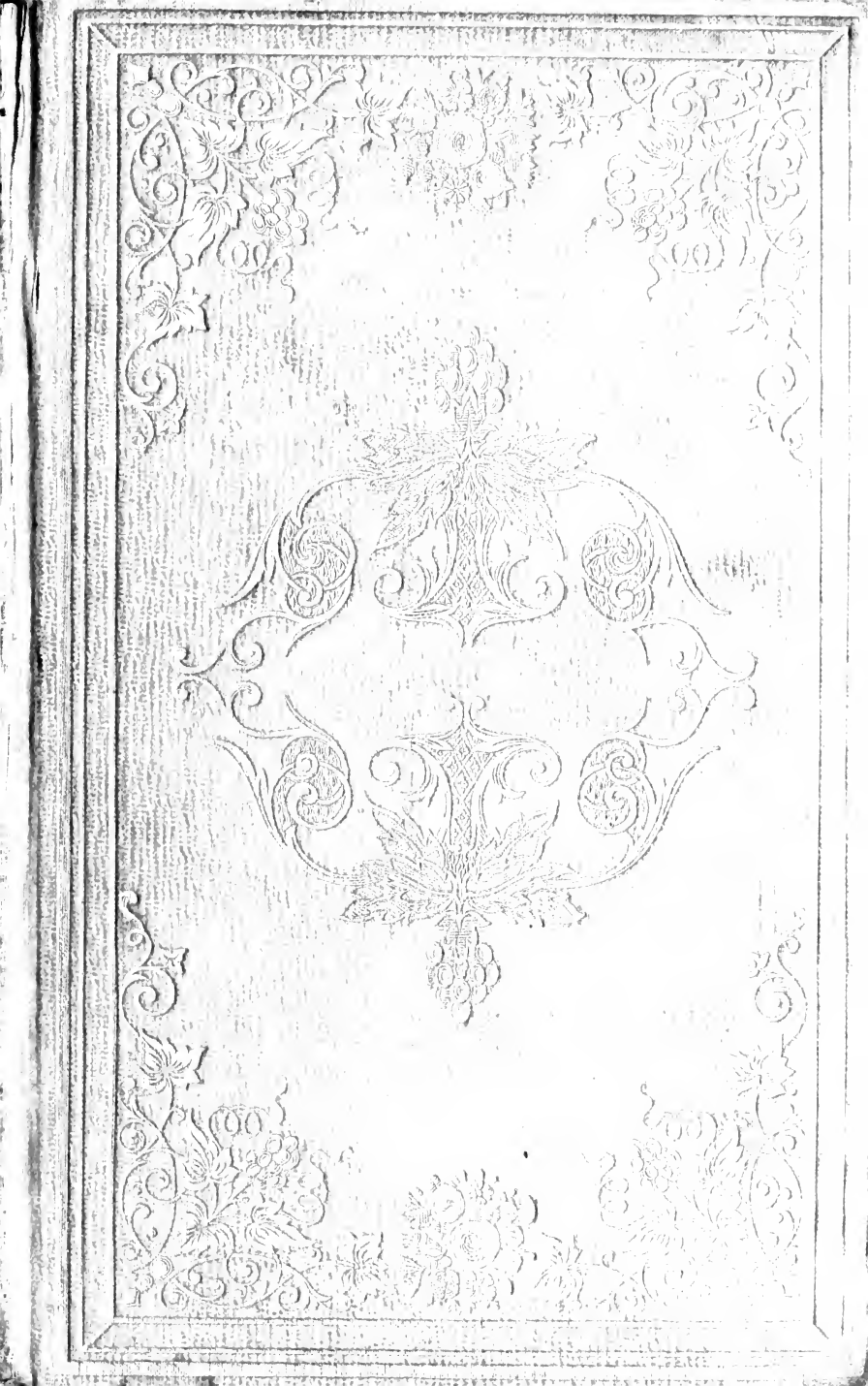

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THE PASTOR'S BEQUEST.

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SELECTIONS

FROM

THE SERMONS

OF

REV. HENRY BACON.

EDITED BY

MRS. E. A. BACON.

"A volume precious with thy name,
And latest records—all that love can save."

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TO

The Universalist Societies

IN

EAST CAMBRIDGE, HAVERHILL, MARBLEHEAD, PROVIDENCE

AND PHILADELPHIA,

OF WHICH

MR. BACON WAS PASTOR,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE following Sermons are presented to the reader as the last work of the author, and as a memorial of his ministry. Unaccomplished though the work may have seemed, when no guide was left for its arrangement, save a Prospectus dictated when the sands of life were running low, and a list of about half the contents found among his papers, his choice of subjects decided the tone and spirit of the book, and has been my guide in completing it.

Those who were interested in his life and labors may receive this volume as an interpreter of his thoughts on life and duty, his cheerful views of death and his unclouded hope of immortality.

Continually "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," a peculiar tone was imparted to his ministry; and one has truly said, "He was not a

theological or a reformatory preacher, though theology and reform were a large staple of his material; but he was eminently a 'spiritual preacher;' one whose religious life underlies, forms, colors and permeates all his opinions and forms of utterance."

May those who once received the Gospel in its fulness from his living voice, accept these gleanings from the harvest of thought that he has left, as peculiarly their heritage.

E. A. B.

MAY, 1857.

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SERMON I.

THE GOLDEN RULE VITALIZED.

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. — Matt. vii: 12.

THIS is called the Golden Rule, because it embodies a principle of action most precious in its results to society. It is an indirect assertion of Human Brotherhood, leading us beyond nations, clans and classes, to our simple humanity whatever its form or condition. It is an argument against isolation, narrowness, selfishness, and makes the necessity of sympathy apparent — that sympathy by which we make another's situation our own, and thus discover our duty to him. And yet farther: this precept makes Christian duty a matter of thought, reflection, careful deduction from principles, so that if, in any given case, we do not find a precept made for us pointing out our duty, we can make one for ourselves. This answers the objection which some Christians have to a new form of moral action when they say, "there

is no precept in the New Testament which demands this." It is unreasonable, we answer, to suppose that Christianity goes no further in its precepts than what are laid down in the New Testament. The farther the age of the Apostles extended, the more questions came up, and all of them were answered by the application of the vital principles of the Gospel; and had that age been miraculously continued to the present day, new precepts would have been drawn from a like application of Christian doctrine to Christian duty as circumstances and exigences required. So with our law books and new questions in law.

It would seem that every possible case might be covered by some specific law, or decision of some Court or Judge, but it is not so. On this ground many a criminal escapes; many a simple case is long protracted by the subtleties of legal argument; and many an assumption of power is made by Judge and Jury. Paley has well said, "had the same particularity which obtain in human laws, so far as they go, been attempted in the Scriptures, throughout the whole extent of morality, it is manifest they would have been by much too bulky to be either read or circulated, or rather, as St. John says, 'even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.'"

This is true, and it should awaken us to consider more the culture demanded by Christianity, that we guard ourselves against that conservatism which seems to suppose that every case of human duty has been legistated upon by either the Saviour or his Apostles.

The true comprehensiveness of Christian duty is, to be as cautious not to refuse to *apply* great principles to *new* questions of moral action, as not to *withdraw* from the principles themselves. Like the mariner or shipmaster, we must not only be careful that our compass is right, that the ship's course may be correctly steered night and day, but we must also be cautious that nothing be in the way to cause a local derangement of the Magnet, lest that upon which we depend for guidance should lead to rocks and shoals and shipwreck.

The text, then, must ever vindicate Christianity as a Religion of Culture — a Religion that prompts to a perpetual vigilance against the power of custom, the appeal of precedent, and demanding of us the moral heroism that says, we will *make* a precedent if there is none, we will be faithful to our light though the ages have been blind ; for of all the things we would have men do, fidelity to principle is the most important — principle in its application to present exigences, showing new methods of progress, and opening new discoveries of eternal things.

Two things are now to be noticed in reference to the text — this Golden Rule :—

First, in some form, this precept is found among many nations, Heathen and Jewish. It is one of those great ideas which appear to be common property of humanity, and in all ages to witness to a common feeling of rectitude, a universal sense of honor and right. In *Wetsteins' Notes* there are given many examples of the presence of this precept among

strangely diversified nations. Quotations may be made from classic and Rabbinical writings which contain a similar thought; and it is beautiful to see how grand ideas of Right and Duty vindicate the eternal rectitude of human nature, and show that, despite "the Fall," the image of God is still in the soul. And it is this which makes the popular form of Christianity abhorent to the thoughtful and sympathetic soul. It outrages the universal sentiment of honor and right. It presents the Diety as acting on a lower principle than he holds up for man, and makes the law of Heaven the iron rule of doing to others as they have done to us. And while the sentiment of our text is the common property of our race, witnessing to an idea of rectitude as inherited from the Creator, we can always hope for the advance of our liberal religion, as it is in harmony therewith. Men holding to the dogmas of Total Depravity, of the arbitrary Election of some and Reprobation of others, and the condemnation of our race to endless wrath because of the sin of Adam, must have awful contests with the intuitive principles or sentiments of honor and right, or of what the great law of Equity demands. It will not do to ask of men to act on a high plane of generous sympathetic regard, and then present them, as the Diety of such a religion, a God who renders evil for evil and smites with the sceptre of endless wrath. And eloquently, and truthfully as eloquently, has the author of "The Conflict of Ages," in speaking of the principles of honor and right common to all, said, "It has been the great evil of other

ages, that principles like these, although avowed, have not been consistently carried out. They need to be exalted, made prominent, and insisted on. If true at all, they are to all created beings the most momentuous truths in the universe of God. They are like a full orbed sun, in the centre of all created existence. No system can be truly seen but in their light. No system can be true which really contravenes them. For God is all glorious, all holy, all just, all honorable, all good. He cannot but observe the principles of honor and right. For though he often dwelleth in thick darkness, and deep clouds are his pavilion, yet now and evermore righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

The second consideration I designed to present in reference to the text is this: Misbelievers or Infidels erect on their basis of the universality and antiquity of the idea of the text, an argument against honor to Jesus. In one of our Daily papers, the past week, in a correspondence on "Christianity a Failure," a writer speaks of the good precepts and sentiments which may be culled and presented as Christianity, and then adds: "Suppose I find the same or similar notions in Zoroaster, Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, or Socrates, long before Christianity was dreamt of, can I help the conviction that these good precepts and sentiments were stolen from the Heathen? They are not the integral part of Christianity, and are only put in to give value to the rest."

This is common talk on the part of modern unbe-

lievers. The most learned among the early Christians labored to show that Christianity was not something entirely novel, but in harmony with the best things of the best minds in all ages, and now these things are put forward as an argument that Christianity is made up of patch-work — its good precepts and sentiments are not an integral part — that is, do not belong to its wholeness, but are put on, as the painter puts on certain jewels to his picture of Venus which he was not able to make handsome; or they were as the jewels the children of Israel took with them when they went out of Egypt.

Now there are at least three answers to this common objection to Christianity.

It is not the preceptive portion of Christianity which gives it its highest value. To speak of "good sentiments and precepts *put in* to give value to the rest," is preposterous, inasmuch as the Doctrines of Christianity have a pre-eminent value in and of themselves. They inevitably suggest good sentiments and precepts. If all the precepts and sentiments of all the philosophers named had died with them, the doctrines of Christianity would have re-created all that was good and true. Take Democracy, as an illustrations. Suppose all the good sentiments which ever were put forth under all other forms of government had perished when Democracy was born bright and beautiful to the apprehensions of men. Would it not, as a doctrine, or principle, or as a combination of doctrines and principles, have suggested sentiments and precepts as good as ever met the eye or ear of

humanity in any age, among any people! That a Democracy has laws and institutions which have been adopted or originated under other governments, is no argument that these are not an *integral* part of Democracy. They are not *put in* as a mechanical addition, but absorbed as something made for its life; and this but shows that the ages have been a unity — that humanity is an organic whole — that the labors of one age are for another, and Democracy, as we have it, is the flower and consummation of Political Economy — the aggregate wisdom of all thoughts of free institutions. So with Christianity. It never claimed to stand apart from the preceding ages. Man had not only *dreamed* of, but *prophecied* it. It claimed an organic, a final union with them. "I came not," said Jesus, "to *destroy*, but to *fulfil*." What was old and decriped died of natural decay; but whatever was good, that had any element of eternal freshness, lived; and Christianity became the flower and consummation of all religious truth. Hence, the New Testament is always appealing to the Old; the Apostles are always venerating whatever is good among the Heathen; and at Athens the centre of Philosophy, Paul, when speaking of the divine Fatherhood and against the worship of idols, joyfully used the Heathen poets as he said, "As certain *also* of *your own* poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.'" This sentiment is in Aratus and Cleanthes, and Paul quoted what the former wrote three hundred years before.

