriousness look upon the eyes that are already cast down and veiled with drooping lids, and say all that is in your heart. The guilt and danger of cherishing such feelings as those which gave you so much pain you may faithfully show. You have the beloved offender at advantage. Conscience has already been at work before you. Your own feelings appear all the deeper and stronger, because they have kept themselves alive till another sun arose. Your first forbearance is now appreciated, seen not to be a weakness, to carry in it no promise of final impunity, consistent with the most settled purpose, and noble in its self-control and kindly generosity. Now the tears start on those drooping lashes, and humble words give the utterance of an humble spirit,—“I was very wrong.” The rebuke sinks down deep in the heart, never to be forgotten, and you have won your child. Certainly this is better than to have fought the battle out the preceding day. You would have conquered, but not in the same

way, not with the same weapons, not with the same subduing effect upon that disloyal temper. A resentful memory would have hung over the battle-field like a sulphurous cloud as often as those young eyes looked back. I am not saying that you should yield, at the time, the point originally in debate. It may be very important, for manifold reasons, that your suggestions should be made instantly imperative. But you can do that without *trying the case* as one of filial disrespect. You can say calmly, "It must be as I wish, my child!" and yet not utter one word of reproof. The great secret of administering rebuke wisely and impressively in most instances, lies very much in this one simple precaution of *Time*; it includes so much more than mere waiting.

There are, doubtless, cases where the Rebuke must be immediate or not at all, or not effective. You hear some good name maligned by foul or bitter lips, or some good cause berated indecently by a bold-faced Calumniator, who seems to think he can look down all protest with cool and brazen impudence. You are not likely to meet him again; at least not in the presence to whose ears his slanders are mouthed. You are greatly pained that such representations should go forth uncontradicted and such malicious injustice carry it off with a high hand. You feel competent to silence the Defamer, to turn the tables upon him, to expose the meanness of his motives, and to vindicate the character which has been assailed. *It may be* worth while to do it. And yet you may have more than once in your life repented that you did not bottle up your indignation and your eloquence. Still, if you judge it well to speak, take a glass of ice-water first, then do your work thoroughly, dissecting your subject

till no Anatomy can put him together again—as *he was before*.

I offer another practical suggestion; *Rebuke should seldom be administered in the presence of others*. The illustration just given will perhaps serve to indicate a class of exceptions to this remark. But in most cases, when we deliver our admonition in the hearing of third parties, we bring two distracting forces to bear upon the mind of the culprit—the sense of mortification, and the stress of the uttered reproof. The mind is not free to listen profitably to what we have to say, when it is called off to weigh continually the effect of our words upon the judgment of the bystanders. It will arm itself against conviction and concession, so long as there are lookers-on. It will feel resentful toward us for mistiming our rebuke so grossly, and inflicting the needless pain of its publicity. It will regard itself as in some sense challenged to self-vindication, though in the wrong, by the very fact that we have so inconsiderately created a kind of tribunal, before which we have put the defendant on trial. While so aggrieved and offended at our *want of delicacy*--to make the best of it—if not our *indifference to its sensitiveness*, it is in no state to receive our admonition favorably, lay it to heart and profit by it. Rather go with the offender into solitude; let no other ear catch a syllable of what you say; let there be no eye but yours on the changes of his countenance, and you have reconciled him to the circumstances in which you address him, and are almost sure, so far, of a candid and patient hearing. This caution is salutary for domestic life as well as social. Unless there is some greater good to be gained by producing a common impression, the parent will do well to

give his chidings in secret, and in all ordinary cases, one servant should never be blamed in the presence of another.

Again, *Rebuke should never be administered in ANGER.* It is likely, if dictated by wounded and heated feeling, to be excessive in some direction. The judgment is not *cool*, so not clear; and the proper measure of blame can not be fairly estimated. It loses force as rebuke by taking upon itself the color of passion. It is no longer calm and weighty as a judicial sentence, or tender and fervid as the plea of weeping affection; it is rough with tempestuous energy; it assumes an aspect of self-avenging, and excites in return only feelings of its own kind. That *parental authority* that expresses itself in furious demonstrations, sharp voices that almost literally "take the ears off," a rush and a grasp, or a push and a blow, dethrones itself in the very act of its assertion. It ceases to be sacred. It reposes no longer upon the undeniable prerogative of nature, or the sanction of Divine Law. Its effect is not penitence and reformation, but only the palsy of fear. *Self-control* is, next to Justice, the kingliest attribute in all penal administration. And no rebuke, in any relation, that of friends and brethren, is weighty or useful, that fails in this infirmity of temper. Be sure of yourself before you set out upon such an errand; and if there be the least leaven of personal unkindness in your heart; if secretly, your meaning is to open a channel for all your pent bile, if you say aloud to your own outward ear, "It is my Christian duty, and I must not shrink," and very softly to your inward self—"I will give him what he deserves this time"—you are going in a bad spirit to do an evil work.

Again, Rebuke should not be given in *sharp and biting*

speech. Scarce any weaponry of wounding rankles like a *word.* The thoughts return to it, and repeat it over and over, and brood it with a cherishing and bitter memory. He who can say all that is in his heart, by way of reproof without using offensive words, has learned one secret of rebuking both faithfully and profitably. We can bear almost any reach of faithful severity in chiding, if only the manner and the language do not wound. Rebuke must often be severe *in matter*; the offense may be very serious and grave, fidelity and honesty may demand very plain and pungent dealing; but the more this is true, the more careful should we be of our manner and our words. The most trying reproof should obviously be the most considerate, delicate, and tender in the vehicle which conveys it. As a general rule only the severity of *matter* belongs rightfully to a proper rebuke. To superadd to this a gratuitous severity of manner, a curling lip, a loud and excited voice, and a scorching severity of language, is a misuse of the ministry of Rebuke and an injury to the culprit for which it is scarce possible to atone. The spirit of the rebuker will be itself powerfully wrought upon by the dialect he employs. His language will react upon himself with a force he can not resist. Let him suffer an abusive epithet to escape from his lips, and something else goes with it. He can not avoid, in the same opening of the gate, the emission of the sentiment that suits the word. He kindles himself into flame by these air-vents. And then he wins no conquests, subdues no trespasses, restores no slackening friendship; only drives the wedge of separation deeper, and leaves behind tones and words that make the ears to tingle and the heart to turn, as often as their sound repeats itself

in memory. For such use, the simplest language is the best, with no covert innuendoes lurking in its significance, no satirical edge to it, no sting sheathed within it to thrust out its slender and poisoned spear into the soul. Say, in a straightforward, plain and manly way, what rests upon our mind, more subdued in manner, and more chastened in speech, as we approach the weightiest charge of all, and leave only the tender pressure of our deep sorrow for the wrong upon the guilty spirit.

This *Sorrow over the wrong* is one chief element in a faithful and profitable rebuke. The rebuker must separate between the wrong and the wrong-doer. Toward the one he can entertain only aversion; toward the other, only the sincerest loving-kindness. He must show that while he sees clearly the evil which has been committed, and his soul rises up in abhorrence of it, if it demand so strong a feeling, he keeps his affection for the criminal. It must be *the wrong* for which he visits, not a resentment against the culprit. In this way personal alienations will be avoided. It is not, in such case, a personal offense that has brought the reprover out to *demand a reckoning*; it is not that he is animated by a sense of the injury, as against his own rights and interests; it is not that feeling within him has become exasperated; it is, it must be, a concern for the evil as evil, a grief at the going astray, a protest of purity, truth, integrity, and honor against that which undermines and sweeps them all away.

Finally, Rebuke must always be administered IN LOVE. This has been already more than once implied. If *love* be the soul of every rebuke, the outward expression will correspond. Whoever sets out in a spirit of *good-will* to recall an erring brother or regain a perverse and alienated friend,

by dealing faithfully with his fault, will deal considerately and tenderly. We shall think of him as unhappy because he is guilty, or more to be pitied still if hardened. We shall feel for the suffering we are about to inflict upon him; we shall long for his restoration to the lost path of rectitude and peace. If we go to him with fierce look, as if about to challenge him to mortal combat, we only move or incite him to put on his harness and take his place in the lists. But kindness disarms him of his war panoply. He will meet us as we meet him. Our spirit and manner will be contagious. Love is mightier to subdue than sword and battle-axe. My brother, seest thou a fellow-Christian staining the ermined robe of discipleship? Is thy zeal quickened to undertake with him? Art thou resolute to cross his path? Take care! Is not thy spirit *hot* within thee? Dost thou not mean *chastisement* rather than *chastening*? Search thy heart! Analyze thy zeal! Are thy lips yet made tremulous with the intensity of love? In these relations of the Christian household the office of mutual fidelity is provided for in our covenants and made sacredly binding. We must give, we must receive, faithful reproof. Remember, then, on these errands, to take *soft words* with you, my brother. Go in love. The sunbeams melt the frozen fountains, which the cold winter blasts only hide beneath a thicker rime. Examine closely, with great self-distrust, the spirit that leads you on. Ask for a special baptism of the dews of grace and meekness. Seeking to extract the mote from thy brother's eye, remember the beam that may be in thine own. Destroy not the whole power of your rebuke by some incidental harshness or injustice that shall mix itself subtly in. If you must wound in any of these relations of life, let it be the wound of "a friend!"

XIV.

STRONG IN THE LORD.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”—EPIH. vi. 10.

THIS exhortation comes most fittingly in its place. The Apostle had been marshaling before the eyes of his brethren at Ephesus the long array of personal duties they were to undertake as disciples of Jesus. The tasks they were thus called upon to assume seem well-nigh innumerable. They come thronging up from the ranges of the whole changeful experience. There must have been in such a recital a keen trial to faith, and hope, and courage. It were no wonder that the Ephesian Christians should feel weak and dismayed before this formidable summary. And that was the time and place to add this stirring and cheering call; to *close up*, for them, and for us who read after them, the same crowded catalogue of personal obligations, by lifting the desponding eye to the availing source of succor and strength.

I. The first note of this call finds a response in the universal human heart. “BE STRONG!” Yes, we all want that. We like to be able *to do* and *to endure*, to be victorious in our activities, and impregnable in our defenses. We live in a world of aggressive human selfishness. We wish to be capable of maintaining our rights. We are engaged in sharp competitions. It is an earnest question with

us how we may hold our own and win success. We see our fellow-men overborne by unexpected reverses; by the faltering of their own counsels and endeavors; by changes in the methods of the world's progress; by a strain upon their vigor of body and mind, a pressure upon principle, virtue, and character, with which they could not cope. We need to be trained well; to put on a stalwart manhood; to be thoroughly fortified against this various stress of life. Peer into the mist as keenly as we will, we can not tell what is ahead. "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." PERHAPS! and within that "*perhaps*" there are all manner of disastrous possibilities. That is a veil we can not lift. Beneath the fair and level horizon, unseen now, dark clouds may be drifting up with the tempest in them. To-day we float with the current; what if we have it to stem when another noon stands above us! Nay, we have every day to breast some tide-way in the never quiet sea. Our cares are many; our burdens are heavy; the points of weakness and exposure more than we can provide for; the present arduous; the future uncertain. We have need to summon ourselves to do our best. It is not more Paul's lips than the echo from our heart that bids us "BE STRONG!" None of us can turn a deaf ear. If the voice were, "Be meek!" "Be humble!" "Be self-distrustful!" we might postpone audience. But these other words, "Be strong!" suit our NATURE and OUR NEED.

II. And now, let us look a moment at the *prevalent reliances for strength*, and put an estimate upon them. One man confides in the *strength of his will*. He feels that he can carry his ends and make headway against all opposition by simple resoluteness of purpose. The soul that is vacil-

lating and infirm in its counsels and choices, he regards as weak indeed. But decide, and adhere, with indomitable fixedness of mind, to the decision, and whatever hinders progress and success must give way. Well, there is strength in a strong will. But put this man in perplexity, and what becomes of his strength then? If he knew which way to move, he would move with his whole force; but he veers now to every point of the compass, looking *for light*. He *vacillates* now as much as his weak neighbor, not from weakness, but from ignorance. A stalwart vessel, iron prowed, completely equipped, able to exchange buffets with an iceberg, but lost in the fog, without compass or star.