To make the good sentiments and precepts of

Christianity stolen jewels gives to the New Testament writers a range of learning that cannot be claimed for them. It supposes them to have had a key to every cabinet from Egypt to Greece, and to be greater masters of Mosaic work than the world ever knew. No, the sentiments and precepts of Christianity flowed out of the inspired soul of Christ. If they were gathered from all times and peoples, then it was God who gathered them, as the Sun is supposed to draw back the rays of light which have illuminated the globe, and to pour them down again in the sunshine of to-day.

But again: Because we can hunt up sentiments and precepts by searching the literature of the world, that is no reason for accusing any person of theft because that person publishes the like. Children, who never read a single author, are frequently found uttering the most profound maxims; and the ancient reverence for a little child was prompted by the idea that it came fresh and uncontaminated from the Diety; and old philosophers thought that this wisdom could be accounted for on no other ground than the hypothesis, that knowledge in this life was but the memory of a former existence.

It is a narrow criticism that makes resemblances proofs of theft; and it is astonishing to see what some critics call resemblances, not having power to penetrate to the fulness of the significance of one expression in contrast with the limit of another. It is with authors as with inventors:—Authors publish the same

idea in a book as Inventors do in a machine or process of art, unknown to each other. Any scientific work which records the doings of inventors in different countries, will furnish many instances of the same invention in widely separated countries. A learned man has asserted that the only original portion of the Lord's prayer is the petition relating to forgiveness; but before this can be proved, the previous question must be settled, "Had Jesus access to these Rabbinical writings and did he use them?" What was original with Christ, and what might be hunted up among all the writings of the laws, are quite different matters. But admitting the existence of the parts, is the symmetrical whole not an originality? This brings me to the last proposition:—

Whatever may have been anticipated of the good sentiments and precepts of Christianity by master spirits before Christ, the originality of Christianity holds good on the ground of the symmetrical harmony of its parts, its perfection as a whole, and the vitality imparted to all sentiments and percepts by the doctrines and life of Jesus Christ. Here was originality to a grand degree. The doctrines of Jesus in their fulness were no stolen jewels put into the ears of a corpse; and from whence did he steal that Divine Life of his? It is a humiliating process for the unbeliever to go through his famous ranks of Philosophers and see with what absurd superstitions they united the fine sentiments and good precepts which are so much applauded. Their doctrines did not uphold

these precepts any more than the doctrines of the popular Church can support the Golden Rule. In Jesus we see something peculiar. He vitalized his precepts. The words that *he* spake were "spirit and life." Whatever of sentiment or precept that existed before his time, were as the elements of modern discoveries or inventions which are by no means new; but the combination of them, the forms given them, by which they minister to the advance of Civilization and the progress of Society, are new. Men of modern times have regulated and directed these elements as they have never been regulated and directed before; and the spirit of our humane religion is finely seen in the fact, that the glory of inventive skill lies now in ministering to what contributes to the general good.

Say then, if men will, that Jesus taught nothing new — that, like the Golden Rule, all the good sentiments and precepts of Christianity are jewels worn before the time of Christ, still it is low talk to speak of them as stolen; and it is a poor compliment to a man's range of thought for him to say, he cannot help the conviction that they were stolen. Nay, these things were, when Christ came, almost without power. He breathed into them new life, and they had power, as when God breathed into the lifeless clay the breath of life and Adam rose to go into the Garden to dress and to keep it.

SERMON II.

UNWASTING POWER.

THOU HAST THE DEW OF THY YOUTH.—Psalm cx.: 3.

The grass is greenest, and the flower is sweetest, where the dew lies longest; and to be said to have, in manhood, the dew of one's youth, is to be said to retain freshness of life, its buoyant energy, and its beautiful prophecies.

The text is connected with a magnificent promise which all Christians apply to the Saviour. David commences with a high strain, sweeping all the chords of his harp at once, and says, "*The Lord said unto my Lord*," that is, Jehovah, in the great purposes of redemption, spake unto the Messiah, the great hope of David; and to David's Lord, Jehovah said, "*Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*"

And then comes the grand promise, clothed in the richest oriental imagery: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the

midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the bounties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

Here, in the language of sublime poetry, four things are presented, the Messiah's *people;* the *willingness* of the Messiah's people at a certain time; that certain time is set forth on *the day of the Messiah's power;* and the glory of the result is pictured as the *beauties of holiness*, which beauties are imaged by the rising dews of the morning, glittering in the light of the early sun, like orient pearls.

There is a fine gradation of thought as we *reverse* the order of these ideas and ascend from the last to the first.

The beauties of holiness are imaged in the purity and loveliness of the dew, and the dew is never any where more beautiful or plentiful than in the land of the Psalmist.

These beauties are to attend the Messiah's day of power. His power is unto *holiness*, the *beauties* of holiness — that perfection of result which shall leave nothing wanted in the completeness of the redemption. The results of his power shall be as perfect as the globes of the morning dew — as crystally pure — as prismatic to the great central Light.

This power, producing *such* results shall be in harmony with the willingness of the people. There is *power* spoken of in connection with David's *Lord*, God's Messiah; and there is *willingness* spoken of in connection with the Messiah's *people;* and God sees

the harmony between this power and willingness, whether man can search it out or not.

And then, also, *this* people who are *to become* willing in the day of the Messiah's power, must be recognized as not his *in character* in the light of this prophecy. This prophecy speaks of their being willing when the day of power comes, so that the people spoken of, must embrace those who were intended, where it is written, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make *thine enemies* thy footstool." And also, where in the context, we read, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of *thine enemies.*

That rod or sceptre of strength shall be swayed, and that rule exercised, to the bringing in of the beauties of holiness wherever the hideousness of sin has been and is. The footstool of the Messiah shall be glorious, because it shall be made of prostrate kings and humbled princes; the great and the mighty shall submit; the masses shall become united in subjection to truth and holiness; but that footstool shall not be as a thing to tread upon, to stamp with the heal of violence; for this is not the use to which the kings place a footstool; — their use of it is to give dignity and ease as they sit enthroned in the majesty of state. As the dews beautify, in the morning, the earth, God's footstool, so shall the redemption of all souls make a footstool for Christ all beautiful with the beauties of holiness.

But the text, which is a brief portion of the prophecy thus dwelt upon, has an attraction peculiar to itself: "THOU *hast the dew of thy youth.*"

It seems to be a rapt expression of the sacred poet, suggested by the image previously used, where the dews of the morning were employed to set forth the beauties of holiness.

The earth seems still fresh and young as the dews rise and impearl the leaves and flowers, and so the blessed Redeemer loses no virtue by the victories he achieves.

The circuits of the vapors are ever supplying to the earth the material for its dews, and the eternal providence of God is the full fountain of the Saviour's fulness.

The grand summing up of the Gospel is, "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," and now, as in any portion of the Redeemer's career, *he is fresh for his work*, and the beauties of holiness attest his power, as the dew drops now sparkle in the light of the morning, as when Adam blessed Eve, or Jacob found the fleece wet, or the Psalmist beheld in their beauty the purity of the holy soul and the regenerated heart.

God's agencies never lose by activity. They have an eternal youth. Jesus is a priest, not according to a changing and perishing priesthood, "but after the power of an endless life;" and so with his *kingship*; for he sits on no throne of succession, but on the right hand of the Father, according to the purpose of ages — the plan of God "before the foundation of the world," and by which came the promise in Eden, and the prophecies that fell from the harp of David, and rung from the trumpet of Isaiah.

Such a priest and king — such a Saviour cannot be defeated; and to read the text, "THOU hast the dew *of thy youth*," is to read of the eternal freshness and sameness of the Redeemer's power in producing the beauties of holiness.

O what a power was that which, by his truth and his miracles, Jesus exhibited in the morning of his great mission! And have we yet to learn, that his Truth remains the same, though his miracles are ended? To him, the work of his truth *on the soul*, was a greater result than the deed of healing which he performed for the body. These deeds of healing were but expressions or types of what his truth could do for the faculties of the mind, as he seemed to intimate when he met the blind man, and declaring himself "the Light of the World," opened the sealed eyes of the kneeling suppliant and permitted him to behold the sun, the beauties of nature, the face of his fellow man and his benefactor.

Thou hast, O Saviour! the dew of *thy* youth — thy glorious morning. The freshness of the Almighty power is ever thine. The baptism of the Highest has lost none of its unction; and the dews of Hermon but faintly picture the plentifulness of the conquests of thy redeeming grace, and the perfect beauty of the result — the beauties of holiness.

But another application of our text attracts us now. Where the dew lies longest, there the grass is greenest, and the flowers are sweetest. The dews are greatly enriching to the soil where they are distilled, and the flower that is plucked that has kept till the

noon tide the dew of the morning, is most beautiful to the eye and sweetest to the sense that inhales its perfume.

How eloquently this speaks of the benefits of early religious education! Eminent piety, presenting an unspotted name, a symmetrical character, a uniform testimony to the greatness of virtue and the royalty of Right, — what is it but the retaining of "the dew of youth" — the fresh beauty of light's morning!

There is nothing more attractive than the beauty of youth seen in old age — *something* that says life is ever new, that the years have their blessing and their favors as parts of a Providential period.

To see such a one, is like going into the fields where, as you wander, you see nothing but the half-wilted grain and bent grass, till you come to where the dew has lingered and the freshness of the grass and the grain is delightful to behold. We say of such a one, and we say truly, "He is enjoying a green old age!" and hardly any of us can help sympathizing with the poet who sung:

> "How I love the mellow sage,
> Smiling through the veil of age!
> Age is on his temples hung,
> But his heart — *his heart is young!*"

And what will contribute most to this — this possession of the dew of youth in a green old age? I answer, that which will best preserve the heart's freshness in every period of life, and that is, *the Religion of Jesus*. This is the guardian of the whole being;

and they who imagine that religion may be put off to some special period in life when sadness or sorrow may have come, when the heart is torn and shattered like a broken lute, may learn something better from the dew of the morning. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and *distil as the dew*, as the small rain on the tender herb," said Moses in the opening of a sublime ode. "The small rain on the tender herb!" what is that but a sweet image to speak of the appropriate influence of religion on the young? Only by the culture of religion in the morning of thy years. O young man! O young woman! can it be thy happiness to hear, in the year of thy manhood or womanhood, and of old age, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth!" a freshness that tells of unwasted power.

Too many good Christians can go back no farther than to the rain that fell upon their hearts when youth was passed; and too many, alas, can turn back no farther than when their way of life begun to "fall into the sere and yellow leaf," and religion was accepted because the earth has lost its charm, and, like a criminal condemned to die, a preparation was sought for the march to the tomb. To God is given the dregs of life; and prayer is but a lightning rod to avert the stroke of heaven's shafts of fire.

Religion *is* something for youth.

> "The earth affords no lovelier sight,
> Then a *religious youth*."

Religion binds year to year with the band of "natural piety." It is the dew of morning that shall leave an

influence that will be seen in the sunset of mortality. It is the protector of innocence. It is the shield of virtue. It is the herald of noblest aims. It is the inspiration of loftiest courage. It is strength and power, resolution and energy, struggling and achievement for life's grandest meaning. It is the serenity of the spirit amid trial; the repose of the heart when circumstances seem to mock, and life threatens to be a failure. It is the life of God in the soul.

Let then, the morning of life have its dew. Let the distillations of the truths of the Bible fall on your hearts. Let the overshadowing presence of God in the soul be as the cloud that drops dew, and then wilt thou say of one who is more than an earthly king, "His favor is as dew upon the grass."

Far better, O parents and guardians! is it to use Religion in *forming* the character in the first efforts of the soul upon itself, than to wait till it must be used to *refashion* and adorn. The dew that helps the opening of the bud and rolls its blessing down deep into the heart of the flower, is more to be prized than the dew that only glosses the withered leaf and keeps the flower from speedily dying. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount upon wings as eagles" — eagles that are replumed, and that spread their wing, and fasten their eye on the sun, in all the energy and freshness of their first soaring amid the clouds, when above where the thunder rolls, they rejoiced in the clear blue of heaven's serenity and that they had passed the lightning's path.

SERMON III.

YOUNG AMERICA.

I HAVE WRITTEN UNTO YOU, YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YE ARE STRONG.
1 John ii.: 14.

The Bible is the most inspiring book for the young man. It speaks to him as capable of the highest aims, the loftiest purposes, and the grandest achievements; and wherever you may turn for similitudes of strength, vigor, elasticity and hope, you meet with references to the young man. He rises up to the imagination as the spring-time abounding with forces which shall change the year from winter to summer beauty and autumn richness; while every suggestion of the need of care in pruning, training, and fostering, is but a hint of the native wealth yielding its resources.

It is a grand sight to behold St. John in advanced life addressing young men and giving as his reason for so doing, their *strength*, placing them in the militant position, and trusting the victory to their achievements.

And, first, the young are strong in numbers.

In the various educational institutions in the country three millions of the *male*, and one million of the *female* youth are receiving educational privileges, and what a mighty army would these make to show that the young are strong in numbers!

What a mass of mind is thus receiving impressions, beyond any contrast which any portion of the world can furnish. Young America cannot turn to any point where it will not find itself addressed with most spirit stirring appeals to be strong in thought, in self development, in the harmony of appetite and aspiration, in the consecration of the whole being to personal purity and exalted patriotism.

I would do something, while considering the vast number of the youth of America, to redeem from low and rowdyish associations the name of Young America as denoting the freshest efforts for progress in connexion with public matters.

Whenever there is an outburst of mere passion — an overriding of all law, and the worst spirit of boyish sportiveness is united with the violence of the brutal man, the common remark is, "There is Young America in full bloom!" And in accordance with this, lengthy orations are delivered, sad sermons are preached, and mournful lamentations are sung, decrying the spirit of the age, despairing of the success of our free institutions; and the worst pictures of the worst parts of crowded city life are set forth as specimens of the Spirit of the Times.

Now, nothing is more disastrous than to depreciate

the young. It discourages them in reference to good effort; it encourages them in the wilfulness of appetite and passion; it infuses no redeeming element into the forces of character; and it makes the future of our country dark to the vision of the anxious patriot. It prevents any just discernment of the different classes in the community, and makes us blind to the fact, that in the social and business world, as in nature, the most powerful forces are the most invisible; and that, though now and then we have the outbursting thunder with the electric flash, yet constantly diffused and active is the vital electricity silent in the atmosphere.

It is true, the young are strong in passions, in impetuous desires, in appetites, in hopes that ask not for the means of fulfilment, and aspirations which have yet to be freed from too exuberant growth. But is it not good to see this fresh life? to behold the evidence, that born upon the bosom of the old Earth, every thing wears a youthful appearance to the eye of wonder, and the stars that gazed on Abraham and lighted the desert home of Hagar's son, seem new creations, through which the glory of Eternal Beauty comes to the sight of man. In ancient times new life was put into the old blood and shrunken veins of a royal personage by contact with the young, and so is it in every department of society where there is any cordial sympathy with youthful buoyancy and exuberant hope. Grand is the thought of the poet, when looking out on the awful tyranny of the Papal States while war was raging against Liberty, she saw a child

lifted up and smiling in the crowd, and received it as a token not to despair, saying,

> *Who* said we should be better if like these?
> And *we* — despond we for the future; though
> Posterity is smiling at our knees,
> Convicting us of folly?"

A recent Association formed in Boston for the erection of a Monument to Franklin, have embraced in the picture on their certificate of Membership the figure of Franklin with a kite leaning against him, and a view of the Telegraph. The kite employed by the Philosopher in his experiments is a plaything of the young, and the experiment it served to make so successful, is but a type of the aspirations of Young America; and there are as grand connections between those aspirations and the results of the Future, as between the kite experiment of Franklin and the Telegraphic wonders of the present day.

Yes, here is the next thought, the young are strong in Hope, in trust in God's future, putting the Janus face of the New Year to soften the sombre effect of the countenance of the Old Year, bidding us listen for the music which is soon to wake in the woodland, on the hill side, and by the streams. And this we need. It comes in amid our darker musings as the young David entered the presence of Saul, and made him smile with his expressions of daring towards the proud giant of the Philistines. It was a grand day when young Israel thus rose to view; and though his elder brother told him he had deserted the sheep he

was only fitted to tend, his deeds showed that youthful expertness is more than a match for giant unwieldiness, and David, holding in his little plump hand the gory head of Goliath, symbolizes the fresh spirit of Young America, the victor over profane might.

But this freshness of spirit is only to be cherished as David cherished it—at the fountains of God. He did not meet the giant in his own name; he was not strong in self-reliance; but he spoke the name of God, and felt his power in the swing of his arm, the aim of the stone, and heard his voice in the whiz of the sling, as it whirled through the air, and sent the smooth stone to its mark. Hence the pertinency of St. John's added words after he wrote, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong," for he did add, "and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." This is the crowning strength of humanity, and no demon can possess the soul while, with its own overcoming power, the word of God abideth in the young man. Young America thus possessed would prove more terrible than an army with banners, more victorious than a thousand of the mightiest armies. Young America would thus re-produce Washington, and would move to the battle of Progress the most effectually for the liberty of the world.

How shall the youth of the States and the domains of this country be impelled to the putting on of this noble, patriotic spirit?

Scolding will not do it, nor ridicule, nor depreciation, nor anathema, nor solemn warning, nor impa-

tient reformers; for spirit answers only to kindred spirit, and repels whatever is antagonistic. The real demand is, for that recognition of the goodness of human nature which admits noble aims to be in harmony with our Maker, and which labors to do for the soul what Adam did for the garden of Eden—to dress and to keep the exuberant vines, that the force of growth, which *must* find expression, need not run to waste.

In our judgment of the young, we forget what an age of stimulation this is—what a hot-house it is to the plants that otherwise might unfold more perfectly and enduringly, and we charge upon human nature what only belongs to the exciting influence of the steam engine and the telegraph. The common representations of the old and young changing places, are as effectual against the old as against the young; for why, with their immense advantage, did they not keep the junior behind the senior? for the enemy in the parable, sowed tares in the field while slumber was on the eyes of those who should have been awake. Aged Eli was told that the reason why young Israel had been made iniquitous, was the sin of his own sons at the very door of the tabernacle; and said the Almighty, "They made themselves vile, and you restrained them not." Easy old man! hardly waking to see the inspired face of Samuel, and not noting the contrast of Hannah's child and his own sons.

We are too ready to speak of Eli's children without remembering Hannah's son.

The ludicrous caricatures of Young America are,

I repeat, as censurable to the old as to the young; and we should be cautious, lest while we call the radical to a proper reverence for the past, we show there is no past to reverence, because the character of the present shows no happy work wrought by it. Conservatives who depreciate the present, do, most effectually, decry the past, for a degenerate stock shows degeneracy in the sires.

The fact is, all ages are linked together, and the truest strength of the young is derived from a vital connection with the past. They stretch out their hand and connect themselves with the electric chain which runs through age after age, winding through infinite circuits among the nations and peoples of the earth, till it reaches Adam under the tree of life in Eden. It is a mighty spirit—this spirit of association, this union with all ages, making the individual man unite himself with his nation in far-off times, as the Greek of the present time talks of the victory *we* gained at Marathon, and impels the Psalmist to make the generation around him to have lived, as it were, through all ages, as he addressed God by saying, "Thou hast been *our* dwelling place in all generations!"

O, Young America must never loosen these vital connections with the past. They must be felt with their good and evil. The dark shades of disaster must be seen to blend with the gorgeous lights of victory, and the soul stand up amid the whole with something of the feeling which creeps over us in a vast forest, where the swaying trees are constantly

changing the chequered floor of that great cathedral, and where we see such wonderful blending of age and youth—the oak and the violet. How gladly amid the young growth, and the springing of the blue-edged violet, do we catch sight of some of the old landmarks, where

> "A darker moss
> Coats the rough outside of the old grey rock;
> Some broad arm of the oak is wrenched away;
> By storm and thunder—thro' the hillside wears
> A deeper furrow—and the streams descend,
> Sometimes in wilder torrents than before,—
> But still they serve as guides o'er ancient paths,
> To wearied wanderers."

Yes, there is much to bind us to the past. Our fathers reverenced the past, revolutionary as they were; but they gave to it no honor that belonged to their present and future. While appeals to charters and history, to laws and edicts, to constitutions and monumental things, could promise any good, or were right, they made the appeal; but when they could send no root out into the future, and the river must stop flowing, they yielded to the other portion of their nature, which made them heirs of the future, men of progress, champions of daring innovation; and to the stone of stumbling and rock of offence which they could not remove, they applied a touch that dissolved it, so that the free winds bore it away as dust.

High thinking, broadening sympathy, activity that can give way to healthy repose, plainer living, are the great duties of the present. We must bear as strong

a testimony against that gilded vulgarity which shines amid the silks and satins of the fashionable drawing-room, as against the naked and loathsome rowdyism of the lower strata of society. Sometimes I think there is no less a need for philanthropic efforts in respect to the children of *the rich*, than in reference to the children of *the poor*. Vice appears another thing in brocades and laces, fine apparel and polished manners, and Satan does his worst, when he transforms "himself into an angel of light." While the new clothes of iniquity last, her snares are most fatal; and how awful is the fact, that pride shrinking from contact with the poor and lowly when the object is good, can humble itself when the purpose is to betray and ruin. The same low thinking by which the poorer classes are kept to their vicious modes of wasting life, rules the richer classes, where they are possessed by the love of dress, the showy equipage, the dazzling display, the apeing of foreign manners and customs, and the longing for travel for the mere sake of saying, "When I was in Paris, or London, or Florence, or Rome."

What we want is a spirit truly American—a spirit that shows something fresh to the world; a spirit of progressive wisdom applied to laws, institutions, and every form of political, commercial, and moral action; a spirit that upholds the rights and privileges of every citizen, and rings the "Three Bells" of rescue everywhere—fidelity to the interests of freedom at home, protection to the Americans abroad, and sympathy with the oppressed throughout the world.

There IS *such* a Young America. I feel the fresh breathings of its reverence for the fathers, its appreciation of the grandeur and might of the Union, its breadth of patriotism that discards the usurpation of mere local interests, and while mourning over the delinquencies which stain our country's fame, yields not an iota of hope to the prophets of despair. It shows itself strong—strong in principles of right and Liberty's might; strong in the God of our fathers, and the only God of their children; strong to say we

> "Will go onward to extinguish
> With our fresh souls our younger hope,
> And God's maturity of purpose."

SERMON IV.

NO SYMPATHY AMONG THE GUILTY.

AND THEY SAID, WHAT IS THAT TO US? SEE THOU TO THAT.—Matt. xxvii. 4.

No one of the disciples watched the proceedings against Jesus after his betrayal, with any thing like the intensity of Judas. He was the only one who could do it with impunity. By the act of betrayal, he had placed himself on the *popular* side, and could watch the whole movement without impediment. A history of those few hours in the experience of Judas would be worth the reading. They would open the secrets of the prison-house of conscience, and tell us that the silent condemnation which the betrayer felt, was more terrible than the loud, crashing thunders of any public indignation. He watched the issue of the trial. He saw the whole of the malice and cruelty of the enemies of his Master; he beheld the meek submission of his Lord, and his own iniquity was fully revealed to his soul. He flew to where those who

had hired him were assembled, and bearing the thirty pieces of silver, he entered the hall; he attempted to do something for Jesus; and throwing the silver down before the astonished priests and elders, he exclaimed, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

It was a noble vindication of Christ. It was made directly to those who had purchased his blood, and the price of that blood was given up. Could Judas have found anything in the life and character of Jesus that was evil, he would not have done as he did. But he had betrayed "the *innocent* blood," and there he stood, shaken to the centre of his being by the horror of his deed.

What a contrast was seen in that trembling, horror-stricken man, and those wily priests and cool elders! They take very quietly his exclamation, and they reply, "*What is that to us? see thou to that.*"

What did *they* care about the innocence of their victim, seeing he was at last in their power? What had they to do with the *responsibility* of the deed? They had bargained for a betrayal, they had paid the price, and what more had they to do with it? Judas saw at once with what characters he had to deal. He could hope to impart none of his own repentings to them. He could set in motion no means to recover Jesus from the cruelty that was about to scourge and crucify him, and, desperate with anguish, he threw upon the floor of the temple the accursed silver, and rushed out and horridly died.

The elders and priests, with a flexible conscience,

gathered up the silver, and said it was not lawful to put the money into the treasury, because it was the price of blood. They bought with it a piece of ground for a burial-place for strangers—the Potter's Field, which, by reason of the source from whence the price came, was called "The field of blood." And thus was it called at the time Matthew wrote his Gospel.

The answer of these priests and elders to Judas is worthy of our attention.

"What is that to us? see thou to that." How could *he* see to it? He had no power to act—no influence. He could only see to it—his sin—as it stood before him an overwhelming shadow, and in the utter darkness of which he died.

We condemn these priests and elders. We utter strong words against them; and it is well. We do but obey the simplest moral sense in so doing. But do we do it as a matter of principle, ready to see the principle as it may be involved in matters of business, in the daily commerce of man with man? I fear there are many who have purchased the betrayal of innocence, and who disavow responsibility for the agency they created.