A vigorous will, with nerves of steel, throws no light upon the darkness of to-morrow or the obscurities of Providence.

And another relies upon his SAGACITY. He is *acute, far-seeing*. Give him a problem whose conditions he may weigh, whose practical solution lies behind the convexity of the future, and he will find a key for it. Perplexities are just a pleasant excitement to him. It will go hard but that he will discover a clue. But Sagacity makes no man a prophet. Providence will still have some secrets too deep for sharpest human eyes. Stir *the passions* and you blind those eyes as effectually as though the judgment were imbecile. Let calamity press the brain, and its processes are like the Egyptian chariots in the Red Sea bed, driving heavily, without wheels. No safe reliance here.

One stakes his issues upon his TEMPERAMENT. He is calm, imperturbable, not open to surprises, not to be taken off his guard, nor thrown off his balance. He takes life coolly—looks before he leaps—has no riotous passions to

mutiny against his sceptre of self-control. He thinks *excitable* men weak and in peril, and feels himself secure. But temptation may assail him on this very side, fit itself to this temperament, use it to ensnare and overcome him, feather its fatal arrow out of his own unimpassioned coolness, and leave him stagnant where strenuous action were the call of the hour.

And *another* makes his *vigor of body* and unbroken health his comfort. The "*strength*" that supports him is in his right arm, dances in his veins, swells in his muscles, looks toil and danger dauntlessly in the face, and challenges work, or care, or trials, with a confident smile. The fever of a night, the accident of a moment may make this physical puissance weak as childhood.

And *another* relies upon his *Wealth*, "Soul, take thine ease, thou art portioned and secured." The *thief*, the *flame*, the *sea storm*, the *panic*, a thousand *fluctuations* of which no prophet gives warning, laugh him to scorn.

Another fortifies himself in the heights of his *Good Name*. Nothing can touch him behind these battlemented walls of a stainless reputation. And a single blast of the breath of Slander levels his towers in the dust.

And there rise around *another* the *castled securities of Home life and joys*. These are the pledges he has given to virtue, these the perennial wells of contentment from which he draws. And, over some little grave, he stands bereft and inconsolable.

And yet *another* rests on his *Strength of Principles*. This will abide. He is garrisoned within. Like an impregnable citadel, he has set up in his soul the purpose to do right. He is strong in his integrity. There can be no

breach in these massive walls. Ah, if this made him indeed impregnable! But the whole story of humanity might teach him better. The virtue that is merely human always gives way. It never yet stood immaculate; treason within, or violence without, or some subtle undermining prostrates its defenses, and the enemy comes in like a flood.

Oh, no, my friend, none of these confidences are sure. Rest not in *any* nor *all* of them. Hear this other voice that speaks to-day as you look out from the morning of the year upon the unknown way your feet are to tread before night-fall, "*Be strong in THE LORD, and in the power of HIS MIGHT!*"

1. "Be strong" in THE TRUTH of the Lord. Go as far as the *Divine Word* goes! Bate no jot nor tittle of any utterance of the Holy Ghost for any plea of the life that now is! It is a weakness, and it makes us weak, to come down from the unchangeable sanctities and verities of our Revelation to accommodate the sliding scale of human opinion. Half confessions of the Truth and restricted and softened applications of the Truth are a snare and a delusion. We shall win our opponents, we say, if we are more liberal and round off our angles. We may join them to *us*, but we do not thus win them over, because we have left our distinctive ground. It is urged that *the Life* is more than *Belief*, which is a truth beyond doubt, but it is emphasized as though it meant that the Life might be right independent of Belief; that the tree might bear good fruit whether it have roots or no; that a man may throw away all belief—certainly all rigid Scriptural creeds—or even believe all wrong, and yet be and do all right. Now, a true and pure life grows out of *Truth*, not out of *falsehood* or *emptiness*.

It grows out of one kind of truth, and that is *Christian Truth*—the truth that brings God in Christ near to our sinfulness and helplessness, and gives us a hold by Faith upon the personal life of that Emmanuel who is “*God with us.*” Let down the claims of inspired Truth and we may *please* men, but we can not permanently *bless* them. And so it is through the whole conflict of Truth with Error. Take the high ground, the highest ground, and we stand strong. Begin to dip our crest, set to work to frame a “*Song of Degrees,*” and we betray our own feet and *slide, slide*, till we get to the bottom, without ever helping anybody up. The work of the Lord on earth is not just a work of making men amiable and moral; it is the establishment of Truth and Holiness against all opposition, the setting up of a new kingdom, which is the kingdom of Righteousness and Love, and must overturn the existing kingdom of Evil before it can have the supremacy. We must stand by this Truth, go thoroughly and radically for its full significance, and let it get voice from our lips and the witness of our life. It is God’s truth, and, standing upon it, we stand strong. “The word of the Lord endureth forever.” Where this Truth leads, there we need not be afraid to follow. Plant yourself upon this loyalty to the “Truth” and your feet can never be moved. The Truth will triumph, and you will triumph with it. You may be martyred for your steadfastness, but, even so, the Truth to which you give witness will stand your stately and imperishable monument, and you will the sooner have put on your crown.

Truth has an inviolable majesty. She may be assailed; she can not be vanquished. Her robes may be defiled with the missiles of rebel hands, but the slimy blackness will fall

off, and her own inner brightness will stream forth unobscured. *Error* may have legs of iron and stand with a frowning height, but the feet are mingled of clay and will crumble till the Colossus is overthrown. Let one be panoplied with the truth that is divine, and no weapon can prosper against that armor of proof.

Again : Be strong in the Lord as A DEFENSE. There are times when we want a *hiding-place*, and it is written, "The Lord God is a . . . Shield." *The Friend* who stood between us and adversity, who kept the winds of Heaven from blowing too roughly upon us, is removed. *The Gourd* that grew to make us a leafy arbor and to shade our head from the heat withers away. We are left in comfortless *widowhood* or in desolate *orphanage*, and against the power that would wrong us, the covetousness that would make our little heritage less, the cool selfishness that would elbow us out of the way, we have only the plea of our helplessness to interpose. A day of sore personal trial comes upon us, in which the strain upon our fortitude and endurance, our strength of frame, and elasticity of hope, and patience of spirit, is such as we never remember before. And we shake our head doubtfully and half-despairingly, and question softly with ourselves, "How will this end?" The believing soul has no need to ask. He sees a *hand* reaching down to him out of heaven. Before him it holds an ægis, orbéd, ample, and impenetrable. Under this cover he sits serene, he walks in safety and quietness. When calamities threaten him or foes assail him, he smiles a fearless, untroubled smile. The front of some whelming misfortune moves on to meet him. He smiles ever as he gazes. He sees something the world can not see. The great wave that was rolling up goes over him.

Where now is his confidence? And the world looks as the wave rolls past, and he re-appears unharmed and smiling as serenely as ever. Oh, what a strength of calmness have they who make the Lord their defense! The secret of invincible endurance is with them.

Again: Be strong in the Lord as A PORTION. In partnership with a covenant-keeping God, we are rich enough. A long life of toil ends perhaps as it began; except that our capital of muscle and enterprise is gone. When we should have reaped our harvest, and stored our granary, and sat down to eat of our abundance, and rest from the sentence of daily labor, too severe now for our failing vigor, our hands are empty. We can not begin again; we are too near the end for that. We have had our successes; been lifted on the wave of prosperity; but it has rolled from beneath us and broken on the strand. And, with *Age* abating our natural force, multiplying our infirmities, and making the tribute of comfort and ease more needful and grateful, we find our worldly resources cut off, and dried up. And this occurs often in the history of good men, who use their means moderately, wisely, and beneficently, who love to do good with their increase, and whom all would rejoice to see prospered to the end. Ah, yes! But in an old age of ease and affluence, they might not ripen so well for Heaven and Immortality. Our garden fruits grow most luscious when they are plucked from their sustaining stem and laid upon the shelf. And piety is most simple, and humble, and sweet, and ripe, when it is deprived of all earthly supports. The discipline of a soul, it may be, can not be perfected amid the sheltered warmth of earthly luxuries. Something of self-reliance, or of some confidence that is

not *Faith*, may still divide it off from God. Leave it God alone as its portion, then it perceives its true wealth, and the emptiness of what was reckoned wealth before. It has now inexhaustible treasures and no care. There are heavenly dividends each day, this check on the bank of Faith, to fill up and sign every morning, in the Hebrew tongue, "Jehovah Jireh"; in ours, "The Lord will provide!" No changes, or chances, or vicissitudes, or panics, or erratic human schemes can touch this reliance. No more anxiety; no troubled looks ahead; no financiering; "The Lord is my portion." Here are strength and peace.

But the call is still more specially addressed to our *distinctive spiritual need*. "Be strong in the Lord, as a Partner in all our *personal Christian life!*" How many weak Christians there are in the Church of the living God, just breathing, but with pulses so languid, and vital currents so sluggish, that it is often a question with the soul itself, "Is not life extinct?" But my *temperament*, sighs one, it perpetually betrays me; how can one grow in grace and be an eminent Christian, with such a natural climatic constitution as mine? And my *circumstances*, pleads another, they are so unfavorable to the cultivation of holiness. And look at the *pressure of worldly care* upon me, argues a third: I have time and thought for nothing else; and here are *Doctrines of the Scripture* that stumble me; and here are *great trials* that sadden and oppress me, and here, for me, are *arts of the Adversary*, and temptations such as other men are free from; and here are my weak health and shattered nerves; and here are my ungovernable constitutional *passions* and *proclivities*, no man ever had so hard a strife to keep himself right as I. Now, not one of these pleas touches the

point, nor could they, if varied in ten thousand forms. What has any style of human weakness to do with our spiritual victories? Of course, we are weak, all weak, and utterly weak. Varieties of weakness or degrees of weakness we need not consider. None of us can find strength within. God in Christ is our strength. Join Him to any human heart, and what does that heart need more? To what grade of *finite weakness, infinite strength* is united, it matters not. Infirmities of will, peculiarities of temperament, the disadvantage of circumstances, the fiery vigor of passion, and all conceivable hindrances to goodness and purity; here is a grandly overbalancing alliance, free and availing.

Be strong, my Brother! You, who are weakest, who acquiesce with a kind of contented hopelessness in your spiritual failures; deliver yourself from them by taking hold of the Divine Strength. Lean on Christ, and see if He will let you fall! When the waves are roughest, and your fears greatest, reach out poor Peter's trembling hand, with only this word, "LORD, SAVE!" and see if He will let you sink!

Take hold of it, the almighty hand, *young Christian!* Clasp it, palsied hand of *Age!* You who *fear*, and you who presume! Make the Lord your STRENGTH, for all trial and all work! Say of no task, "*I can do this.*" Call in the overcoming Helper! And be this your single confidence, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!" Oh, what an athlete each frail and puny Christian might be instead! What power in the bannered Sacramental Host, marching in the might of their Great Captain, to the final victories of the Faith! What a year of growth, of progress, of triumph this might be upon which we enter now! God himself, our Father, and Almighty Friend, give you all a "Happy New Year!"

XV.

GUILLESSNESS.

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”—JOHN i. 47.

IN our studies of life and being, we are fascinated by that which is profound and inscrutable. The type of humanity which is all clear and transparent soon ceases to interest us. If we read a story we like a plot that moves at first in shadow. The novel-writer, meeting this sentiment of our heart, wraps his characters, at the beginning, in mist and mystery. If there be a smile on the face, it must touch the edge of a cloud. If the speech, in substance and in language, be apparently simple, it must still cover unsounded depths. The thought, the purpose, the reasoning, the mind, that are fathomed at a glance, are likely to be labeled “shallow.”

For ourselves, it is not quite agreeable to us that an eye that gives us a passing scrutiny should read us through and through. If we have no secrets that we care to keep, we like to be thought capable of holding such possessions, and if our treasure-box be locked, none can certainly know that it is empty. To lie open to all inspection, with no curtain at the window of the soul to be drawn and darkened when we please, seems to us a style of demonstration not significant of the most robust and intellectual manhood. To carry our jewels of thought, the refined gold of our qual-

ities and acquisitions, all in the open palm of our hand, with nothing richer or rarer hidden, or supposed to be hidden, in the deep vaults behind deep iron doors, were to confess the poverty of our endowments; and so to be unable by our personal force to influence strongly the world's exchange of opinion and action. Such an issue were disappointing to our hopes and mortifying to our pride, and must be diverted by whatsoever device that shall seem to clothe us with a reserved power, sceptered and crowned in the realm of mental and moral life! Utter frankness might so often, practically, be the equivalent of utter weakness, that it were the throwing away of whatsoever personal influence a more studied reserve might enable us to wield.