No precept deserves more to be pondered than that which the apostle gave, where, in speaking of hastily introducing a person into the sacred office, he says, "Be not partakers of other men's sins." How much unheeded is this! And yet how common is the remark, that the most guilty, in perfecting some swindling or thieving expedition, are apt to escape, and

the immediate instruments are detected. By this form of expression we recognize the true principle, we assert the guiltiness of those who furnish the motives to wickedness, who stand back and cheer on those who brave the danger. But too little is thought of this class. Judas is denounced. His utter misery, through unending ages, is declared to be certain, and men hate his name, and abhor his memory. But the guilt of priests and elders—what is said of that? Little, very little. Hundreds of sermons echo the iniquity of Judas, and his repentance, his tears and death, are but little considered; but the malicious indifference of the priests and elders has no vivid painting by the rhetoric of the pulpit, and the great lesson of their cool wickedness is too much passed by.

If by our influence a man works out good, we take praise to ourselves according to the measure of influence we think we exerted; and this is right. We honor the man whose advice and encouragement have secured good to others, and we envy the happiness of those who have great power over others for good—power to persuade to virtuous resolves and deeds, whose presence seems a spirit of success, and whose smile is more than the applause of the crowd.

But the reverse of this is just as reasonable. If a man employs his influence for evil; if he puts temptation in the way of evil doers; if he furnishes the silver for a Judas who is to perform the act, there is no reasoning that can free him from the guilt of the transaction. We do not accuse the last actor in the finale of an iniquitous drama, as though he was the

only guilty one, but we call into judgment the whole of the characters in the vile play.

This is the method of God.

When Adam attempted to throw off the sin he had committed, and accused Eve, and Eve accused the serpent, God made them both to feel the terror of his judgment.

When the cities of the plain were denounced, the worth of the influence of a few is seen in the offer, that if ten righteous persons could be found in the cities, should the cities be saved.

When Nathan came to David, he denounced him as a murderer; not because his hand had slain the devoted Uriah, but because his letter to Joab led Joab to place Uriah in the fore-front of the battle, in the hottest of the fight, that he might surely be killed.

And so when Ahab desired the possession of Naboth's vineyard, though Jezebel, his wife, performed all the work that led to the death of Naboth, and the confiscation of the vineyard to king Ahab, yet he had no sooner stepped in to possess the vineyard, than he lifted his eyes and beheld the prophet Elijah, and cried only, "O, mine enemy, hast thou found me?" "I have found thee," was the answer, "because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

And so throughout the Bible, *wherever* influence has been exerted to promote an evil work, *there* the Almighty fastens his judgment. As evil is committed into other hands, the *transmission* does not cleanse the hand that transmits it; and if the bold criminal

asks, "What is that to me?" when the preparation for sin has ripened into the infamous deed, God's reply answers the foolish soul and convicts it of transgression.

It took but *one* to put Joseph into the pit, and but one was needed to bargain with the Ishmaelites; yet *all* the brethren felt the guilt.

I could wish that this important matter might be solemnly pondered. I fear there are many who do not regard as they should the responsibility which presses upon them by virtue of their influence over others.

Where we have thrown our weight of influence, we are bound to be interested in the issue; the issue is partly ours; and so far as our aid has fashioned it, we must take glory or shame to ourselves.

It was not simply the *money* that influenced Judas, by any means. It was doubtless the *position and influence* of the high priests and elders that gave force to their offer.

It would be interesting to know the details of that transaction—how the scruples of Judas were met, what promises were made, what assurances were given, what patronage was offered.

But we can imagine it all. History abounds with such matters, and even around us, in daily life, in religion, politics, business, friend sells friend *far cheaper* than Judas sold Jesus. The bond of honor, that ought to be better than gold, is as nothing; and the confiding, the truthful, the frank and friendly, find themselves often grievously betrayed. Private

friendship receives the utterance that only friendship could be entitled to, and transmits the communication where it knows it will be perverted, misapplied, abused. Evils, great in magnitude, result; and all that the guilty one has to say is, "What is that to me? see thou to that." It would be well to so see to it as to remember the lesson, and deal with men according to their likeness or unlikeness to the double-sided, two-tongued, flexible conscience chief priests and elders.

But let us consider the second suggestion of our text—the miserable dependence of the guilty on the sympathy of their companions in guilt. We hear a great deal about "honor among thieves," but it is a thieving kind of honor. What lessons of history are plainer to the point than those which teach the miserable dependence of the guilty on the sympathy of those who have wrought with them in sin?

See a band of rogues surprised in their work of darkness, and who is generally the victim? The least unsuspecting of the whole, who has gone into danger with confidence in the ready sympathy of his companions in guilt. The brave and terrible things they promised to do, are left undone. They are afar.

See for an opposite illustration, a band of firemen, or mechanics, or sailors, engaged in their honorable employment. Let one of *their* number by bravery, that ventures much for them, become involved in some danger. What heroic efforts are made! what noble sacrifices are witnessed! what deeds are performed, which nothing but the enthusiasm of the time and the nature of the deed could have inspired.

No one is heard to say, "What is that to us?" as they see the anguish of their workmate. They send no insulting answer—"See thou to that." They feel a brother's interest; and O, it is grand to behold the gigantic labors which feebleness itself can perform to show the sympathy of true souls.

We need sympathy. The changes of life, its exposures, the smallness of our personal experience, create demands for sympathy. We cannot live wisely and happily without it. But our wisdom and our happiness are in seeking sympathy from virtuous sources. We lose our strength as Samson lost his, if we trust where virtue is not. We tread on glass easily broken, and springs of torture lie beneath the brittle surface. We turn away to die as poor Judas did. The scattered silver, the price of sin, is as the glittering fragments of a broken mirror, each portion of which throws back to our sight the horror of a disappointed and desolate soul.

If Judas could have gained courage to have thrown himself at the Master's feet and craved forgiveness, it might have been well; but he, poor man, imagined that the horror of his soul would draw out sympathy for him from priest and elders, and he might bear to his Master some relief from his peril. But, alas for him! they threw by all responsibility—sympathy was dead, and what could he do but die?

What sympathy did she who sold her innocence to Amnon find when the fatal hour was past? And how is it now all around us? Wrecks and ruins of beauty and virtue, homes desolated and hearts

crushed, grey hairs sent in sorrow to the grave, only because the misguided trusted in sympathy from companions in guilt.

The secret of the change which guilt works is not understood. It is not always that deliberate maliciousness or recklessness of consequences is at work. BOTH ARE DECEIVED. Guilt changes the whole ground of thought and feeling, as in the case of Amnon, who "hated Tamar exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her." He hated the *memorial* of his guilt; he desired the *absence* of that which *reminded* him that he was one of the "fools in Israel."

This fact is but little regarded. Human nature cannot be trusted to nourish that sympathy in guilt which only belongs to innocence and virtue. The vicious are cautious of reposing trust in their guilty companions, but they will pour out their souls into the good man's breast. Sympathy comes purest and truest from hearts that lie open to heaven, as streams of water; while guilty hearts are as the stagnant pool, to drink of whose waters is death. The soul goes out from thence as Judas went forth with the fever of disappointment, and relief is found only in dying to all such communion with wickedness and sin.

SERMON V.

SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP.

AND HE ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, MY MOTHER AND MY BRETHREN ARE THESE WHICH HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND DO IT.—Luke viii.: 21.

All four of the Evangelists have sketched the incident with which the text is connected, for it presents our Saviour performing one of those impulsive acts which let the observer at once into the innermost of the man's being.

At this time he was surrounded with a great multitude, and was absorbed in teaching them. His mother and brethren were outside the throng, and for some reason desired to approach him, imagining, perhaps, that he was going beyond his strength and was in danger of becoming fanatical. Their desire was seen, and from one after another the word went, till it came to Jesus and he was told that his mother and brethren desired to speak with him. At this he stretched forth his hands, and gazing around him, exclaimed, "Who is my mother and my brethren! My mother and my

brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it."

There is nothing that bespeaks a noble and generous nature more than these sudden onsets of feeling that sweep through the world to seek and embrace whatever is kindred with itself. Spiritual relationship is highest and best. It is kindredness of soul. It is an affinity of mind that travels on from men to angels, and, through all possible ranks of Spirits as one family, to Christ and God. It longs for companionship and cannot bear to be cooped up in any narrowness, nor to have it thought that it loves the few without regard to the many.

Something like this was, perhaps, the experience of Jesus when he uttered the text. Glowing with the great truths of his mission he desired the best thought of who were kindred with him — that like father or mother, brother or sister, seemed to him each soul that looked as he looked on the things of Duty and Hope. To hear God's word and to do it, created a unity most sublime; and to this the heart could look amid all contrariety of opinion and creeds, as something genial and pleasant, as the open Arctic sea must have loomed up to those of the Kane Expedition who beheld it amid a world of icebergs.

And may we not catch this spirit of sympathy with the good and true of all sects and parties and have our resort for comfort when the narrowness of sect is too much about us — when it galls like fetters, and seems to make the domain we occupy too small a place to breathe in? If we have not anything of this impul-

sive breaking forth from a part to the whole, if we have no desire to see any spiritual unity where there is dogmatic difference, and insist on making a fragment of the Church all the Church to us, — then we have yet to learn the noble and generous nature of Christ. His character must remain like some magnificent work of Art before one whose eye can read but little of its excellence. It could be hoped that they are few who thus live in the smallest circles, girdled with contracting narrowness.

For myself I love to see new evidences of spiritual unity amid dogmatic differences; and it appears to me that there is one basis of union too little appreciated — I mean, *The Character of Christ. They* are as our mother and our brethren who pay homage *there* — who thrill as we do at Christ's great acts of divine mercy, and looking from one point of view, with one interpreting heart, say, "He hath done all things well." This recognition of Christ as the Moral Image of God, forms a sublime unity in Christendom.

Though it has not prevented corruptions of his religion, yet it has been its best preservative and is constantly a most efficient reformer of dogmatic abuses, as when nothing could be preached against the voluptuous Pope pretending to be Christ's vicar, two pictures were painted, presenting the simplicity of Jesus and the splendor of the Papacy, and crowds gathered to see. As His touch healed the ear which Peter's sword had severed, so his character comes in amid the pursuasion of his words to impart the interpreting spirit.

It is a great thing to be able to stretch forth our hands and point to the more numerous spiritual kindred than gather in our own home, as we thus turn to the universal homage to the Spiritual Jesus. In one sense, already, as far as known, all knees are bowed in homage to his excellence, and the heart feels his searching eye resting on its sin, demanding that we be pure as he is pure.

Perhaps it may be well to give a few moments to consider how valuable to us is this greater than sectarian kindred in Christ.

In the first place, What a mighty influence always comes with the fact that ages have contributed to build up the fame of some great soul. To us it is like some of the wonderful cathedrals of the Old World whose building, century after century, was an act of faith and worship. The creed and liturgy of the cathedral, however we may object to them, do not prevent our recognition of the identity of faith, the true devotion, the lofty aspiration which kept on building up the great thought of the soul that would build to God, till the pinnacles glitter in the one light of the sun as the foundations rest on the same earth that sustains us all.

A certain intellectual sceptic once set up a countryman of his as more perfect than Christ; but how unlike must be his experience in the use of his ideal of excellence to that of the Christian who sees millions of eyes streaming with a common reverence to one point, and beholds there the Being towards whom has flowed the best love of the best souls for eighteen

centuries! How painful to contemplate excellence in utter loneliness, — to be conscious of no heart beating any where as ours beats, and that the perfection of beauty to us is no perfection to any one else. But not so with the Christian. He lays his ear, as it were, at the tube of the great whispering gallery of the past, and the names of Christ are syllabled all along the centuries as the echoes of an undying song. The homage of millions comes swelling and deepening, and his heart is thrilled as it could not be with any less general strain. James Martineau has well written, that "the established power of a soul over multitudes of others, — its historic greatness, its productiveness through season after season of this world, in the fruits of sanctity, *must* inevitably enter as an element of our veneration." This is too little thought of; and because of this indifference, religious controversies have made the Christian world seem as divided in heart as in creed.

The early disciples did not feed their homage of their Master with simply what he was as he acted before them, but they brought from the prophecies a light and glory which made him appear the Man of the Ages; as thus to us he assumes a peculiar moral greatness as we see in him the Christ of the centuries, every where owned as the image of God.

Again: When we stand in our sectarian lot, criticising the creeds which we believe are but perverted Christianity, there seems to be no possible chance of union, so radically opposite are the chief points of

doctrine and discipline; but when we rise above all walls of partition and look over the vast field to see how the character of Christ fares, we see at once there is union and there may be *more*.

This is like going from the irritation occasioned by some song that wakes all kinds of tempers and moods in an audience, to the delight occasioned by another that makes all souls kindred and summons applause from all. Here is something superior to all the rest, for that which sounds the universal heart — that lays at the base line of its electric current, and brings from all the same response, must be the greatest. We thus see one moral nature, and demonstrated is the fact, that there are universal sentiments in Christendom, and however strange it may seem, the many sects in the one Church do, really, stand around Christ, as "a belt of mirrors round a single flame." Is there not encouragement in this? Can it be that creeds will always be so diverse while the minds that maintain them cherish such a moral unity?

And is it not sweet to think that even Christians denying the one to the other, the Christian name, after all, may be one in spirit! Gliding away from dogmatic controversies, and dwelling it may be on some Christian picture or statuary, they look alike, they talk alike, and for the while there is the intercommunication of tender and harmonious feeling, notwithstanding the picture or statuary may be suggestive of knotty points in the controversies of the Church. What is the source of more oppositions in doctrine then the crucifixion, and yet how alike do all the varieties of con-

trovertists receive the moral sentiment of Christ on the Cross! And is it not a dear thought, that they all bear away from the sight of the touching picture or symbol of our Redeemer's sufferings and glory, like feelings of tender reverence and aspiring love; and may it not be good for us to remember that such things were when it seems as though there could be nothing in common among the contending characters.

Still farther: We are indebted for the best aids to religious meditation to the spirit that has wrought when it felt the greater kindred, and thought more of humanity than of sects and party. How different — how superior is that literature which has been written for the classes embraced in the moral unity, in distinction from the Church unity! What a breadth of view, what a sweep of thought, what nobleness of candor, what a richness of material, what a geniality and glow of soul, is there in contrast with the sectarian author! In this spirit Church History is now, in some degree, written; and the consequence is, that instead of dry, repulsive details concerning strifes and divisions, with little or no insight to the real matters of interest, we find a living picture of the struggles of the human mind for the best expression of its religious nature and culture. What a vast library of Christian books — books in which Christ is morally venerated, we can gather from the writings of those who would, perhaps, scorn our liberal creed; and yet there would be nothing in those books to reject, but, on the other hand, we should feel the pre-

sence of a co-operating spirit. In all our homes are works of this character. By our estimate of them we own our kindred in spirit in the author; and when we pass from these works to the theology of the same authors, it seems like a discussion of differences with our brother, and our tone of criticism will be better tempered from that fact.

But once more: How this greater kindred in Christ reveals itself in the chamber of death! There the debates and discussions of theology lose their charm, and the soul cries, "If thou be Christ, bid me to come unto thee!" and feels most the reality when the hand of Jesus saves him from sinking in the fearful waves. There the soul says, like Howard, "My Hope is in Christ," and wants to deal in no metaphysics concerning his nature and rank; and they who have fought the boldest and bravest for creeds, and those who have marked out a severe form of sanctity as essential to hope, have alike dropped their last anchor into the universal sentiment of Christ as the image of Divine Love. Once a dying neighbor, with whom I was familiar, but who never entered my church, sent for me, and as I entered the room where she was breathing her last, she stretched her hand to me and said, "In this hour we are one — there's no difference." She meant no difference of creed, for the soul rested only on the universal sentiment towards the Redeemer. I ministered by prayer and word to her, and, by her request, conversed till the ear was too dull to hear and the delicate frame was rigid.

And who does not know scenes like these, and where can you look into the biographies of Christians without multiplying evidences that a beautiful unity lives amid all our diversities — a unity towards which we should stretch our hands not only in acknowledgement of our kindred, but also in prayer to Heaven that we may value more the holy comfort, the strengthening encouragement, and the divine fervor which spring therefrom.

SERMON VI.

INVISIBLE BENEFACTORS.

FOR HE THAT WAS HEALED WIST NOT WHO IT WAS.—John v., 13.

That is, he knew not who it was that had healed him.

The healer was really Jesus, and by his method of procedure he threw not a little of dramatic interest around this incident—his design evidently being to draw out the character of the Jewish leaders, and demonstrate that they cared more for ceremony than for man.

The incident with which the text is connected took place at the time, probably, of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Jerusalem wore a peculiarly rural appearance, in consequence of the multitudes dwelling in tents or booths made of the branches of trees, in memory of the fathers in the wilderness. Jesus mingled in the mighty throng unknown. He walked as one of the mass, an observer, not the observed; and as he took his way by the pool of Bethesda, he

noticed the multitudes of diseased people who lay in the porches around the water, waiting for its moving, it evidently being a medicinal spring, whose flowing was intermittent.

At certain times the waters bubbled up from some chemical cause, and whoever bathed in them first, received great benefit from them.

The commotion of the waters was attributed to the descent of an angel, from whose wing was imparted a healing virtue. This idea, it may be, originated from the mystery at that time encompassing the cause of the medicinal virtues of the waters; or from the proneness of the Jews to attribute every uncommon effect to the ministry of angels, so that the Law given direct to Moses, was by them said to have been given by the ministry of angels.

As Jesus looked on the groups about the pool, many of the poor expectant souls being accompanied by some person to aid them to enter the waters the moment they began to move, he saw one lonely creature, whom he had known to have been baffled many times in attempting to get amid the charmed bubbles, and to this most pitiful of all expectants Jesus addressed himself, and asked, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Supposing the reference to be made to the virtue of the waters, the man answered that he was baffled, like many a soul in the every-day affairs of life—some one steps in before him, and the kiss of Fortune is taken.

He had no one to lift him up and put him into the water when it was troubled, and while he was crawl-

ing to the steps, a more favored one stepped off into the buoyant waves, and shook off his languor and illness in the friendly waters, joyous as the glad swimmer in the summer time, when his stroke

> "Flings the billows back from his drenched hair,
> And laughing from his lip the audacious brine,
> Which kissed it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
> The waves as they arose, and prouder still,
> The loftier they uplifted him."

A pitiful condition was that of him who had seen, time after time, the healed go forth leaving him still expectant, with hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.

To this man Jesus spoke—"Take up thy bed and walk"—and departed.

Immediately wholeness came, and the man, with his little bed, a mere cushion, was walking at ease. He was an object of public charity—well known, and his appearance now was something for remark.

Instead of giving him joy, the Jews showed that *form* was more than *substance*, and so they gravely told him that as it was the Sabbath, it was not lawful for him to carry any burden.

Doubtless the man had not thought of any thing but using the new life which coursed through his veins, as he was hastening to the Temple to pay worship to the great Source of all good. His answer was to the point—"He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk."

Would that all of us were as ready to do the commandments of Him who has, by his truth and life,

healed us of many an error, many a sickness of heart and soul!

Whether the skeptic can see it or not, the man *felt* there was some connection between Miracle and Commandment, and instinctively he used what the miracle gave, to do what the Miracle-Worker commanded.

But who was it that had healed him? Whose word had been so potent? He could not tell. It is doubtful whether the man had strength to look up when he answered the question of Jesus, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Despondency was in his reply. He had no one to help him. Somebody had always proved more fortunate than he, and with a downcast look he still sat and mourned.

Jesus spoke and departed, as a star shoots its light and vanishes.

In his surprise, the poor man had no glimpse of his Benefactor, and so he takes his way at once to the place of worship, there to offer some token of his gratitude for the blessing received.

It was in the Temple where Jesus met him again; and as there was no mistaking the tones of that voice, the healed one, relieved of an infirmity he had suffered thirty-eight years, knew his Benefactor, and received this admonition: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

And then, with the generosity of a soul that thinks more of gratitude than of all opposition, the man went forth and proclaimed that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

Now the point that at present seems to me very

suggestive, is this. How modified must have been the happiness of that man had he been kept in ignorance of his benefactor.

Of course, at the first, the pleasure of relief from an infirmity he had endured nearly forty years would overcome all other feelings; but when this was past—when sober thought took the place of mere emotion; when he meditated on the past, as we all do more or less, he could not but be haunted with the desire to know who was his friend in the great hour of need, and whose word was better than any arm on which others had leaned as they stepped into the pool.

A weight must have been at his heart when he could not tell who had befriended him, and he must have gazed around him, as he went from place to place, to see if some token might not reveal his invisible benefactor.

If this is not a probable picture of the man, then he was selfish indeed. His heart was still impotent, his spirit needed a moral bath to invigorate its pulses of gratitude.

But let us be cautious in this judgment, for this man is a representative man. More or less he stands for every one of us.

Humanity, part and parcel of which are we, has many a time laid impotent. The pool of society has been moved, has been troubled by one angel after another, and all the benefit has been taken by the privileged ones. They have stepped down before the poor commoners could move because they had so much help. And who has done the best things for

humanity but those who, Christ-like, have stood outside the charmed circle,—who have made original effort, and helped where there was none to help.

All places are haunted by the spirits of such. The poet has rightly said:

"All houses wherein men have lived and died
  Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
  With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
  Along the passages they come and go;
Impalpable impressions on the air,
  A sense of something moving to and fro.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud
  Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd,
  In the realm of mystery and night;

So from the world of spirits there descends
  A bridge of light, connecting it with this,
O'er whose unsteady floor that sways and bends,
  Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss."

And shall we let them go to mingle among invisible things? Shall we not ask after them, try to discern their merits, and see them, as it were, coming out like glorious shades from the dimness, wearing the beauty of goodness and the glory of truth upon their brows? Shall we not rise to their coronation, and celebrate their greatness with triumph? There are more invisible benefactors than we can ever know.

It should be the endeavor of every person to know

as far as he can his Benefactors — to add to the visible friends of his progress, the invisible — to know what a vast assemblage is that of the contributors to all that is liberal, progressive and humanizing in the laws, institutions and customs of society. A marked distinction between the past and the present in reference to History is, it is now read rather for the pictorial power by which the world's story seems like a panorama, than for acquaintance with the Benefactors of Humanity — the men who in the hour of social impotency spake the word, or did the deed of healing. The consequence is, there is less valuation put on the blessings we enjoy than would otherwise be the case. It is one thing to be free from an old infirmity, and quite another to know the Divine Agent that accomplished the work. The latter knowledge may present the *return* of the infirmity, or the approach of something worse.

And, therefore, I deem those who speak of accepting all the good there is in the world without regard to men or names as the foes of society. They care not who did this or that; they will not quarrel over rival claims; they will take the product of human toil as coolly, as they take any refreshment, and are really relieved by the invisibility of the doer. This runs into the things of every day life, and we find genius and talent feeding indolence and luxury, and men grasp the benefaction and turn away from the Benefactor.

Our times demand more of attention to the great Healers of humanity.

Young men should be called to the study of their country's history, that they may know how to fill up the present with the glory of the past — how to invoke from their obscurity the benefactors of mankind who served Liberty, who made life the glorious thing it now is, and catch the spirit of their self-denial and heroism.

And thus will it be seen how we are linked to the land of our forefathers, and through what noble souls, that never dreamed of this Union, have come down to us invaluable benefactors. There is nothing more sublime in the visions of thought than the crowding from all ages into the horizon of the present the great benefactors of humanity. They form an ocean before which Bethesda dwindles into nothingness. God's angels did indeed trouble them. They were moved that healing from a thousand plagues might be imparted.

Men of the Ages! how like phantoms ye crowd upon our vision — how majestic is your march, ye royal souls! ye kingly intellects! ye imperial hearts! O let us know ye more, that we may see from what words and deeds we have such a Sabbath as to-day.

And as emphatically must the call be made to a broader history — the History of the world, that we may know the real progress which has been made through the Ages.

Foremost in this array comes the Bible — unparalleled as a Book, and before which the philosophy of man is but as the fire-fly's lamp in contrast with the noon-day sun. Not by efforts to get at every little

blemish — to twist and turn every obscure passage, can our Benefactors in the Bible be made to come out from their invisibility. A fool can babble at a blemish where a wise man is absorbed in wonder at a perfection.

Nothing is more to be deplored than that littleness of mind which passes the stupendous miracle to carp and cavil at some neglect of precise form, and that asks that every record of the most magnificent marvellous acts in all History shall be given to us perfectly daguerreotyped without variation — which, could it be accomplished, would be rejected as manufactured by collusion of minds.

The man that is any thing for Humanity is a man of broad views. He, having greatness in his soul, brings out greatness where it exists, like the Apostle in the Epistles to the Hebrews, when in speaking of Faith and its power, summoning up the vast army of those who had shown its virtue, till the multitude became so great he could not name them.

Let us return again to the many of whom our text speaks, and let this be the lesson of the hour,— He who feels his infirmity will go to where he has heard of virtue being imparted, and there, it may be, he may find something better than he went for.

The most erroneous Church is better than Infidelity. Whosoever heard of *that* being a *Bethesda?* a house of MERCY?

Ye followers of Voltaire and Hume and Paine, come out from your invisibility and show us the men whom you have made whole.

SERMON VII.

LABOR THE PRICE OF EXCELLENCE.