So we often reason in our self-protective musing. But this seems to me to be the very essence of weakness and falsehood. A true nobility of soul would say, every time, and under every strain, "Deliver me from an ascendancy that must resort to any species of trickery to maintain itself among its fellows. Let me take any lowliest place accorded to my genuine self, rather than loftiest position under a mask of deceit!" Any acting meant to disguise a failure either of competence or integrity or whatsoever element of a noble manhood, or to convey the impression and secure the conviction of a being and purpose contrary to fact, is an equal derogation from STRENGTH and TRUTH. "An Israelite indeed." A disciple of the humble Nazarene, a MAN worthy the name, is one in whom "there is no guile."

I do not mean that there will be no heights of vision, or aspiration, or spiritual uplift in such a soul, that any earthly spirit can not tread with him, side by side—that there will be no profound depths of conviction, self-deserving and

humility beyond the deepest plummet of a life never looking at itself in the mirror of the divine word—that there will be no horizon of meditation, love, and sympathy, of habitual thought, and excursion of loyal feet or quickened wings, as far beyond the narrow circle of fleshly appetites, desires, and gratifications as the blue ethereal walls beyond the ridge of our home landscape—that there will be no profound belief, or controlling purpose, or strong emotion, or far flight of Hope and Faith, altogether outside the experience and perhaps the comprehension of the trivial dreamer on the highways of sense—I do not mean to say, that, in these manifold exercises of the renewed heart, there shall not be mysteries so thickly veiled to those eyes of sense, that no dim ray shall flash from their abiding splendors upon that dull perception; but I do mean to say that with the true Israelite there is never any forfeiture of honest intent, there is no misleading concealment of character and purpose, no false semblance worn to deceive, no subtle devices, by word or act, or by silence and inaction, to entrap the confidence of another in a conclusion known to be unsubstantial and unreal.

We may profitably develop this Spirit of Guilelessness more in detail. With him in whose breast it reigns supreme it is the SOUL OF ALL SPEECH. It dictates the words that are spoken. They are the echoes of the inner life. They are the incarnation of the feeling and the thought. They are the vocal pulses of the passions throbbing under a veil. They are the honest messengers of the conclusions formed, the sensibilities stirred, and the resolves embraced, out of sight and hearing, in the interior chambers of the consciousness. If they express the emotion of *Joy*, it is a sunny

hour in the inner sky. If they sing in gladness, the poetry and the music keep time with the chime of happy melodies in the heart. If they express grief and sing only dirges, it is because a cloud broods the spirit and drenches it with cold, continuous rain. If they give out an affectionate salutation in domestic or social life, the warmth is more than lip-deep,—the words throb with heart-beats from under the ribs. In connubial intercourse the adjectives and expletives of Love and Dearness are not just a convenient vocabulary in the use of which to avoid more formal and cumbrous speech, but the sweet translation of the heart's tenderness. When the tongue says, "Hail, brother!" the confirming echo from the recesses of the bosom is "brother." When the lips testify, "Welcome, friend!" the heart is at home in that reception. In the business intercourse of life it is not thought necessary to mask the face, and to enter the market-place in disguise. If one would buy, he does not assume a careless indifference, or a critical sharpness, as though, on the one hand, he had hardly a desire to secure possession, or, on the other hand, saw such defects that he must yet look farther before he could be suited. If he would sell, he does not affect either a lifeless languor of address, or press the issue, as if such opportunity could hardly be repeated in a lifetime. If there are words spoken in the fellowship of the *Christian* life, they do not assume an ardor or a zeal to which the breast is a stranger that others may catch the flames as of a sacred fire, and an artificial devotion stimulate the sluggish devotion of another. If they are uttered for God's hearing, they do not practice the fearful audacity of putting on an outward emphasis of penitence, or desire, or zeal, for which there is no inward

reality—an eloquence intended to affect an earthly audience rather than the Divine. In a guileless soul, *the words* of the mouth truly translate the thoughts of the mind, the feelings of the heart, the resolves of the will.

And the SILENCE of such a soul is as honest as *its speech*. It is not a device to mislead without assuming the responsibility of beguiling words. It is not a cover for a meaning which the lips shrink from voicing, but which the heart, at once false and cowardly, hopes will be apprehended and confided in as the truth. There are those who dare not, in the face of Conscience and God's Law, bear a false witness by the direct utterance of the tongue, to whom it seems not at all a criminal thing to *allow* their silence to be wrongly interpreted, and even to *mean* that it shall carry an aspect contrary to the fact. If a man have something to sell, upon the *good* qualities of which he is glowing and eloquent, and utterly silent in respect to other qualities of which he is equally well aware, which neutralize the former, and which, under a clear intelligence of the case, would cast the balance of resolve against the purchase, is he *innocent* that he is DUMB? If a merchant show to a shopper the attractive pattern of goods concerning whose utter want of durability he is aware, but silent; if a dealer display on the road, to charm a customer, the style and speed of a horse whose claim to soundness of wind and of limb, or to docility of temper, he knows to be empty, but utters no disclosure of the capital defect, he has not, indeed, sworn to a falsehood, but is he any the less a violator of the Truth? If a man hear a reproachful story told against one of whom he is envious or jealous, and, knowing this tale to be a slander, does not contradict it, but allows it, through his seeming

acceptance and indorsement, to gain additional currency and credit, has he not borne false testimony against his rival as really, if not as emphatically and responsibly, as if he had labelled the story "true" with his own hand? A heart that is sensitive to the sacredness of truth and all complicity with evil, can not possibly consent, through its own fault, to be misinterpreted to the prejudice of another. Its silence, under any such strain, it will not suffer to be equivocal.

Nor will a guileless man be less genuine, or less loyal to Truth, in his ACTION, than in the use of his lips. There is a proverb, on this point, as sound as it is familiar, "*Actions speak louder than words.*" The ends upon which we are seen to be laying out our chief energy, are ends which we thus proclaim to be near and dear to our hearts. Or, if they are not, in themselves, attractive to our choice, they are, still, for some qualities of their own, or some relation to our interests and wishes, issues with which we can not dispense, and which we must accordingly serve to our utmost. Our actions do thus in manifold scenes express our convictions and choices, with a distinctness of utterance to which articulate speech could add nothing. Taking advantage of this principle of interpretation, if we act toward another in a manner that implies confidence where we profoundly distrust, or that argues distrust where we have no reason to doubt or be afraid; if we seem deeply interested in a cause or a person to whom and to which we are really indifferent, or quite unconcerned about an issue that occupies all our thoughts; if we loiter and linger on our way, to avoid the suspicion of special concern when we would run or fly; if we assume deafness to a conversation which we eagerly overhear, so as to conceal our knowledge of some

secret sedulously guarded, and compromising perhaps to character and standing,—we practice willful deceptions; we could not more vitally assail and betray the cause of Truth and Honesty; we are as far removed from the exercise of a guileless spirit, as the direct opposite in life and character. In an ingenuous soul, ACTION corresponds with the spirit and intent of the life within, and if it fail fully to express the thought and purpose of the doer, it is through some infirmity encountered in the execution, and not some intention to mislead and deceive.

And now, there is a language in *Face*, and *Look*, and *Attitude*, and *Manner*, which as truly as the speech of the lips express the thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart. By these manifold tongues one may tell the genuine exercises of the Intelligence within, or he may bear false witness concerning their nature and strength. The whole outward man is articulate with the utterances that furnish incarnation to the inner life. The dilated eye and the pallid cheek give out the language of *Fear*. Trembling lips and flowing tears are the legible tokens of *Grief*. Firm foot and dauntless gaze convey the challenge of unconquerable *Courage*. Lifted hands and raised eyebrows are exclamation points of *Wonder* and *Surprise*. The eager welcome of *Love* is seen in outstretched arms and forward leaning, and tender light of flushing face. *Joy* wreathes the mouth with a smile, flashes in lambent gladness from under the eyelids, and breathes in quickened gushes of melodious breath. We know *Anger* when we see it in scowling brow and clenched fist and looks with dagger-points. The side-long, half-covert glances of *Suspicion*, *Jealousy*, and *Distrust* re-

veal their disturbing presence, exploring eagerness, and longing for confirmation. The unchanging downward look, and clasped fingers and motionless drooping of form, show where *Despair* has set his seal. And parted lips, and out-reaching arms and sudden lifting of the eager gaze and sheen of dawning and sunrise on the face, are the draperies of the revisiting, fair, Angel *Hope*. We are familiar, every one of us, with this varied dialect of the Spiritual, giving out through the Material the record of its wide range of passionate sensibility. We need no interpreter when this mute alphabet invites our reading. It is our own vernacular, not a foreign tongue. The language is itself identical with our thought of its meaning, and requires no translation to enable us to comprehend. Sight is intelligence. But, now, all these forms of speech may be used dishonestly. They may be drafted into the service of craft and guile. They may be sent out with false messages of the Feeling and Purpose, whose livery they wear. Every one of them may be commissioned to bear testimony to the existence of what it naturally and legitimately conveys when there is no corresponding substance in the soul. In every instance, we can translate the language without difficulty, but *who* speaks, and *what* speaks, whether *reality* or *fraud*, whether Nature, in its own honesty, or hypocritical Falsehood, we can not always be sure. But all these forms of expression are transparent and translucent with the *guileless* soul. They correspond with the inward verity. The thoughts and feelings, seemingly emphasized in this visible language, are the real thoughts and feelings of the Soul. Behind the smile is the Joy; in the embrace, the Love; with the tear, the sympathetic Grief; in bowed head and bended knee,

Humility and Devotion; in the melody of lifted notes, the pulsations of Gratitude and Praise; in all the demonstrations, the soul of Sincerity and Truth.

My friends, is this quality of GUILLELESSNESS out of place in a world like this, and with such a race as ours? Because there is so much cheating, and lying, and acting on every hand, must we cheat and lie, if we would live? Because there is so little of this frank and guileless spirit, is it in vain that we seek to exercise it? Shall we reap the penalty of such openness, and work no good by our example, receiving only contempt for it as a weakness? Would it leave every man defenseless among those who are ready to take advantage of Honesty, and to impose upon Simplicity? Must we meet craft with craft, and match sharp and cunning devices against those who devise our illusion and betrayal?

I do not think we are to raise the question of consequences. That which is in accordance with the divine will, which wears here and hereafter the lustre of a divine eulogy, need not ask what reception it is likely to meet with in the fellowships and rivalries of the present life. If it be right in God's sight, if our blessed Master commend it, if He hang a wreath of honor upon such a trait in a human soul, no matter whether human lips approve or revile, it is for us, by God's help, to win and wear it. How shall the world ever come to know the beauty and the price of Truth, and be weaned from all its own cowardly and selfish hypocrisies if nowhere this practical loveliness be seen? How contagious such a spirit might be, acting itself out in some single illustration, in all the round of human intercourse. Deceit would writhe with shame before it, and flee away

from it, and hide its head forever. Oh, that we might always and everywhere be clothed in this celestial transparency, flinging away the grossness of our earth-woven disguises; and in all interchanges Godward and Manward, speak and live and act the honest meaning of an honest and truth-loving heart—Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile!

XVI.

MUTUAL DUTIES.

“ . . . Am I my brother's keeper ? ”—GEN. iv., part 9.

WHEN the world was young, two brothers, the *first* and *second* born of humankind, brought offerings unto the Lord. The elder, who was a tiller of the ground, brought of the fruits of his husbandry. The younger, who was a keeper of sheep, brought of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord looked down from heaven and beheld His worshippers, and knowing what was in their hearts, He had respect unto the younger and his offering; but unto the elder and his offering He had not respect. And the elder brother was very wroth and his countenance fell, and the Lord reasoned with him for his anger, and kindly encouraged him to walk in the paths of virtue, with the promise of accepting him therefor, and then left him to his thoughts.

And Cain drew near to Abel and talked with him and wiled him away with friendly words from their parents' sight, and they went together out into the field, the one loving and trusting as a brother should, and full of peace as one who has just been accepted of God in prayer; the other with kindness *on his lip* and murder in his heart. And when they were alone Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him.

We need not dwell upon this old, old story. The inso-

lent challenge put by the murderer's lips to the righteous Judge, who came to question him at the call of his brother's blood, suggests my theme. I wish to show that it is the ordinance of God that every man should keep his brother-man, and how the duty should be performed.

Look, first, at *the natural relationship* of man to man under the Fatherhood of God. Take the children of any human pair, and note how their relationship determines their mutual duties. Sprung from the same loins, nursed at the same breast, fostered by the same care, blessed by the same love, fed at the same table, clothed by the same providing hand, bearing the same name and the common family likeness, who does not see that this fraternal relation implies the fraternal affection and the fraternal duties? What one of the group can excuse himself from loving and helping his cradle-mates?

How must parents feel who see hostility to each other among their own offspring! And, on the other hand, how do parents feel, what grateful and glad emotions, who see their children growing up in harmony and love, stepping forward, each in the other's exigency, to extend a helping hand, and carrying the tenderness of the early and inalienable bond down to gray hairs! There is all the interest and obligation of such relationship in God's household of the human family. God is our Great Father, and all of us are His children—born of the dust by the same creative word, fashioned by the same skill, breathed into by the same breath of life, led and fed and clothed by the same providential hand; how clear is it that every man is our brother by common descent, by a common likeness and a common parentage. It is explicitly written that God "hath made

of one blood all nations of men." I can not, then, look upon the face of a human being without seeing a brother. If I trample upon a poor, friendless creature, under any sky of earth, my foot is on a brother's breast. Did God teach no universal obligation when He constituted the tribes of men one vast fraternity and Himself the common Father?

But this mutual obligation appears also from the fact of *our mutual dependence*.

God has so conditioned us that no man can live independently of his fellow-man. This spirit of dependence is in our hearts; we seek to lean on some other heart; we yearn for human fellowship and sympathy; we pine when we are alone; we are made for social life and find our highest happiness in taking others by the hand, in looking into the faces of others, in hearing the friendly words of others; and herein is our mutual dependence.

There are few things that we can *enjoy* alone. We want some one to enjoy pleasures with us. The sublime of the mountain summit, the beauty of the far hazy landscape, have lost half their charm if there be none to look upon them with us. The pathos or eloquence of a book is redoubled if there be one by our side to whom we may recite the periods that have captivated us. And so of many a scene of social enjoyment, the companionship is more the source of the delight, often, than any feature of the scene itself.

Then, again, we can not undertake our enterprises alone; we need other minds to counsel, other feet to run, other hands to fashion and make and lift. We avail ourselves of the accumulated wisdom of the past and of the co-operation of the present. No man can do for himself what, in the division of labor, in the mutual helpfulness of the arts, in

the combination of friendly forces, is done for him. And however he may fancy himself in love with solitude, no man in his secret soul can quite divorce himself from his kind. Simeon, "the Stylite," who lived nearly forty years alone on the top of his column in the open air, is yet a witness for us, in that he thirsted still for human praise and chose his abode where he could look down from his perch upon the throngs of a populous city. These indissoluble ties, these mutual dependencies, can not be dissociated from mutual duties.

This relative obligation is clearly and impressively suggested, also, by the example of Him whom we call "Our Elder Brother." He became a brother of our humanity for this among other ends, that He might *show* us how to do a brother's duty, how to perform a brother's part; and what was the lesson, what offices of brotherly kindness filled up His life!

"He went about doing good," is the comprehensive answer. Every day some new miracle of mercy! Now it was healing some life-long infirmity, now it was restoring sight, now opening the ear and loosing the tongue, now giving strength to a withered arm, now feeding a famished multitude, now raising the dead and giving them back warm and breathing to the hearts that mourned.

We can not, indeed, work miracles to bless our fellow-men; but a look of kindness, a word of kindness, an act of kindness always blesses a needy brother, and may sometimes cheer him almost like a miracle. And if the example of the "Man of Nazareth" have any force, these overtures of good-will are a debt we owe to all.

And such brotherly charity is distinctly enjoined by *Script-*

ure statute. This is the very essence of that Golden Rule which embodies the comprehensive spirit of the whole legal code, that divine formula of legislation which stands in its sublime simplicity so far above all the teachings of human philosophy, the purest maxims of the world's wisest sages, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." With this rule accords that second great command of all, which is declared to be like unto the first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And if any man ask, with the "lawyer" of old, "Who is my neighbor?" he may be answered as the Master answered His questioner, with the beautiful parable of "the Good Samaritan" and its earnest practical lesson, "Go and do thou likewise!"

How then, we may proceed to inquire, is this fraternal duty to be performed? How, *in what respects*, are we to keep our brother? Generally, it may be answered, as we keep ourselves. This, we have seen, is the Scripture *measure* of brotherly love; and any "SCIMPING" of it is to take away so much from *the words written in the Book!*

But we may be more explicit. Certainly this faithful keeping of our brother implies *sympathy and kindness for him in the common exigencies of life.* We are to help him in his misfortune; we are to draw his ox from the pit; we are to run to extinguish the flames of his dwelling. We are to lend him the strength of our muscles where his own are too weak. We are to watch with him in sickness; if he be querulous and whimsical and unreasonable when his disease is on him, we are to put up with it. He is our brother. We are to go to him with a grasp of the hand and a sympathizing heart when Death enters his household.

We are to follow with the mourners to the grave; he is our brother. We are to consider him in his destitution, to open our stores to him as God hath blessed us, to give to him, not as to a beggar—a gift may be a humiliation to a sensitive heart—to give to him as a brother. We are to strengthen and encourage him in his industries and enterprises; to hold him up till he can go alone; to give him, in homely but hearty and honest expression, to “*give him a lift*,” just when it is most needful and will go farthest in blessing him. There are ways enough for us all to do these common kindnesses to our brethren. We are not so forward in this good work as to need no exhortation. And the standard of action on this line will bear raising with us all.

We are to keep our brother, again, *in his reputation*. A man’s good name is his capital for usefulness. Sully it, and you take away so much of his power to do good. If the robbery touched only his sensibility, if it wounded his feelings and did no more, it would scarce be brotherly to perpetuate it; but when it kills his usefulness, blasts his prospects, blights his hopes, takes from his hand every instrument of profitable toil, and makes those whom he would bless look cold upon him and shun him, one might as well stab with the dagger as with a slanderous tongue. We are, then, to be very careful, by whatever feelings we are actuated, to speak nothing wantonly, or thoughtlessly, much less maliciously to another’s discredit. And when a tale of slander reaches us about a third person, we should look displeased upon such a visitor; we should avoid taking in the poison if we can, for despite our primest purpose its subtle exhalations may affect all our thoughts and feelings. But if we must hear it, as the guardian of our brother’s fair

fame we have something to do in the premises. We are not to smile and nod and say, "Aha," like the enemies of David. We are to hold our brother guiltless till his guilt is proved. In most cases, the way for us to do is to silence it at once, to see that it dies with us, to be sure that it gets no farther currency by having our name linked with it, to regard it as we would if we had found a viper's nest, something to set the heel upon and crush the life out of it. If we kept our brother's purse, would it be right to let any man, with an itching palm, put his hand in? And being the keeper of his reputation, is it right to let any man who has a foul tongue, soil it in our hearing? I look upon it as one of the most sacred duties we owe our brother, to watch vigilantly over all that can affect his good name. We can hardly sin against a more vital social interest, than against the sacredness of character.

The keeping of our brother includes also *a healthful moral influence upon him*. All that we can do to restrain him from going wrong, from doing wrong, we ought to do. If our doing a thing that to us is right, or indifferent in its character, lead him to do a thing that for him is wrong, we had better refrain. If our position, not in itself a wrong one for us to keep, shelter him from convictions of truth and duty, and fortify him in a standing that is wrong for him, we had better change our position. If you ask me, by what right I thus entrench upon your liberty for your brother's sake, I will answer you by the lips of Paul: "Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." And again, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world

standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." If you say you can not come up to this magnanimity of Paul, that you are not prepared to give up something which it is right and innocent for you to indulge in, because others may make a bad use of your example, when they have no business to; that every man must stand or fall by himself, I reply, "Be it so; if you are not equal to such self-sacrifice as Paul's, own up, and do not try to clear yourself. In this there is somebody you love a little better than you love your brother." And I reply again, "It is not true that any man can stand or fall by himself." "For none of us liveth to himself," saith the oracle, "and no man dieth to himself," and immediately it adds: "Why dost thou set at naught thy brother, for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God." And one of the most tremendous chapters of human trial, in the last great day, will be that which investigates this very matter of reciprocal influences, and calls in question the tendency of one man's conduct and belief to determine the conduct and belief of another man.

And yet once more: We are to keep our brother *in the life of his soul*. Religion, you may say, is a matter between every man and his God; and there is a sense in which this is true. We can not repent and believe for one of all our fellow-men. But let us not affirm that we have here alone no responsibility in regard to the destiny of others. We ought to feel, in this relation, an interest for our brother as much deeper than that we feel on other matters as the welfare of the soul transcends all temporal problems. Which of us can be satisfied to do nothing more than to save his own soul alive? Who would look upon the throng that shall be gathered upon that final day and see among all the

Redeemed not one whom he has led to serious thoughts and penitent resolves; and, on the other hand, not one known to him on earth on whom he had tried the utmost efficacy of prayer and entreating love? Look upon that friend by your side still out of Christ! He is your brother. Shall he rejoice and sing praises with you through his immortal existence, or, among all the saved, shall his face nowhere be seen? In all the song shall his voice never be heard? Where, then, shall he be when you are at home in your heavenly mansion? Shall he be to you then a lost brother, one separated from you, from hope, from bliss forever? Think of it now, while you stand side by side with him beneath the blue arch of mercy, beneath the bright bow of promise! Go not alone up the star-paved steeps to the celestial heights. Clasp your brother's hand; entreat him, lead him, draw him; with kindly violence "compel" him to go with you on pilgrimage to the Happy-land!

Oh, open your eyes, each one of you, with a new look upon every brother's face! Let the constraint of a new and sacred care for him come in upon your heart! Keep bright as shining gold the links of love between you and each earthly mate! Let nothing that concerns his interest and happiness in the present life be to you a matter of indifference or neglect. With chiefest solicitude, look ahead for him to the issue of the great day of trial and award!

So live and walk, amid the fellowships of the present; your tender, faithful, and vigilant self-devotion answering the question of the text, with soft, affirmative repetition, "My brother's keeper!"

XVII.

FOR THANKSGIVING.

RETURNS FOR MERCIES.

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”—
Ps. cxvi. 12.

I COME before you at this time, my friends, not to engage you in the elaborate discussion of some doctrine of the Scripture to our finite comprehension environed with difficulties, or, to our dull spiritual discernment, draped in cloud and mist; nor to propose some nice question in Morals on which variant consciences take opposite sides; nor to vindicate some high attribute of Jehovah, the tread of whose going forth is in the deep waters. Our text calls us to wrestle with no such problems as these. It is just a simple self-query—the soliloquy of a pious heart, before which, as to the Prophet on Horeb, in the cleft of the rock, a vision of the Divine Goodness is passing by.

I take up these words of an intense and almost despairing gratitude, “What *shall* I render?” that they may stir within us, through all this memorial week, a livelier sense of our ever undischarged debt to the mercy of the kingly Benefactor who reigns over us in love, and put us upon a more diligent and eager search to find appropriate responses.

The heart—I mean our heart, *yours* and *mine*—our wayward human heart, grows strangely selfish under favors. You know how it is in earthly relations. Let us receive

one bounty from any hand, and we become clamorous for another, as if the first were a pledge unredeemed until the second is bestowed. Let us receive frequent bounties, and we come to think we have a claim and can set up a title, and feel wronged if the stream of kindness be cut off or diverted to flow past some other threshold instead of ours. How often do we encounter such an experience in bestowing our trifling personal charities. The family whose need we have often relieved look upon the relation as established, and present their fresh appeals with the confidence of one urging a legal demand, rather than the suppliant lowliness of one asking alms.