AND JOSHUA ANSWERED THEM, IF THOU BE A GREAT PEOPLE, THEN GET THEE UP TO THE WOOD COUNTRY, AND CUT DOWN FOR THYSELF THERE IN THE LAND OF THE PERIZZITES AND OF THE GIANTS, IF MOUNT EPHRAIM BE TOO NARROW FOR THEE.—Joshua xvii. 15.

This was said to a people who murmured against the limit of land granted them in the division of the promised land, and is to be used in the present discourse only as suggestive of the fact that Labor, and not Endowment, is the patron of Greatness. All uncommon excellence, in every department of human effort, is to be attributed more to laborious endeavors than to any mysterious gifts of genius.

The tribe of Joseph came to the successor of Moses and considered themselves straitened by their allotment of land, for they were, as they said, a great people. Joshua was no flatterer, and simply answered their speech by bidding them show their greatness by their labors—to enter the wood country in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if Mount Ephraim was too narrow for them. "Cope with difficulty," he seems to say, "and that will show your greatness.

Measure strength with the Perizzites, in their unwalled towns defended by the valor that is better than gates of brass, and let your axe swing and its echo sound where its conquering force shall be heard by the ears of the giants. Make your domain larger by courageous deeds, by determined endeavors, and thus shall your greatness be shown by the conquests it achieves."

This is the voice of God's providence to every soul that has dreamed of greatness, or of the possession of unfolded powers and abilities. By labor show your talent. Express what you are by what you do. Genius is the stimulus of effort, rather than the spontaneous activity of endowment; and man is blinded to the toil that has procured the beautiful or astonishing results of well directed art, because he sees "no part of study but the grace." The blast that brought the rough block of marble from the quarry, he heard not; and inaudible to him were the blows of the hammer that clove portions of that block away till the rude outline of a human form was seen. And then the days and nights spent by anxious toil, with mallet and chisel, carving out the embodiment of a beautiful ideal, were not known; and when the product is seen, it stands apart from the labor that produced it, as though it had come into existence like Minerva springing from the brain of Jupiter, or Venus rising from the foam of the sea. Michael Angelo once exhibited a rare specimen of his art, and it was pronounced beautiful and wonderful. Months passed, and visitors saw nothing more in his studio, and when he was asked what he had been doing, Angelo

answered that he had been at work on the same statue, reducing this feature and developing that; and his visitors said those were but trifles, and he should be engaged on something great. To this he replied, "Trifles make perfection, and perfection itself is no trifle."

That was a noble answer. Indeed, genius may be defined as that power which best magnifies trifles. It sees the worth of everything. It glorifies the small because of their relation to the great. It goes searching for the minute, because these are the mustard seed from which the tree with its wide spreading branches is to spring. It best imitates the God who lets no sparrow fall without his notice, lest it might jar some nerve in the universe whose vibration might be felt for evil throughout the realms of matter and spirit.

The most finished actor of our age, on retiring from his profession, and on receiving a public testimonial as having made the best impression on his age in reference to his art, made the memorable remark, "Whatever is excellent in art must spring from labor and endurance." That sentiment may well be written on the shield of every aspiring young man. It ought to live as a watchword in his memory. It ought to fix as an all-illuminating truth, the idea in his soul, that uncommon excellence is no lucky accident, no product of circumstances, but the fruit of labor and endurance. Greatness is from culture, rather than from genius; and if it had a voice for the world, it would sing of "The high endeavors and the

glad success." The common idea about genius is pernicious. It sets up insurmountable barriers to the masses, and they set down in the conviction that they are nothing, and effort is useless. This is no less discouraging to those who are dispirited by it, than it is unjust to the great.

But let me deal with this subject in proper order; that this treatment of it may be recalled, and therefore, that there is an aptitude in minds for some art or profession, I do not deny, though the common arguments are many times weak. There are, unquestionably, some instances of that original intensity of a mental faculty by which the mind springs, as it were, at a leap, to the results it desires. It is genius that cannot communicate itself. It helps our idea of Providence to recognize original aptitude for the different occupations of life which are essential to civilization and progress; but it is certain that many of the most remarkable men have attributed to patient labor what the world have attributed, in them, to endowment. That Newton attributed his success to greater patience with the minute, is well known, and Sir Joshua Reynolds held that superiority resulted from intense and constant application of the strength of intellect to a specific purpose. "Genius," he said, "is the art of making repeated efforts." The first effort he made with his pencil was the perspective of a book-case from sheer idleness; but his father saw it, encouraged him, and he went on by labor to success. Benjamin West, when he drew the babe's face as he watched it in the cradle, was kissed by his mother for his effort, and was wont to say, "That kiss

made me a painter." And to every department of artistic, mechanical, and professional life, the advice of Sir Joshua Reynolds to his scholars is adapted, where he said, "Make no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, labor will improve them; if you have poor talents, labor will increase them. Nothing is denied to well directed labor. Nothing is to be obtained without it." Napoleon well said, when once asked to create a Marshal out of a man who belonged to a noble family, but who had no other claim, "It is not I that makes Marshals, but victory."

It is a fine illustration of our position to see the progress which has been made in the application of the name of genius. To draw a rude likeness was once genius; but when this was learned as an art, then genius was the power that could add to it—that could render the effect greater—the picture more life-like—the style more remarkable. So in mechanics, and equally so in poetry, music and oratory. Genius ceased to be recognized as soon as labor could equal the result once attributed to nature's gift, acting unaided. Genius has kept its name by doing all its work in secret—by keeping up the show of the Juggler that makes us think his tricks are real, notwithstanding he tells us he but deceives the eye. Demosthenes standing by the sea and declaiming with pebbles in his mouth, in his study, with the sword suspended over his shrugging shoulders, and three years in the cave at his studies, shows us the labor that produced the results which were attributed only to genius—a mysterious and irresistible force.

"Genius," said the illustrious Buffon, "is patience;" and a mighty man answered the question just the same in spirit, when he said, "You ask what is genius, and I can only say, if you have not felt it, I cannot define it." Many of the best men in all departments of life define genius as a *habit* rather than a *quality* of mind; and perhaps it may be best spoken of as an intense, persistent, concentrated activity. What but a definition of genius was given, when Webster said, "A man is not educated till he has the ability to summon, in case of emergency, all his mental power in vigorous exercise to effect his object?"

What we attribute to some gift may be traced to the kindling and concentrating power of feeling or passion, as is illustrated in that orator's reply to Hayne, and in the many instances where the greatest mental effort has sprung from passion. Scorched and stung by a Scottish Reviewer, Byron wrote a poem, and he who was deemed but a simple rhymester became a poet, as he himself once said, "I went to bed one night, and woke up to find myself famous." So in sharp debates, in violent controversy, the most remarkable things have been uttered: men have gone beyond themselves and have astonished the world. A mighty intensity of thought has burned within them, and they have brought the whole stock of intellectual attainment to bear upon the matter before them. The best things of many men in all departments of effort have been unpremeditated; but this gives no argument against labor, study and forecast, because these men have been made capable of

these great or uncommon efforts by the wealth of mind stored up. Great discoveries have not been made so much by accident, as many suppose, as by that habit of mind that will not let any thing pass unnoticed. It is not to a light and frivolous mind that the fall of an apple will suggest a thought in reference to the great laws or forces of nature, and no dream of the pendulum floats before the eye of the careless thinker as the lamp is seen to swing or oscillate in the church. The ripe things of nature fall into hands prepared to receive them; and in a profound sense may the wise man's words be applied beyond religion, where he says, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." A thousand times the same advice may fall on the ears of the prodigal in vain, but at another it may come as a regenerating force, and he be made to start as the warrior at the sound of the battle trumpet. The learned and famed Dr. Paley was an unambitious student, careless of his opportunities, till one day a collegian said to him, "You are a fool, Paley, to squander your time so. If you would arouse yourself, you may be famous. I have wealth, and need not exert myself; but you have no such dependence. Now wake up." He did so, and millions have reaped the benefits of his activity. And so with many dull intellects, who loved fun more than books and study, like the youthful Chalmers, have been started by some new turn of thought —some attractive subject, and they have sprung at once into glorious mental activity, blazing like the dull fire on which oil has been poured.

Genius, therefore, is really intensity of thought, feeling, emotion, activity. All the faculties of the man are in earnest. The whole man is glorified by the intensity of the determined spirit, and what is done is done with every energy—with a resoluteness that means; with persistence of effort to conquer if such a thing can be. The great object glorifies each portion of labor, and the passion of the mind seems to be that which would

"Scorn low delights and live laborious days."

If we were to consult specific cases of superiority in the spheres where genius may be said to shine, we shall find that labor and culture, not endowment and luck, have gained the palm of renown.

Take an illustration from oratory. I have spoken of Demosthenes, who held the Athenian crowd at will, and in addition to what I have said, I may remark, that his first effort was jeered at and scorned, and only by the advice of an actor, who met him in his despondency, was he encouraged to try again. Cicero, who uttered so irresistibly "the deep, clear cadence of the Roman tongue," had an oratory that was the fruit of countless labors; and coming to modern times, it is quite remarkable, that the three most brilliant specimens of the orator in the British Senate, at the bar, and in the pulpit, were men whose first efforts were evidences that energy makes the man. The first is Sheridan, whose maiden speech was so inferior, that it was deemed a kindness to advise him to desist from further attempts; but his reply was, "It's in me, and by Heaven it shall come out." It

did come out, and he became the wittiest, most sparkling, and persuasively brilliant orator of the British Parliament.

So at the Bar. Lord Erskine, whose career was most brilliant as a lawyer, and especially as a pleader. When making his first effort, he felt his nothingness — that he had no ability, and just as the tears were springing to his eyes, and he was about to yield to despair, he says he felt, as it were, his little boy pulling at his gown. Thoughts of home and the dear ones there rushed into his mind, his heart was on fire, and he burst forth into an effort of which he never dreamed he was capable. Fifteen cases, with the appropriate fees, were immediately after that victory placed in his hand.

So in the pulpit. Robert Hall was for fifty years the prince of preachers. He did not know that the Princess Charlotte was dead till he entered his church, and the sermon he preached then was the richest and most eloquent of all the hundreds delivered in the realm. His first three efforts were failures—terrible failures; and when he went to his chamber the last time, he was heard to say, "If this don't cure me, the devil must have me." It did cure him of depending on other things than toil and preparation, and he was for fifty years at the head of pulpit orators.

Take example from moral characters, such as Socrates, William Penn, or Washington, who have shown the most difficult of attainments—a calm, dignified, impressive demeanor that says, in silence that is as eloquent as the stars, that the soul has in its hands the reins of passion with a perfect mastery.

Take up any man's life who has risen to real, permanent eminence, and you see there the marks of labor; so that it may be said of many, as was said of Piso, "What he withdrew of application, he deducted from glory." Goethe said truly, "What is genius but the faculty of seeing and turning to advantage everything that strikes us?" And so thought the celebrated French landscape painter, Poussin, who, when asked how he was able to give such an effect to his paintings, simply answered, "I have neglected nothing."

All that has thus been said of art may be said of religious character — the superiority of virtue and holiness. We must "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," if we would wear the laurels of victory. I know not what continuance may be given to art in the future, the realm of immortality, but I am sure that all advancement in virtue will cling to us. Every habit of the mind, however gained, that helps holiness of heart, will be ours forever; and there where we shall shake off many errors of theory and belief, we shall put on new advances in holiness and love, by the forces that here we cultivate.

The price of excellence, then, is labor. What most we need is to intensify our love of God and his gospel — to make faith more a fire — a fire that rouses up to action every inmate of the house, and shows what wonders can be wrought. A fire that demands more and more fuel, when it is rightly confined to its place, and that bids us go out of our Mount Ephraim, into the land of the giants, and cut wood.

SERMON VIII.

THE BATTLE OF THOUGHT.

FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES.—Eph. vi. 12.

How different is the battle of Arms and the battle of Thought! the warfare where flesh and blood wrestle, and the struggle where mind is in conflict with mind.

There is no comparison of *appearances;* for in the one case, there is the roll of the drum, the pealing of the fife, the shrill call of the bugle, the clash of swords, the glittering bayonets, the floating banners, the thrilling shouts of the combatants, till amid the shock of arms and the roar of artillery, the dreadful scene is shrouded by the vast columns and sea of smoke.

As this clears away, the power of the opposing forces is seen in the dead strewed upon the field; and over the river of blood which then flows, goes up the wail of the dying and wounded, blended with the shouts of the victors.

This is to be followed by the removal of the mutilated bodies that for years must bear with them the sad evidences how terrible is the conflict when flesh and blood wrestle against flesh and blood.

Such is the conflict that has so often been resorted to, to settle the simplest and most insignificant question as well as the most stupendous of all the demands of man on man.

But how in contrast with this is the conflict where Thought battles with Thought — where the contest is "*not* against flesh and blood, *but* against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

All the show in a case like this is seen in the picture of Paul on Mar's Hill, when his spirit was stirred within him to see Athens wholly given to idolatry.