To us it looks sometimes a little cool in these pensioners, that the multiplication of our free gifts should only, in their view, settle their right to them, and make both their asking and their thanks almost superfluous.

And we, ourselves, if we are not watchful, fall into the same insensibility and presumption under the favors of bountiful Heaven. God has always blessed us and kept us, fed, nourished, and cherished us, therefore we expect it. Having been so generous, He must continue His gifts, and the showers of His benefits will still fall as a matter of course. He has met and endowed our dependence hitherto, therefore this help is due for all time to come!

So the question, with our perverse and inveterate selfishness, is apt to be, not "What shall *I* render?" but "Why doth He yet withhold any good?"

To make us ashamed of such a spirit, to waken and vitalize our palsied emotions of Love and Gratitude, and to quicken us in the exercise of a humane and Christian beneficence, let us put ourselves in "the cleft of the rock," and

hear that voice proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," and see if that tender self-apostrophe of the Psalmist in the text be not graciously instinctive within us, and whether we can not frame some fitting answer.

And FIRST OF ALL, let the Divine Charities, for which we are to render some thankful tribute, arise and pass before us. "All His benefits!" What pen, what tongue, what faithful chronicle can set them forth in order? What arithmetic can reckon up their totals?

We must review and rehearse the story of a life-time, to hear the distinct utterances of ministrant agencies, whose numbers, not to say whose special offices, are beyond our computation; we must translate the thoughts of God toward us from oldest eternity. What volume, what library, could compass such a narrative, and what progress in the recital were possible in one short Sabbath hour. We can not, then, take up this inquiry in its details, but glance only at grand outlines.

By the painter's art we are made to see, on a few feet of moving canvas, a panorama of hundreds of leagues, mountains and vales and majestic streams, forests and cities and broad spaces of human culture, travelling from the snows of the Arctic to the verdure and flowering of the Tropics, the length of a continent, in the brief passing of a quiet evening at home. So, sitting here, we may catch a hurried panoramic view of the Divine Goodness to us personally, as we unroll before our thoughts the canvas of memory. And, first, at the rising of the curtain, appear the scenes of our

birth and *infancy*, our own faces and forms in miniature. The comforts of a civilized and Christian home are there; do you see it again, your own early home? gratulant friends are near, tenderest parental care smiles upon us, and in the background, dimly and softly pencilled, stand our Guardian Angels, come to take in charge the new-born life.

The canvas moves on, and our *childhood* looks out upon us, laughing, merry, gleeful childhood; we roam in sunny places—do you see it, hillside and garden, and meadow and brook?—we gather fairest flowers; we frolic with chosen mates; smiles and tears give the lights and shades of an April day, and again kind hands robe us and feed us and cherish us, kind hearts soothe our little sorrows and lead us to the portals of knowledge, and again bright Guardians, out of Heaven, hover around to shield and to bless. This scene passes, and, in richer and warmer coloring still, succeeds the golden *Summer of our Youth*, and close behind, with not a few of us, the serene and fruitful days of our Manhood's Autumn. Your own thought must fill the blanks along these wide interspacings. On more than one reach of the canvas there may flit dusky shadows, but how quickly the light follows; there are here and there arid places, but beyond, greener meadows and broader harvests. There are some attitudes of sadness, and grouped around manifold comforters. There are occasional couches of sickness and pain, and brighter hues of Nature above and beneath, and warmer greetings of friends welcome abroad the pale one coming forth from the chamber of captivity.

And, again, as the canvas moves on, the *outside ministrations* that wait on this human life, in all its periods, appear. *Earth*, with its flocks and herds, its fruits and flowers, its

nodding sheaves and yellow corn; *Sky*, with its lighted Sun, and shimmering stars, its soft airs and fertilizing showers, its nourishing and protecting snows, and birds of summer-time; the *Seasons*, laden with promise or bounty; the *Oceans*, cooling our fervid heats and softening winter rigors, and piling our board with delicacies; toiling and faithful *Providences*, opening pathways for our feet, smoothing the rough places and elevating the low, and scattering plenty and gladness all along by the roadside. And still the lengthening canvas is unexhausted. There are village schools, and academic walks, and galleries of art, and halls of legislation, and monuments of freedom, and stately fabrics of public munificence.

And now there come into the field of vision the domes and spires of Christian Temples—Altars for the worship, not of an “unknown God,” but of One revealed as a Father, Friend, and Redeemer—and greater wonders yet behind; a CROSS and an UPLIFTED SACRIFICE; expiation of earth’s sin and guilt; above, the face of God reconciled; below, the joy of pardon and hope breaking into songs; and light streaming down from the opening heaven, and poor wanderers guided up the radiant steps to the shining threshold. What would avail us all bounties of Earth, Sea, and Air; all products of varying climates and revolving seasons; all means of personal culture and enjoyment, if this great, costly Redemption were not superadded? Hopes immortal spring here. Joys pure and enduring bloom on this garden-spot; light for the erring, white robes for the vile, pardon for the guilty, rest for the weary, life for the condemned, life with God, life forevermore!

We pause here to let our hearts speak. Their full emo-

tion—at least with some of us, and I trust with all—can no longer be suppressed; it will throb forth into vocal utterance: “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”

And now for our answer. First, then: *We can not directly enrich God the Giver.* If we sought to give back some actual return, what should it be which is ours to give or withhold, and not already *His*? This would be like the gratuity of a child who should go to his father’s purse for gold with which to purchase that father a present. God is the universal proprietor, and has personal need of no treasures from us. He forestalls all such offers by setting forth the inventory of His possessions. “I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy fold. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.”

But, again: We can gratify the Divine Heart with *Thanksgiving* and *Praise*. The appreciation of a gift is always pleasant to the heart of the giver. Often the best pay we can receive for favors are words of gratitude warm from the heart. Any returns unaccompanied by such deep and true emotion of soul we should reject as *worthless*, because *heartless*. There is no reason to doubt that God loves to hear His goodness celebrated in expressions of grateful Praise. The uninterrupted music and worship of Heaven are ever-varied praises, and the living creatures there rest not day nor night to give glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sitteth on the throne. Yes, by the

vocal, affectionate gratitude of our hearts we can convey joy to the heart of God, as by our dumb insensibility to favors we can grieve that heart. And here is a return the poorest can make to the Great Benefactor. In our most abject penury, with nothing but the gifts we have received, there is still the fullness of a loving and thankful spirit we can offer as ours. We can *feel*, we can *speak* our gratitude. We can bring and lay at God's feet, as a free-will offering, that which shall swell the volume of the Divine emotions and minister to the blessedness of the Infinite mind—our poor, but honest and hearty thanks. We can lift, to the hand that has enriched us, our eyes overflowing with warm, grateful tears; and there are no gems of the mines, no jeweled splendors of angel coronets, more lustrous and precious in the sight of God.

My friends, I fear that in our communion with Heaven we do not abound, as we ought, in *praises*. Our addresses to the Supreme we fill up with *confessions*—alas, that there should be so much occasion for these!—and with *petitions*, and doubtless our need is great; and with *intercessions*, and truly there are objects enough for such a memorial; and too often thus our *songs* die out into a burdened minor, or into deep silence. So the goodness of God passes unsung. Oh, we should have more breath for PRAISE. Praise should be a larger element in all our worship, public, social, domestic, and private. Our sad thoughts we should put away, our sorrowful faces we should put off more frequently, and let joyous anthems from Earth to Heaven make our *homes*, and *temples*, and the blue, high arches ring. We should call to each other in those triumphal chants of Israel's royal Harper: "Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make

a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms!”

But, once more: We are to make response to our question, chiefly, as I think, by *bestowing blessings upon others*. “Thou art my Lord,” is the meditation of David. “My goodness extendeth not to thee”—I can not send enriching to the hand of the Sovereign—“but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.” There are channels through which we may reach by our gifts the heart of our Great Benefactor, and these are the wants and sorrows of our fellow-men. “Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee,—or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in, or naked and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them: Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Every cry of want, then, at our door is the voice of Jesus pleading; every groan of an oppressed and burdened humanity is an echo from the heart of Jesus; the low, distant chorus that comes over the sea from Pagan lands, “Send us Light; we perish!” brings the accents of Jesus to our ear. He who gives not for the relief of his needy human brother would not visit the Saviour “sick and in prison.” And every act of kindness we do a poor sufferer in our path, every loaf we cast to the starving, every garment we give to the naked, every cup of cold water to the thirsting, every word of cheer to the disconsolate, every Bible to souls igno-

rant of the way of Life, because of our debt of love to Jesus, renders back to Him, for His benefits toward us, returns which He shall acknowledge when He cometh in the pomp and power of the last great day, and all His holy angels with Him.

The man, then, who asks this question sincerely, out of the earnest emotions of a thankful spirit, overwhelmed with the greatness of its debt to redeeming Love, has his abounding answers. They call to him from all sorrow and suffering; they call from the unevangelized poor around him; they call from the islands of the sea and the continents of gloom; they call in every tattered garb and shivering form and pale, sorrow-worn, outstretched hand and timid voice that asks for alms in honest and doleful need.

The Christian age is counting out now its lengthening scroll by the chime of passing centuries and of thrice as many generations, and yet how circumscribed is the field within which the saving efficacy of its light and truth is known and tested! We have written it "Anno Domini" for almost two thousand years, and yet the most populous kindreds of the one human family have never heard the story that makes the birth of Jesus the most wondrous chapter in the annals of our race. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!" The words quiver with the love and authority that thrill them, and yet we keep our pleasant homes and talk on our trifling themes and interchange our social greetings, and let the "GOOD NEWS," the "GLAD TIDINGS" go unheralded. We send ships of adventure and of scientific exploration to the frozen Pole; we send ships of commerce and trade to populous islands and kingdoms under the burning Equator; we go ourselves on pleas-

ure trips that climb and descend the steep, rounded sides of this our native sphere, girding it with the meeting tracks of our footsteps, and still we have not time, nor strength, nor means to publish the great salvation to the perishing millions of the Human Family.

And it is not simply imperious Duty that we set aside, it is not only royal authority that we disobey—they are not the bonds of human fraternity whose strains we ignore, the plea of brothers' blood; it is the melting claim of gratitude's mightiest debt to which our hearts are so insensible.

Ah, what a joy it should be to us to discover any overture of answering love welcome to our Great Benefactor, any issue dear to His heart which we can serve by the utmost tension of ours, any expression of obedient and faithful loyalty from us, for which He sits waiting on His throne! I hear His voice to-day, "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep; feed my lambs!" I see His wounded hands stretched out as He calls for the reward of His great sacrifice, "the joy that was set before Him" of a redeemed and glorified humanity.

Blessed Master, take us and all that we are and have for this great passion of Thine infinite nature, this costly scheme of salvation for a lost race, this incessant work of doing good to all whom we can reach with blessing, as our humble and thankful return for all Thy benefits!

XVIII.

COMPENSATION.

“And the Lord God prepared a gourd and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. . . .”—
JONAH IV. 6.

THERE is one law of Divine Providence illustrated in this incident of long ago, working silently and ceaselessly in every lot of life, to comfort and cheer our hearts amid whatever ills and losses, whose ministrations we are too apt to overlook or undervalue. We may call it THE LAW OF COMPENSATION, borrowing this term from the science of Comparative Anatomy. It may help our sense of the Goodness of God, and so the expression of our gratitude, to set forth a little, to our thought, the working of this beneficent Law. The significance of this word “COMPENSATION” and its constant presence amid our daily experience may be easily illustrated.

It is, for instance, one of the painful things of social life that friends, loving and beloved, must often part. Life's duties summon each for a time to pursue his separate way. The more their mutual friendship is prized, the higher the value set upon each other's society, the more grieved are they at the necessities which sunder them. They take each other by the hand, they look earnestly upon each other's faces, they speak kindest words, they wave to each other as each disappears from sight their last distant adieu, and the

heart is filled with its sense of loneliness. Use may harden us to all this, but the true heart learns the lesson slowly. These scenes are life's every-day experience, and sometimes there are no griefs like them.

Now, what is the "Compensation"? Why, *this*, in part: it is a new revelation to each of the other's attachment and worth, and so it but endears the twain; and *this*, chiefly, *the luxury of the reunion*. There is no single joy of social life like that of meeting after separation. The face lights up like Nature's at dawn. There is *a thrill* of pleasure, a rapture of emotion very unlike the calm, placid satisfaction of living on in each other's presence day by day, and very far above it. The interest of each for each is concentrated into a moment's expression. The keener and richer sensations of that moment outweigh the pain of parting and the sadness of absence. This is "*Compensation*." And who can doubt that there are stronger affections, more kind offices, and more real happiness in social life, from that ordering of Providence that takes us continually from each other's side only to restore us again, than there would be if we were always together! A man is dearer to his household if the day's toils take him much from their presence, though they love not to have him go. This is COMPENSATION. And we shall find that this experience runs its golden threads through every woof of Life.

Take the Lot of man as appointed by the sentence of the Garden: *Labor, with the sweat of the brow, upon a changed and ungenial soil, fruitful only in thorns and thistles!* Man's activity, but for the sin, had been ever a pleasure and a joy. There had been no weariness nor aching in any ardor of pursuit; no tasking of the muscles till the face were moist with nature's overdoing. There had

been no ruggedness in Earth's wide garden to smooth ; no growth of thorns to uproot and subdue. There had been no tired eyes and aching brains in the darkened fields of thought ; no shattered nerves in the pursuits of art, chasing, through dim avenues, the fleeting forms of grace and beauty ; no "sweat" in gathering, from all harvests, the golden-eared sheaves of Wisdom and Plenty. But now, from youth to age, it is toil, *toil*, TOIL, till the worn laborer lies down, exhausted, to his last sleep. Do we ask what *Compensations* can be found, in such a life of constant hardship ?

Well, for our Laborer in the desert, there is the pleasure of subduing the dreary wastes, and making them like Eden's Garden, green, fragrant, and faithful. It is no common luxury to the Tiller of the soil, and I take him, only, as the representative of all labor, to look out upon his cleared fields and prolific orchards, and level meadow-lands, and think to himself, "These, through the favor of God, by this good right hand I have captured from the wilderness. I have dispossessed the thorn and the thistle. I have made one blade of grass to spring where there was none, and two where there was one. I walk forth where the brambles grew, and my flocks and herds crop the rich, abundant pastures." This joy is real ! It is great, and it repays the Laborer. And so the joy of all acquisition, the pleasure of achieving success, compensates the toil it cost. The *Husbandman* looks upon his full barns and garnered plenty, and thinks no more of the summer heat, and the hardened hand, and the streaming brow. The *Artist* sees, starting from the canvas, or the ivory, or the marble, or breathing from the chords of Music, the ideal form of beauty and

harmony his fancy followed so long in vain, and he thinks no more of the often-baffled pursuit and the weary tension of his nerves. The Philosopher, mining, amid Nature's deep foundations, to find the hidden links that connect her *laws* and *issues*, leaps upon the discovery and shouts "Eureka!" with an ecstasy cheaply purchased by all the toiling years.

And, again: To compensate the lot of Toil, comes the thought that *the Hands of Labor* are the sceptered and bounteous hands that *bestow all blessings upon men*. I mean, that there is no good enjoyed, no pleasure won, no comfort entertained, that owes not its being and charm to some son of toil. The estates of the rich, the inheritance of the heir, the soft couch of idlers, and all the delicacies of refined life cost *once, somewhere*, and from some limbs that wrought with weariness, the price of *hard work*. Good, of various kinds, may come *to us* without our toiling; but it was not produced without somebody's toiling. This is the law of that primal sentence, that everything valuable which man possesses shall be the fruit of the diligent hand. Why, then, THE LABORER is the only and universal benefactor! He is monarch and dispenser of all earthly gifts! The Artisan's low bench is a throne! The Craftsman's tools are royal batons! The producers are earth's true Nobility! Our obeisance is worthily to be made, not in the halls of gilded ease and lounging indolence, but before the anvil and the loom, and in the studio, and by the hum and jar of machinery. He who produces something to help humanity in any of its outward or inward needs, is heir to a truer honor than all the soft idlers of Luxury and Fashion. He may LOOK DOWN, from the

height of his real eminence, upon the silken butterflies he feeds and clothes. Herein, in the *true Dignity of Labor*, in its undeniable relations to human wants and enjoyments, is a "Compensation" so rich and large, that it overpays the embrowning of being *afield*, the dust of *the shop*, and the pale weariness of the *chamber of study*.

We may bring up, also, to our thought *the healthfulness and cheerfulness* which, as a general fact, the Laborer secures. After toil, his bread is sweeter. He has an unfailling relish for his noontide repast. You have no need to tempt him with dainties and delicacies. He has no coy and sickly appetite to be offended at strong meats. He is freer from petty complaints of lassitude and indigestion than they who are waited upon by liveried hirelings. If his *back* ache, his *head* does not. When the night comes, his sleep is like a mantle of Peace from heaven, so deep, and quiet, and refreshing is it; no tossing and wakefulness, and wishing for the morning. And then he has the happiness and cheerfulness of useful activity, "the true bliss of mind." The idle man is never a happy man! His thoughts, unemployed in *doing*, pour out their ceaseless currents in wishing. They create, from sheer loss of something to do, ideal wants and deficiencies, which, when supplied, bring no rest, because they were not real. The way to keep off depression, to banish vain cravings, for which there is nowhere any portion, is to buckle on the harness of exacting and beneficent work. We are happiest when busiest, if busy in useful labor. So that it has come to pass, that by the force of our constitution, and the character of our circumstances, that which was uttered originally as a sentence for disobedience, has become such a ministry of comfort,

that, apart from it, there is no true *peace of mind*. Who can fail to see, in such a *Law of Compensation*, the outshining GOODNESS of the Great Ruler? And what man of us, in the deepest weariness of soul or body, can not look up, brown or pale with toil, and thank God for the solaces and alleviations—nay, shall I not say, the boon of work?—and adore the Mercy that has charmed the sting from the sentence that fell on our first father Adam in the Garden.

But it is time we turn to that portion of the sentence that fell on Eve and her daughters, and ask, what *Compensation* there is with the specialties of Woman's lot?

And, *First*, with the thought of her seclusion within the retired and humble walks of domestic life is associated the *exercise of her most Queenly power*. Mightier is she, in the realm of influences that spreads around the fireside, than councillors behind the throne. Sowing silently, and silently nursing the seeds of Destiny, she shapes the history of the age. She sits by the fountains of streams that are to surge down the vales of Time, like the Mississippi among rivers, and as she directs the little rill, so opens and widens the channel along its farthest reaches, even to the main Ocean. Talk of the inferiority and lowliness of her station—the decree that shut her out from the war and strife of outward life, where the strong passions of men close for the mastery, crowns and robes her as a Queen whom none but herself can depose.

She is the very GENIUS and GODDESS of HOME. Without her presence there is scarce such a *place* or *thought* as "HOME." Give her any of the Domestic names, "Wife," "Mother," "Daughter," "Sister," and where she receives us from our toils, and speaks her kind words and performs her kind

offices, there is the dear ideal of HOME to our hearts. Take her presence from any of our households, and see if that which made the scene a Home to us, is not gone too, and our home left desolate! And by so much as the images of Home are sacred and dear to us all, by so much is her peculiar lot dignified and ennobled. Herein is more than "*Compensation*," there is REWARD.

And then, with the specialty of a Mother's Sorrow, is there the compensative specialty of the Mother's Honor. To lift in her arms a young Immortal, which, though its casket be as frail as the cradle that rocked the infant Moses on the Nile, shall yet measure the stars, and match the height of a spirit's stature, and live as long as God himself, to have all human greatness, great kings, great scholars, great statesmen, great benefactors, come bending at her feet to utter the name of "MOTHER," to be conscious of all this, as she looks upon her infant's face, and clasps it to her heart—is she not *compensated*; is not the bliss more than the sorrow?

And then, the place she keeps in the heart of children! What son is there that speaks not his "*Mother's*" name with a swelling of heart no *time*, or *distance*, or SINNING can utterly suppress? What would not one do to give comfort to her declining years? What would he not dare, to shield her from wrong and harm? Who could reach her to wound her, if his breast might stop the weapon? What a Holy name to be spoken almost next to "God's," "OUR MOTHER!" Dearest image that floats out of the mist of early recollections! Tenderest thought that warms the heart of the sailor amid the ice of Polar seas! Unfailing refuge, amid the sorrows of childhood and the wreck

of Manhood's full-blown hopes! Thus to be remembered and enshrined beyond the reach of all life's chances and changes. Oh, this must be indeed "COMPENSATION" for her sentence, in the joy of which she forgets all its sharpness forever.

And yet, apart from all this, there is one Honor more put upon the woman in her maternity, which eclipses all honor beside conferred on the creature. With the allotment that seemed to press most heavily upon her, as first in the transgression, went forth a promise, then indeed dimly understood, but bright with a glorious meaning, and since fulfilled. She alone was to be PARENT of the Saviour's humanity, MOTHER OF THE SON OF GOD. He had no human Father; HE HAD A HUMAN MOTHER. He slept beneath her heart; He was rocked in her arms; He was her own child! Oh, crowning glory of the sex! Oh, sacred bond between the Saviour and Womankind! The sex that bears lordship on earth was to have no share in this lofty distinction. It belongs to her alone, to whom the sentence appointed a Mother's Sorrow, that, of her, as "Compensation" beyond all price of suffering, He should stoop to be born, who was "The brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person!" Such honors invest the Woman, in her peculiar relation as Mother of the race. Is it not more than it was to be mistress of Paradise and hostess of Angel-guests? To be A WOMAN, is to be the Divinity of Home, the Mother of intelligent life, Mother of the Saviour Jesus, and, by all these ties, nearest to God and Heaven.

And we may glance now, as we proceed, at the "Compensations" found in the walks of *Lowly Life*, and under the cloud of *Affliction*. You who are poor in this world's

goods, need not envy the Rich. Freer are you from cares and burdens than he. Equally open to you are the calm, priceless joys of contented and loving hearts. The stars of domestic Purity, Faith, and Peace shine as brightly on your lowly cottage as on the mansions of wealth. That word "HOME," with all its endearments, has as sweet a charm for your ear and heart, as for the ear and heart of the Master of Millions. Safer are you from change and wreck. The storms that bow the oak, and rift the tower on the hill-top, spare the meadow flowers and the humble lodge that look up meekly from the vale below. And forever, it is on record, that "God hath chosen THE POOR of this world, rich in Faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him."

And if any of you are to-day under the shadow of recent AFFLICTION, if there shall be a vacant chair in every circle of the Family gathering, some sweet face absent, or some venerable form and some pleasant voice silent, brood not the sorrow, but search for the cheer of such a dispensation. Closer about you gather the hearts that love you, warmer upon your cheek comes the breath of sympathy, saying, "Be comforted." Clearer to your eye beam the hopes of Heaven and all its promises of unparting intimacies and undissolving friendships above. "It is *good for me*," said one that had been often and sorely chastened, "GOOD FOR ME that I have been afflicted!" And, oh, if God make us weep that He may visit us with consolation, that He may show us what a Comforter and Rewarder He can be, when earthly portions fail, and earthly ties are riven, most blessed are the tears that herald such smiles, brighter such morning after the shadows of night.

Look up, then, each sad and lonely one. Let us all look to the forgotten blessings that bloom at our side! More are Life's joys than its griefs, and sweeter the joy after the bitterness of the grief! More are the days of sunshine than the days of storm, and brighter the sunshine after the storm! More are the hours of health than the hours of sickness, and more prized the health when the sickness has passed! More are the ministries of comfort than the buffets of misfortune, and dearer the consolation the heavier the calamity! Let this voice, as of a messenger angel, sing to us along all the paths of life.

“Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

XIX.

FOR CHRISTMAS.

CHRIST GIVING LIGHT.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”—EPH. v. 14.