There at his feet lay Athens the pride of Greece, with her thousand splendid temples and ten thousand gods. Exulting in the glory of her Arts, boasting of the greatest refinement, concentrating all that was beautiful in the triumphs of genius, Athens spread out the attractions that made her envied by every city in the world. But the whole of this beauty, all these triumphs of Art and Genius, Music, Painting, Sculpture, Eloquence, were vitiated to the Apostle's mind by the presence and power of Idolatry. He had no armament of States and people to bring against it. What would it avail though he should, with a Samson's might, become an Iconoclast and smite from their foundations the ten thousand gods and goddesses of

Athens. What though he should wield a destructive war against the worshippers of marble and silver and gold idols? No advantage would accrue. No victory such as he desired would be obtained.

He, therefore, stands alone on Mar's Hill and trusts the issue to a few words solemnly and earnestly spoken. He stands there a stranger. There is little in his appearance to prepossess the crowd in his favor. But as he is not to wrestle with flesh and blood, he thinks not of the show of outward strength, but stretches forth his hand simply to beckon the people into silence. All is still. The Epicurean has hushed his laughter; the Stoic has wrapped his mantle more closely to his form; the Scholar has smothered his face for a placid reception of the new speculation; the Artist is ready to study a new attitude, while the Curious observer is eager to be amused with any thing that "the babbler" may have to say, and the Sorrow stricken asks for Light on the darkest things of life.

Paul speaks. He utters sublime truths respecting the universal Creator, Benefactor, Governor and Judge, and thus sends forth immortal forces to do battle for Him whose right it is to rule — to rule in the individual heart and in society throughout its manifold relations — in all its laws and its institutions, modes of life and its customs.

There was no noise, no confusion, no clash of arms, no floating banners, no garments and chariots rolled in blood; and yet a stupendous battle then began — a battle with principalities and powers — a battle with

the forces that lay back of the superstition that held the most cultivated portion of the world loyal to Idolatry. Then commenced the battle in which Paul's simple thought, vindicated by appeals to Nature, Reason and the human Heart, was on the one side, and all the powers of learning and philosophy were on the other — the thoughts embodied in the twenty thousand gods that thronged the streets and groves and temples of the grand city of Greece. That battle is to go on, till what? Till outward subjection to Christ shall be obtained? lip loyalty secured? the homage of bent knee and loud applause? No, no! The conquest contemplated is far greater than this. The victory proposed in the Gospel is the most stupendous, the most magnificent ever contemplated, and no one but Jesus could have inspired it. That victory is, the casting down of Imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and the bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ!

Here it is — the knowledge of God — the true conception of the Divine character and economy is to change the vast picture gallery of the soul — to remove the images of Idolatry — all the forms of error and sin, and place there the beauty and glory that find their types and symbols in Nature — in the changes by which with the enthusiasm of the poet of the season we say, —

> "These as they change Almighty Father! these
> Are but the varied God! The rolling year
> Is full of Thee!"

Yes, the victory contemplated is, the bringing every thought into captivity — the glorious captivity of obedience to Christ — captivity like that which holds the stars in their courses, so that they shine and sing, and swing not from their place in the choir of immortal harmony.

What does this theme teach us?

Most obviously it teaches, that we should be more interested in the battles of Thought than in the battles of Arms.

The battles of Thought precede and must follow the battles of Arms. They are like the electricity that forms the terrible thunder cloud, and that prevades the atmosphere when the roar of the thunder has ceased.

The battles of Thought preceded one Revolution, and when Independence was achieved — when the Confederation was established — when once and again the majestic Washington had adorned the Presidential chair, there began a battle in which Young America led; and in which even Washington could not have had power to have been successful. He was taken just at the time when he could best go and leave an unbroken track of light and success behind him.

And now we are to wrestle, not with flesh and blood, not with muscle and nerve, skill of warfare and physical bravery, but with principalities and powers — with powerful principles that rule too much the destinies of the people and take too much attention from

men to measures — from the country to party — from the future to the present — that repudiates the conservatisms of God by which the good of the past is held fast as a security for good in the future.

So in moral and religious matters. We live in an age of the most contending theories and speculations, and even where we might expect to see nothing but a rigid adherence to old creeds and formulas, we do behold the most antagonistic forces, and professor wars with professor in the same department of the Church.

We stand in the attitude of David when he could go down and help the king that sought his life, and then retreat to our own fortress and pursue our own defences and victories.

The times demand what Liberal Religion alone can grant,— Intellectual and Moral Courage — Mental and Moral challenge of Opinion.

We are fortified by one expectancy of the highest good and of new developement of God — we are fortified against the fear of Error. We are willing to meet it. We have confidence in the superiority of the forces of Truth; and when we are equally fearless in declaring the Truth — in maintaining its claims — its rights — its interests — its protests against principalities and powers, against wickedness in high places — the places of thought, of ideas that rule the multitude, when we are thus fearless, our life will speak for our noble and rational and scriptural religion.

This, this is one duty to ourselves, our time, our race, — *To tell what we wrestle with* — to own what

our souls, in all the energy of conviction, do oppose. 'Tis not with men that we are called to war, but with the opinions that rule them; that make them narrow and bigoted — that blind them to virtue outside of their Church — that impel them to imagine that no flame rises from any altar to Heaven save where their priests stand with the sacrifice.

SERMON IX.

LAW OF LIBERTY.

SO SPEAK AND SO DO, AS THEY THAT SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW OF LIBERTY. — James ii. 12.

THE light of the Sabbath has a peculiar beauty as it shines to hallow the incoming, on the morrow, of our national anniversary. It thus intimates what is the great truth of history, that the religion which gave our Sabbath gave also the principles by which has been wrought out the proud structure of the American Government. Christianity and Republicanism is one or identical; and to this theme we may direct our attention, that we may render just tribute to the source of all true liberal government, the vitalizing spirit of all progress, and the grand directory in the pursuit of means to build up the unparalleled greatness of this Empire, whose sun rises from the Atlantic and gives the glory of its setting to the waters of the Pacific.

Seventy-seven years yesterday the grand vote was passed declaring that the united colonies were, and of a right should be, free and independent States; and this day is the anniversary of the thorough, earnest, solemn debate concerning all the details of the *form* of declaration, which was to give the grand reasons for the step taken, so astounding to the world.

Every word was measured; every redundant expression was omitted; whatever bore the appearance of passion rather than of fact was laid aside; and as prepared for adoption on the fourth, it was, as it is, one of the ablest State papers which the history of nations can furnish.

And what is the *spirit* of that grand Declaration of Independence? It is no less Law than Liberty; and it is most admirable to see that the most impassioned of all the minds concerned in the enacting of that instrument, spake and did as conscious that they should be judged by the law of liberty. They acted religiously, and their hope of success was a religious hope; and wise is it for their descendants to study with a like spirit the history of those influences which contributed to final success.

Such a study, I think, will inevitably send us to the New Testament. There is the true source of Republicanism. There shine the great truths which as inevitably suggest popular liberty—the denial of the divine right of kings, and the right and duty of self-government, as the sun gives light and heat.

And it is a glorious truth to the republican Christian, that in proportion as men have been the success-

ful champions of popular rights and liberties, they have cherished the Bible as the grand armory of weapons, the magazine of the battle-field, the encouragement of victory.

The duty of the Pulpit, then, is, to show what was the *Consecration* of the great struggle of our fathers, and that they were successful because they fought under the ægis of the Almighty and obeyed the impulses of Destiny. This will impose on us, as the great lesson of the time, that while we do and must discard a religion for the government, or a governmental religion, the union of Church and State, we must seek for a religious government, as the exponent of that which has vitalized republicanism, and which can alone develop it in full beauty and perfection. To the highest and the lowest, to each and all, the exhortation comes, "So speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

In the New Testament, Liberty is a great word—an expansive word. The whole work of Christ is spoken of as a liberation; he who is liberated by His truth is declared to be free indeed; and the crowning act of the redemption is the introduction of humanity into "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Hence the summing up, in our text, of all that Christianity is, as the law of liberty, or, as the same Apostle has written, "the perfect law of liberty."

Here two ideas are implied, Liberty and Law—but mark you, the law comes of liberty, and not liberty of the law; for the expression is, the law of liberty—the law having the same relation to liberty as the law of

any State has to that State. It is Liberty suggesting Law for its own protection, as the genius of our government is Liberty protected or regulated by Law. The inference seems irresistible, that whatever may be the character of *local* institutions, every thing of a *national* character must favor Liberty. To Liberty and its progress we are committed; and the law of liberty demands that our advance as a nation be for no aims disassociated with Freedom.

To some this truth of Liberty and Law appears paradoxical. Liberty and Law are antagonistical in their speculations; and so the idea of self-government is supposed to be incompatible with any thing like a regard to the essentials of Social Order.

But this arises from a *wrong beginning* in the speculations of such theorists.

He who begins with God and his own religious nature can have no licentious views of liberty, nor can he put self above the social. The text has special reference, it would seem, to one law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and therefore the responsibility seems to be, as the responsibility must ever be, in reference to serving self in view of our social relations. Whatever liberates us from a narrow religion increases the extent of the law of brotherhood or neighborhood. The higher we magnify self the more we obtain for the individual our theory of liberty, the more grand becomes our view of society—our relations to man—our obligations to serve the race.

The law of liberty is, after all, the law of service; and it teaches this splendid idea, that the more a man

serves his race, the more shall he know of the highest and noblest freedom—the expansion of a generous soul—the liberty of affections and sympathies enfranchised from the bondage of selfishness and sin.

There is no such freedom as is known by the Lord's free man; and yet he is Christ's servant, and being Christ's servant, he must serve the race.

To what, then, do we owe our national greatness? Allowing, in the answer, all credit due to man, noble and pure, we must say, Our liberties come of God's gift in Christianity.

Christianity came to the common people, to the masses. It made them the critics of their rulers. It told them, by the appeals it made to them, that they were capable of solving for themselves the greatest questions; and in so many words it said, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" When Jesus said to John's disciples, as the crowning evidence of his Messiahship, "*The poor have the Gospel preached to them*," he struck a mighty chord whose music shall yet fill the world with harmony.

It has been well said by an English radical writer, "This preaching of the Gospel to the poor assumes that the poor have faculties for the appreciation of the profoundest of moral truths; that there is nothing too good to be given to them; that the enlightening of their understandings, the awakening of their feelings, the guiding of their aspirations to spiritual beauty, truth and good, is a work worthy of the highest intelligence."

It is this that makes Christianity the great fact in

the philosophy of the Rights of Man. It was directly opposed to the common test, "Have any of the *rulers* believed on him?" No man can sneer at the "common people" and look Christianity in the face as its believer; and it is that low view of the masses which Jesus rebuked, that has given the only foundation for anti-republican governments.

And the world has yet to learn how much Jesus meant when, on the ears of the masses, he poured the great truths of his religion, and favored Man rather than Philosophers and Scholars. His gospel was "hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes."

How our freedom came from Christianity is seen by the briefest reference to the History of Political freedom.

We need not go back farther than the Reformation, —that bursting of light out of midnight darkness. Then came the struggle between the Claim for supremacy in behalf of the Church, and in behalf of the State; and it was the exaltation of the Individual that settled that controversy and established the right of private judgment in the use of the Scriptures.

That was, unconsciously, an allowance of every thing which the broadest idea of Liberty required. If the Soul is adequate to decide, and must decide for itself, on the import of the Sacred Directory, then it has capacities for deciding, and has the right to decide, on the *application* of that import of the Scriptures to the form of government under which it is to live and to which it is expected to pay obedience.

Men began to catch this idea and to think over it and to speak it and to debate it, till the idea of Despotism was given up for the idea of the Divine Right of Kings — that kings inherited an absolute and irresponsible authority, to which their subjects must yield passive obedience.

The whole of the awe of government then came from Power. Milton and Locke argued with sound reason and keen logic against this proud assumption; but following this controversy was the idea of the Social Compact — an undefined something gave a basis to authority. Then came the struggle for a written Constitution — for defined limits to Sovereign and Subject — the "Magna Charta" and the "Bill of Rights."

Then it was that the time came for the opening of a new theatre — not a "Hippodrome," where old tricks of antiquity were to be played over again, but where new things were to be thought and wrought, and the foundations of an empire were to be laid that was to astonish the world by the rapidity of its growth, the stupendousness of its resources, and the magnificence of its enterprise and achievements.

Here to this new world an humble body of Colonists came, and here, in the fear of God and in loyalty to conscience, grew up the grand truth of the right of a people to govern themselves.