AFTER the Eden gates were shut, the world lay long in darkness. Age added itself to age, as hour to hour, in the slow chimes of that weary and dreary Night. The works of men were deeds of darkness. All that was low and groveling, all that was hateful and malign, wrought itself into humanity's shameful story.

It was as though it had been said, “Let it be seen what the world will do without God!” “Let it be shown whither the lost race will wander, left to itself!” Overhead the stars glimmered, but how far-off and faint! In them shone feebly down the rays of *prophecy* and *promise*, but whether they were *motes* or *worlds*, the dull eyes lifted toward them seemed hardly to care to ask.

At last the darkness paled into morning twilight. The East glowed with the herald flush of coming day. The finger of Prophecy pointed no longer over the far levels to some distant, unborn future, but downward to some grand epoch about to open. Forerunners of the MESSIAH, the anointed revealer of God and restorer of man, began to cross the stage with port and gesture that intimated they

were followed close by some illustrious advent. Behind them came the long-promised, the long-expected. Christ was born! Heaven made a Jubilee over the event. The Sun of Righteousness had risen. The Day had come!

“This is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” They that have been illumined by these beams, and walk in their guiding effulgence, are called “*Children of the Light.*”

But though this risen Sun walks the heavens in a brightness such as earth never saw before, though every man that is born, is born into this light, how many love darkness rather than light, and will not come to the light; and are as those who sleep after the morning has broke and the day come up. There is a land of light and a land of darkness beneath the same illumined sky,—a “Goshen” in the midst of “Egypt.” Our Scripture assumes, that only those who have received Christ are really awake and truly see. Other men walk about like those that walk in their sleep. Objects are shadowy and indistinct to them. They do not seem to realize whither they are going, nor by what they are surrounded. There is no speculation in their eyes. They are *open*, and gaze forward; but they seem not to see, or to be fastened only upon dreamlike fancies. The Christian is awake. He has done dreaming. He alone truly sees. What is *shadow* and what is *substance* is clear to him. Illusions have vanished. Earth, Man, and Time look to him as they are. The mysteries of God’s ways and works are problems, the solution of which, he touches. He walks forth amid an intelligible Universe, and beholds the wondrous architecture of God’s sovereign plan, built up stone by stone,—pillar lifted after pillar,—and the domed grandeur of its glorious complete-

ness spanning and crowning all. LIGHT UPON THE REALITY OF THINGS SHINES ONLY IN CHRIST. This is the sentiment I have now to illustrate, as the circling months bring us again the birth-night of the Son of Mary and of God: the anniversary of the cradle scene in Bethlehem. No true estimate of that Divine System amid which we dwell, and a part of which we are, is possible without the inshining of the radiance which streams from Christ.

Take the very FIRST FACT of that system: *The Being and character of God*. Can we know God without Christ? How much can we learn of Him by the light of what we call "Natural Religion"? We have glimpses of a POWER that could pile the thrones of monarch mountains, that could shut the seas in their caverned deeps, that could poise the white avalanches, that could roll the sable clouds on thunder edges, that could stretch over the breadth of space the illimitable arch, and hang along the azure ceiling the golden-globed lamps of shining worlds!

We are astonished at the WISDOM that could carry on its thought the vastness of this comprehensive whole, arrange details and proportions, perfect the elaborate mechanism of each part, and compact the whole into the harmonious Universe! We reason that this Power and Wisdom must be everywhere present and active; that this creative energy must be *older* than its first out-working, and that on its brow there must rest the shadow of a *Kingly Crown*. We say we *know* this by the light of Nature; perhaps we can prove it by the witness of Nature. But it may be doubted whether we could have learned so much without a Revelation. But we have no Revelation, IN ANY PERIOD OF BEING, but by Christ! He alone, since the morning of Time, has

“*declared*” God. Every incarnation, in the older ages, through which God communed with men, was the costume of the Eternal Word, whose office it is, in all worlds and to all creatures, to voice forth the Infinite One. But for these supernatural glimpses, while as yet the Babe of Bethlehem had never drawn breath, this supreme, invisible, inevitable Power might have seemed to us, not a Being with *heart*, and *soul*, and *will*, but a blind, deaf, soulless, remorseless *Despotism*, with some principle of organizing skill—an interior crystallizing vitality that shot forth into forms of beauty, and life, and systems of order, but with no more distinct, central, conscious feeling and intelligence than a dumb, iron-footed FATE!

But, taking Him without dispute, revealed in Nature as a personal God, Self-existent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Supreme!—is this all we need to know of Him? This is only His *nature*, not His *character*. “*Omnipotent WHAT?*” we ask. “*Omniscient what?*” The answers to these questions will make us tremble or hope! Is He good? Is He benevolent? Is He kind? Put these questions to Nature! She lifts a hundred confused voices in reply: “He made flowers to bloom, and suns to shine, and birds to sing. He clothed the fields in green, and gave the seed its germinant life, and nurtures harvests with summer rains, and reddens the cheek of autumn fruits, and yellows the corn, and sends to wearied toil the grateful alternation of Night with Day.” Yes. But these are only part of the voices. He armed the *Thistle* with bristling spikes; He tapered and sharpened the *Thorn*; He gave the *Serpent* its deadly fang. He made the cloud a magazine of thunderbolts. He blows with His northern blast; He casts forth

ice like morsels. He fills the forest with the roar of savage throats. He breathes the plague, the pestilence, and the mildew. He hurls the fierce tempest on land and sea, on mast and tower, and darkens all the wintry air with gloomy frowns and slanting sleet. Who is He? What is this God? These voices jangle on our ear. Nature's testimonies are contradictory, showing that the truth concerning God is a more comprehensive whole than she can disclose. We can not know Him as we need to know Him till we see Him in Christ. We can not tell whether we can go to Him; by what name to call Him; how His heart beats toward us. One only tongue, the tongue that said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly," spells out to our trembling souls God's name of "Love," and bids us, when we pray, say "OUR FATHER!"

Again: From this source only have we light upon the *meaning and mystery of Life*. To-day I am conscious of a vital being. I can look back a few years and recall an experience that had its birth-hour not long ago. I can see my foot-prints lessening from the present to where they began at the cradle's side. Here's earth underfoot; there's the sky above; before me, a blank, receding wall of mist. Around me are my fellows drifting on with me into this cloud. Within are confused and conflicting forces, changeful moods, embryo powers, germs of capacities and aspirations, tending I can scarcely say whither. What am I? Whence came I? For what end was I born? What can be made of me? Wherein do I realize my true destiny, the end of my being? Not till Jesus appears and says, "Look unto me"; calls to me as to the fishermen at Genesaret, "Follow me!" lifts me up after Him to His cross,

and shows me from that elevation my work and my reward, do I or can I translate the enigma of Life.

Again: None but Christ can illumine the darkness that hangs over God's Providential Dispensations. The Almighty One takes in hand some happy family—happy in His blessings, though not proficient in the deepest love of obedience and trust. Shadows gather over it. The clouds roll up dark and threatening. The bolts smite, crashing down. There is *sorrow* in this home. There is *want* there. There is *sickness, anxiety, harassing care*. There is DEATH and the desolation of Bereavement. Now, until Christ rise upon them they will stumble on in the dark. What all this means they do not know. It seems to them harsh and hard, an unkind discrimination. Why should the storm have burst just there and spent its fury upon their heads? They are sore at heart, rebellious, insubmissive. It is vain to try to vindicate God's ways to them. Goodness, Fatherly Goodness, could not express itself in such sharp inflictions! But if, in this deep midnight, Christ reveal Himself; if they are led thus to seek Him, and to find Him, as a Friend, and Brother, and Saviour, they will bless Him with streaming eyes for that sable past. It will be radiant with outshining Mercy. Never did a black cloud hold so much of blessing! From out the dark, retiring storm they will sing, "first in Night's Diadem,"

"Forever and forever more,
The Star—the Star of Bethlehem."

So, also, is it with the soul weighed down with *the sense of Sin*. The burden is too heavy to bear. Conscience reprobates; the wrath of God threatens; the guilty past accuses; the

gloomy future frowns. Which way for Peace? One belief is tried, and pacifies the trouble for a while; then breaks like a reed and pierces the hand that leaned upon it. Some other system is embraced, some new doctrine pillows the weary soul; there is a momentary, dreamy rest, and then all the old solitudes and fears reawaken; passion is strong, selfishness unslain, habit iron-linked, and there is yet no deliverance for the captive. Poor, struggling, bewildered spirit, vainly expending all its strength, putting forth desperate efforts to no purpose but to sink itself deeper; lifting with straining muscle upon itself, it wants a hand above to take hold of and cling to. Christ stretches down His hand, warm like our own with human flesh and blood. He sets before us an open door. True Light, abiding Peace, sure salvation come only from Him, and are ours only when He is ours. He gives the troubled inquirer light by giving Himself. He is Light and Strength and Peace.

Here is the only clear illumination amid all the *Christian's doubts and perplexities*. The Christian's life is, like all other life but God's, progressive. This progress is *step by step*. With each lifted foot some new difficulty presents itself to be surmounted, some fresh trial to be endured, some fear to be overcome, some doubt to be solved, some duty to be performed, some uprising appetite that seemed dead or dying to be grappled with and bound in chains. Questions start up in the soul, "What means this phase of my experience?" "What shall I believe concerning this doctrine?" "How shall I meet this practical hindrance?" "How can I walk constantly with God and attain that 'perfect Love' which 'casteth out Fear'?" Now, if in any of these perplexities the eyes turn anywhere away from Christ, if they go searching

amid the obscurities of human reason, looking at the capabilities of the natural heart, studying human standards, and poring over the issues of human experience in the past ages, we shall surely let in upon us only a tide of darkness, beneath which our life shall be in peril of being utterly stifled. This is our blessed privilege, to lift and set down every step in the assured confidence and comfort of *Faith* and *Hope*. "Christ shall give thee Light!" Do you suppose this promise could fail—not *in general*, not *as the rule*, but *once*, ONCE! What is the Christian's strait? Are his feet ensnared by the Adversary? Does some question of casuistry stumble him? Is he afraid to take God at His word? Is he feeble of apprehension than the original Mr. "Feeble-Mind," of the old "Pilgrim" story; more a cripple than his companion, Mr. "Ready-to-Halt"? Why, the more he feels all this, the more he is thereby recommended to this gracious help, this celestial charity of Christ.

How long, my brother, have you called yourself *a Christian*? Perhaps you have grown gray since the day you professedly put on Christ. How much have you advanced in *knowledge* and *love* and *joy* and *peace* and *consecration* since that birth-hour of long ago? Here has almost gone another year of this celestial pilgrimage. Are you nearer heaven than when its morning chimes broke on your ear? Does the Light stream from afar with brightening effulgence on your way, on your brow, into your eyes? Oh, have you tested, by an appropriating faith, what Christ could do for you?

The spherical completeness of the Christian's life is in Christ. You want Him—nothing but Him! Write down this one unalterable determination, as this memorial Sabbath recalls the manger scene of Bethlehem and gives out also the

farewell of the passing year, "FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL TAKE JESUS CHRIST AS MY ALL IN ALL!"

And our Scripture calls, oh how earnestly, to any that sleep—sleeping over all the changes that have chronicled themselves in your persons and in your character as these ripening months have fled; sleeping while all the uncertainties of the future stand veiled at your side, while eternity, with its changeless issues, takes one stride nearer to you. Hear, each of you, this call of all that love your soul and desire your immortal welfare, "Awake! look up! Through all brooding shadows, look to Christ and He 'shall give thee light!'"

And if it be too dazzling, if it seem too daring for you to gaze upon the throned Glory, come to the lowly cradle in Judea, journey thither with the shepherds from the pastoral hills and the Christian pilgrims of all the lands of earth; take the infant Saviour into your arms and into your heart; worship Him, while

"Angels sing
"Glory to the new-born King!"

And the singing voices, with still increasing tenderness and sweetness, shall chant the happy issue:

"Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

XX.

FOR THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

DECLINING DAY.

“ Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.”--JER. vi. 4.

THE hour of declining day is naturally to most minds an hour of pensive thoughtfulness. The sun is sinking. The light is fading. A misty veil is spreading over the landscape. We cease from work and fall to musing. The evening lamp is not yet brought in, and daylight changes to twilight.

We recall the hopes and the vigor of the morning and contrast them with the present weariness, and perhaps some sense of disappointment. Our longing for rest may hint to us our frailty. Our thoughts go forward to the sunset hour of Life, the time of final disrobing; and under these mingled influences our souls sit silent, if not sad.

But this natural pensiveness is not the mournful chord which tones our Scripture.

There are not a few who exchange with the parting day cheerful salutations. The laborer in the field, who lifted there his first stroke of toil with the first beam of morning, who has wrought through all the bright hours, pausing briefly at high noon for his simple and hurried repast, lifts his eye

to the westering sun with the glad thought that his day's work is nearly over. He sees his shadow stretching away eastward into giant proportions, not only without a feeling of sadness, but with the pleasant assurance of a speedy release from his task. Homeward roves his fancy, where the cotter's cheer and the cotter's welcome, the smoking table-cup and the lighting of familiar faces, await his coming. Drive faster down the steep, O charioteer of the Sun; the tired field-hand reckons you an ally and friend of his! Willingly would he see your glowing axles disappear behind the gates of the West!

With some such feeling, too, the Christian pilgrim finds himself nearing the close of his earthly journey. His day of toil has been full long. He begins to feel the Old Man's longing to be at home. He has been detained many a year from his Father's house. He misses some from his side who have entered in before him. There is rest within and dear communion and pleasant festival; will not his call come soon? He is footsore with the length of the way; is he not almost there? The evening twilight is to him as the morning's dawn. The star, that hangs so bright in the deepening dusk, is the usher of a more golden day. He regrets not his vanished *Youth*, nor his waning *Manhood*. All his soul is in the gaze with which he looks forward. He has not come to the end of his joys; he is just reaching out to their more satisfying fullness. He is not parting from his treasures; he is going, even now, to inherit. If there be some things he is loath to leave, yet his gain is to be rich and grand. His step may be slower and heavier, but his heart is lighter continually, and his pulses of Hope quicker and stronger.

Let the day go away! Let the shadows stretch out! Swift be the descent of the yet lingering sun! Sooner shall he be at his own Father's door. He is well content to lay aside *Sin* and *Grief* and *Pain*, with mortality; to exchange EARTH for HEAVEN.

Whose, then, is the plaintive voice that pours itself out in these accents of Lamentation, "Woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out"? It is the voice of *those who have invested their all in this life and feel that this life is slipping away from their grasp.*

1. How many there are, all whose schemes of success and achievement respect the Present only! They have not a plan that reaches beyond "the life that now is." The things which they covet, the enjoyments for which they are athirst, the final ends and rewards that stimulate hope and toil, lie this side the curtain that separates "Now" from "Hereafter." Let them ask themselves at any point of their career, let another ask them, what the prize is for which with such ardor of pursuit they are striving, and the honest answer will name a good that ripens beneath these earthly skies. If they have won it, THE PRESENT only has the gift. It can not dower the Future. These mortal years are the years in which they are to attain and enjoy. Half of them must be given to the chase perhaps; but the other half shall be years of possession and fruition. Those comforted and portioned years are what they strike for; and beyond, for the endless future, they have made no provision—they have no abiding investment.

2. Now, the time will come to such men, when the sensation of *receding life* will run, sharply, through soul and

body. They will awake suddenly to the fact, perhaps, or the conviction will gather slowly and coldly upon their heart that "the best of their days" are behind them. "Hitherto" will be the strain of their thought, "hitherto" it has been *Forenoon* with us, our sun mounting yet higher on his climbing path; for awhile he seemed to stand still overhead—it was *Noon*. Now it is *Afternoon*. The flaming orb is dropping down the western descent. Up to the hour of noon the tide of vigor and strength, with bright crested waves of toil and enterprise, was on *the flood*; then it lingered at *the full*; now, it has turned, it is *EBB TIDE*. When men with whom this life is all they have planned for and labored for, come to feel so and to speak so, a shadow falls across their spirits. They may utter no lamentation, but, unvoiced, the sad monosyllable that ushers in our text is in their hearts.

3. To such eyes there is no comfort in looking forward. It is only he who is hastening on to meet a reconciled Father, and receive from His hand a crown of Righteousness, who can "reach forth to the things that are before." This *reaching forth* is the attitude of Faith and Hope. It is the most significant posture of the child of God. The Future is his. That way lies his Inheritance. He stretches out eager arms. When shall he embrace his portion? But to one, all whose coveted riches are in this life, "the things before," as the step crosses the Meridian, are not inviting. *Declining strength, gathering infirmities, whitening locks, the stoop* that repeats the body's sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," the leave-taking, the lonely forward drift; these wake no glad pulses in the soul. This man's attitude is that of one leaning back re-

gretfully toward the past. For him the sunshine is behind, the night is ahead.

4. He can not well, if he would, shut out the contrasts between his earlier and these later days. He recalls his youthful aspirations, and all his youthful types of life. Once it may have seemed enough for him, if his material wants could be supplied. If he could eat well, and sleep well; if his bodily comforts could be cared for; if he could sit down to some inviting relish with every noon, or under the half shadow of early evening; if his thirst could be slaked with pleasant draughts; if he could drape himself in fitting costume for all the round of the year, and all the seasons and varieties of social fellowship; if he could move among his peers, with a personal equipment, upon which rested no stigma of inferiority or incompleteness, *that* would once have satisfied and contented him. It was not a very lofty scheme of life, it presented no very exalted range of enjoyment, but he remembers when it was enough to occupy and absorb him. He is past that now. At least such gratification is of less price than it was. Its old zest is gone. And even if the relish were as keen as ever, the entertainment will soon be over; the seasons come and go with the swiftness of a weaver's shuttle; his day is waning, his shadow lengthening, the good for the body is a good he can grasp but a little longer. *Woe is him! The night is coming down!*

Or once, perhaps, his brightest dream was *a dream of pleasure*. He loved to move from scene to scene of *mirth* and *gaiety*. He coveted to be the life of young companionship, the cynosure of joyous circles. He would not think disturbing thoughts, lest they should sober him and plow

brooding furrows on his brow. Care and solitude he rejected, and reckoned life as a cloudless summer day, in which this butterfly existence was the truest wisdom and the supremest bliss. There are those who sport thus an insect being, as gay, as decorated, as unconscious of momentous realities, as light of mood and motion, as empty of soul longings and the disquiet of immortal capacities as the Ephemera, whose noon of life is the noon of day, and on whose grave the dews weep at nightfall. Once, this man was content with such a brilliant round, living a life, not of *thought*, but of *sensation*, and finding that enough for him. But that dream is past. All his appliances and furnishing for that type of life have changed with him. Such scenes are memories now; not possibilities any longer. The day goeth away. He can not stay one of these young fascinations, nor the tribute they bore him.

His past may indeed have been one of more moment and breadth. He may have been a man of large plans, of wise counsels, and of unflagging energy. He has summoned all his faculties to their work. He has been watchful of opportunities. He has communicated impulse and movement to Society. But his ends have been near and personal. The whole scope of these strong-corded endeavors has been bounded by the present. All the agencies he has harnessed, have, so far as he has sought their service, wrought in earthly fields. He has been, let us say, very successful. He might break off from work now, and find his daily charges met for the rest of his days. He has built him a mansion to shelter his family and to welcome his guests. Around him his garden blooms, his fruits ripen, vineyard and harvest yield their increase. What does he want more? Well, this

is all which he once thought he wanted. In the pursuit of it, it seemed a most satisfying prize. Even now it gratifies his taste and serves his convenience. But TIME has not stood still with him. It will not stand still with him. It will not wait for him to possess and enjoy. There he sits under his own vine and fig-tree. The vine flourishes; the fig-tree will endure for half a score of generations. But, *he* changes daily. The clusters may hang low and purple, season after season; but whose hand shall reach up to them? His trembles already, as he stretches it forth. The walk shall not long echo to his tread, nor the house long call him "master." He sought for competence, for wealth. He has them. His arms are full; but they can not sustain their coveted burden. They lose steadiness and strength, day by day. He begins to discover that it is so. His possessions are not gliding from him, but he is drifting away from them. Fibre by fibre, strand after strand, the cable, by which he is anchored to the pleasant roadstead where he has lain moored for a little while, is parting. A current he can not resist is bearing him out to the great and wide Sea.

I am not speaking, my friends, of the very aged; but of those who know, by many a token, that they are past their prime. Silver lines are in their hair. They borrow help from art, as they read the daily news. Their children are migrating to establishments of their own. They begin to cherish, especially, the society of friends, with whom they can talk over the histories of other days. The "day," their day, is going away. Lengthily, the shadows stream and stretch. They find their sun of life, as they look up, in the western sky; and all the voices of change within

them and around them, softly lisping, "Passing on, and passing away."

Such voices are in the ear of some of you, my dear friends! You are not sick, nor pale, nor laid aside from private work, nor public care, nor official stations. You are as busy as ever; more trusted it may be, more honored, more relied upon; but you feel and know that the end is nearer. You often think of sparing yourselves in something. You are prompted to exercise a little more prudence than once. You come in at an earlier hour. You write or send where once you would have gone in person. Time's *fingers* are touching you. Presently the weight of his hand will press you more sensibly, and bow you more heavily. Life is passing over you.

And with some of you, THIS LIFE CONTAINS YOUR ALL. Your treasures are here. Your friendships are here. Your pleasant ministrations are from earthly seasons and earthly fruitage. What your busy hands have gathered, are accumulations laid up here. What your laboring thoughts have projected are schemes to be wrought before the sunset. What your ardent hopes have pursued are prizes within the horizon of the present. Looking forward, and beyond, there is no voice of welcome, nor face of welcome, nor heritage of unfading good, waiting your coming.

Ah, how wistfully you will clasp to your heart all you are loving and leaving! The Christian lets go these perishable things without a pang; for his riches are stored across the river, beyond the flood. Walk over your pleasant grounds again; sit down with the inventory of your possessions. How many springs of gratification you have opened for yourself! You are just ready to enjoy. You need, more than ever,

these appliances for ease and rest and cheer. May you not yet sit long in the midst of them? Why not? What is that shiver that passes over you? A touch of the palsy of age. Look down—your shadow has changed sides. Look up—the sun has passed the meridian. “So soon?” you ask, with bated breath. Yes, already. You have furnished and provided well in all the veins of material good; but THE TIME shortens fast. If you could only remain as you are, you would not ask for youth, or for reveling, or for laughter and passion, but alone for quiet and sober enjoyment. And even as you wish, the golden floods of sunlight are paler by one ray the less—one shade the more. Up from your heart, riven with this sudden cold conviction, whispers the keen anguish, “Woe unto us, for the day goeth away, the shadows of evening are stretched out!”

I would sadden you to-day, on this last Sabbath of the passing year, with these faithful and friendly words. You will struggle bravely, perhaps, against the sensation of *feeling old*. You will not allow the near midnight, that opens and closes the grave of a year, to chill the red currents in your veins. You will keep a young heart, and enter into youthful sympathies, and move and walk and talk with the unabated freshness of your early summer, and say on another morning, “Happy New Year!” with as clear and ringing a tone as your lips ever lent the salutation in the joyous past. But you can not keep such accents long. If you use the words, the lips and the voice will quiver. Whatever happy greetings the tongue may speak for dear kindred, it will reveal a minor capacity, as it turns in vocal communion with the haunting thought, “The day is going—the evening shadows are gathering.”

Oh, you want another portion,—a treasure yonder ; something to fly to with an eagerness that shall make the transit a joy and not a dread ! You want God as your Friend and Redeemer—known, reconciled, loved, trusted, communed with—waiting to receive you to the everlasting mansions.

Turn to Him now ! Change your investment. Transfer your interest. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Put all your hopes into His hand. Say deliberately, solemnly, finally, “I give up the lower good. I let go of all I have desired and hoarded. I choose HIM as my good, and look to Him from henceforth as my wealth and my content here and hereafter.” He only waits this choice of your heart. When your affections move, when you take off your hands from the earthly inheritance, and stretch them, empty, toward Him, He answers back, “*I am yours* ”; and beyond the darkening day and the deepening evening shadows, your glad eyes shall see the breaking of the eternal morning.

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