This was a march beyond the liberalism of the old world. Circumstances forced it upon our fathers; and when they sought in their Bibles to know its sanctions, they found them in abundance; and they

refused to look into any Compact to know their rights and duties, for they found in themselves the right to say, What will we do? What do we feel to be our duty? How shall we speak and do as they who shall be judged,— not by kings, this and that unbased and traditionary compact, but by the law of liberty that is of God.

"No taxation without representation" became the rallying cry. It was the protest of mind working its way to the grandest ideas of government and society. It denied absolutely the assumption of power on any basis; and what a need there was of this is seen, most awfully pictured in the indictment against the Crown read before the world in the Declaration of Independence. Its awfulness lies in its truth. And when I hear intelligent Americans say it is time that the reading of that State Paper, that unparalleled document, should be done away with on this great anniversary, because we are at peace with the mother country, I can only say, Every argument for the erection of monuments can be set aside on the same principle. The Declaration of Independence contains a truthful history — the awful summing up of the wrongs of our fathers — their justification for appealing to decisive measures — the proof of what irresponsible power *will* do.

It should be read to stir the blood into sympathy with the spirit of '76.

It should be read to show how in advance of the mother country young America was — what shackles were placed upon the growing limbs of the young giant, and how petty selfishness will throw itself in

the way of the onward sweep of a wing powerful as truth and as irresistible as destiny. Blind, blind to the great social law that executes the providence of God, were those who tried to subdue, where they should have co-operated.

On what an Empire will to-morrow's sun dawn! Every return of the great Anniversary that comes when the country, as now, is rejoicing in prosperity, is a matter for devout thanksgiving — not only on our own account — not only because we can still afford an asylum for the oppressed everywhere, but because clearly burns the light of hope for the struggling millions of Europe.

Still more clearly and brightly will that light burn when we remember, as a great people, that we should so *speak* — so *vote*, enact and resolve; and so *do* — perform, execute faithfully our laws and promises, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty — responsible for the use of the privileges which are secured by Liberty, regulated by Law.

If the sentiment of this discourse be true — if Christianity and Republicanism are identical — the latter being but a form for the spirit of the other, then one thing is certain, the more the form has of the spirit it embodies, the better it will be.

SERMON X.

BELIEF IS A WORK.

THEN SAID THEY UNTO HIM, WHAT SHALL WE DO, THAT WE MAY WORK THE WORK OF GOD? JESUS ANSWERED, THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD, THAT YE BELIEVE ON HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT.—John vi. 28, 29.

There are certain admissions made by all Christians however much they may differ in reference to the *meritoriousness* of works.

They all admit that works are the *expression* of faith — they make it manifest, as a word spoken to tell what thought is in our minds.

They all admit that works test the *quality* of faith, and, therefore, there are earnest efforts on all sides to claim the best characters as the fruits of the best faith.

It is also admitted, that works are a test of the *depth* and *strength* of faith; also of its *continuity* in the soul, as a living, vital force always makes itself known in some way.

Hence there is a constant demand for works in connection with faith. This is common to all sects, parties and clans; and amid all the diversity of creeds and ordinances, platforms and bases, the cry is, Show the excellence and powers, the holiness and beauty, the depth, breadth, and continuity of your faith, by your works.

But the idea suggested by the text differs from all these. It stands by itself. It is worthy of our special notice and regard.

That idea is, that Belief, Faith, is itself a "work." It is so to be regarded; and only as we so look upon it, shall we be able to attach a just meaning to the expression of "saving faith."

There is a demand now pressing upon us for special notice of this, because there is a constant cry against faith as not to be considered a work; and when the question is now put and pressed, "What shall I *do* to be saved?" the answer of the Apostle is utterly passed by, and something else is substituted as the essential doing.

When that question was first put, it was by the jailor, and the answer was "BELIEVE *on the Lord Jesus Christ*." That was Paul's answer in reference to what constituted saving doing. "What shall I do?" is answered by, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ!" It is the answer of the New Testament.

Belief is a work, so says our text and says it grandly. To work as God demanded, was to believe on Christ; and we never rise to a true perception of this matter till we see that Belief is a work as well as

a working power, as the Steam Engine is a work as well as a working thing. It fills you with admiration to look at it, as to see it operate. The Engine, and what the Engine does, are two distinct matters; so with Belief as a work, and Belief as a Working Force.

It is the neglect of this that makes so much of traditionary belief in the world — an absence of any thing like a real, profound, heart-searching and soul-struggling conviction or experience.

When belief becomes a matter of work of toil, of reasoning, prayer, and study, it is laid away, and the soul is told, "Take thine ease — be a babe in the School of Christ — remain submissive and keep on the safe side."

I have been told by scores that when they began to make belief a work — begun to see whether they were on the right basis or not, they found, first, that they inwardly trembled to pursue the work; and, second, their religious teachers advised them to abandon the effort.

And what do such things prove? They prove that the force of education, and the policy of the exclusive Church, tend to draw away the mind from its appropriate work — from searching to the root of the matter of belief, and testing the difference between a personal and inherited thing.

Instead of honoring the man who proves he has made belief a matter of mental and moral toil, he is treated as a suspicious and dangerous personage. The prompting that impelled him to look up the rea-

sons for his traditionary faith, and test their value and scriptural claims, are considered and denounced as the suggestions of Satan.

But, on the other hand, he who goes the treadmill round of the Church, who treats the matter of belief as something settled for him by the Baptism he received in infancy, or the Catechism he learned in childhood, is regarded as a true servant of Christ and is honored as such, when there is every reason to conclude, that had he lived in the day of Jesus, he would not have been moulded by his precepts.

That Christians do, notwithstanding this course, honor in their hearts, the man of free and independent mind, who uses his mind to work out for himself the religious problem, is evident from the respect paid to historical personages who have illustrated the stupendous benefits that may flow from one man's making belief a work — taking the popular faith to pieces — examining its parts and the relation of the parts as a machinist does a machine with a skill that is on the alert for improvements and discoveries.

When Luther glanced with an eye of fire on the text, "The Just shall live by Faith," and the thought went searchingly into his soul, that all the ceremonials of the Church could take no rank with faith, and facts and penances and bodily mortifications, could not be what they were maintained to be, belief became a work indeed. It summoned every energy of his mind; and when the bugle blast of the Reformation roused the people to independent thought — to a demand for the Scripture — to the claim for the Right of Private

Judgment, what was it but the voice of a soul that told the agony of its questioning — its toil at thinking — the intense labor in the laboratory of the mind — the wasting work of the refiner as he separated the gold from the dross.

So too when a mind has taken the attention of the world by rising above the nothingness of Infidelity and entering the realm of everlasting realities in the light of Christianity, the Church cannot but admire the work which belief required. It points to the story of such a life as though it were an image of the resurrection from death to glory. It shows what a gloom and bitterness, what a desolation and barrenness surround the mind in the domain of Infidelity; and it says, "See the grandeur and magnificence into which the soul hath wrought its way! O that grandeur and magnificence well repays the toil."

So, too, when the mind has been overshadowed with doubt, and like Dr. Payson, has had times of unbelief when it hardly had faith in the existence of God while writing sermons on his sovereignty, the happier moods into which the soul *worked* its way, are dwelt upon as beautiful encouragements for the desponding and doubtful.

And there is on all sides of us, an applauding voice for the mind that is at work to get out from beneath the doubts that oppress, with the exulting word, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" &c.

But all this goes for nothing if the belief worked out is opposite to the reigning creed; and this, therefore, is the test of the liberality of any man, or party,

or sect. It is the mind that is honored because of its work, or the results at which the mind arrives — those results being favorable to the creed received by the applauder?

The former is the better stand, because it is only by honoring the independent mind, separate from the results at which it aims or achieves, that we afford any encouragement to vigorous efforts to help the race in its progress. It is nothing but selfishness that accepts results where results are clearly worked out — when the mind has by arduous toil solved the problem and lit the light of glory. The honoring of mind is seen in upholding the earnest thinker in his wearisome toil — in cheering him on in the applications essential to success; and it is on this ground that I claim for Liberal Christianity the highest friendliness for mind, because it makes the approval of God to rest upon efforts and their quality, and not on results according to a given standard. It does not fasten moral turpitude to mental error.

So with the Saviour. All through the story of the Evangelists there breathes the spirit of liberal thought. Christ struck all shackles from the working powers of the mind, and the grand moral of the fact, that the Regenerator of the World came forth from among the common people and out from the carpenters' shop, appears to be, to set forth the dignity of mind separate from all social position. "Whence hath *this man* this wisdom! How knoweth *he* the great things of the soul, of religion and of God, having never entered the school of the Prophets!"

No matter how he learned, no matter whence he derived his wisdom; the question is, "Is he the Messiah of God?"

As Christ worked out a belief in the divine origin of his mission, so is a vital, quickening, saving faith in him to be wrought out.

His union with God was the perfection of faith. He found his first work for God in the toil of soul that alone could lead him from the poverty and obscurity of his birth and youth, to the sublime heights of that Mount wherefrom he pronounced the Beatitudes.

> "Cold mountains and the midnight air,
> Witnessed the fervor of his prayer;
> The desert his temptation knew,
> His conflict, and his victory too."

A work — a mighty work — a work of prayer and study — of logic and the heart — of brain and soul, — of day and night is before us, ere we shall rise to the full height of belief in him whom God sent to be the Saviour of the World.

And with the New Testament open before us, we may boldly say, The more we work out in our minds a clear faith in Christ, the more shall we know of salvation. To *do* unto salvation is first of all, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God will own this as a work — because it is the union of forces that move the man, and verifies morally the saying of the Redeemer respecting faith removing mountains.

Let us encourage, what Jesus demanded in his time on earth,— free, independent, personal thinking; and where this is scorned because of some of its results, we can answer with the poet:—

"One indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out —
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own."

SERMON XI.

JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?—John ix. 35.

THIS was the question of the Saviour to the Blind Man to whom Sight had been given.

That man knew not who had healed him, but he stoutly maintained that whoever it was who had healed him, came from God; and when nothing else could be obtained from him, the Jews of his synagogue declared he was altogether born in sin, and they were not to be taught by him. And they cast him out.

When Jesus heard of this, he had peculiar sympathy for the man and he sought him. That man had suffered in his cause. He had met reproach and insult, had been scorned and expelled from the religious associations of his whole life, because he would not relinquish the logical connection between the Miracle and the Character of him who wrought it.

When Jesus found him, he asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man seems to have been impressed by the appearance and tone, or something in the manner of Jesus, for he called him "Lord," and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe?"

He was ready to believe. He only wanted the Son of God pointed out in a convincing manner, to insure the flowing of his heart towards him. His soul had been elevated by the deed wrought upon him, and he had readiness of mind for things sacred.

Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee."

Doubtless, this was accompanied with the resumption of that unction with which Jesus spake the direction to wash in the pool of Siloam, or by something else which convinced the man beyond question of the identity of the Miracle Worker and the Speaker, for he threw himself prostrate before him, in the form of Oriental homage, and said, "Lord, I believe!"

There are many like this man when he was enjoying the blessing of the gift of sight, and knew not to whom he was indebted. The finger of Power which Christianity now stretches forth is potent to give sight where otherwise would be blindness. Many see who know not that it was Jesus who gave this power of sight, and they attribute to Natural Religion what never was enjoyed till Christ came. A cheerful study of Nature was never entered into before; and the balmy breath of summer no more truly changes the atmosphere from the chill and cold of winter and early spring, than Christ has made more genial to the human mind the very atmosphere of common thought.

Some care not to wake from this ignorance. It is enough to them that they see, and they are willing to rejoice in benefits which cost discoverers much, without heeding in the least the demand for acknowledgment and gratitude towards their benefactors.

But there are others, who, like the man addressed in the text, are ready to know and to pay homage to their benefactors. They will not shrink from discussion, or any duty that belongs to the honor of what they know is good. And as the man addressed by the Redeemer doubtless found from the religion of Christ what was better than physical sight, so the common benefactions of Christianity are outweighed by those blessings into which the soul enters by that belief which is a work — a matter of personal thought and investigation.

Here, then, is the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Are the blessings which are thine in the very atmosphere of mental, moral, social and domestic existence, which had their origin in the Ministry of Jesus,—are they connected distinctly with a personal Saviour? and is thy faith *in the Son of God*, while thine eyes are drinking in the light of the moral universe as only his truth could enable thee to do?

There are many who shake off these questions. Christianity is to them a living fact. It can no more be blinked out of existence than sight can be blindness; but as to any process of thought by which they are to settle the personal claim of Christ — what he was, and is, and will be, is too much work for them.

Whether Christ is merely a myth, or a historical personage, they cannot say. Whether he ended his personal and official relation to our race at his death, or not, they will not decide. And, therefore, the great questions of his Resurrection and his Mediation are less to them than whether Cuba will be annexed, or intervention or non-intervention prevail in the national policy. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" is to them a question not pertinent to the times; and they have too much work to do, to work out the greatest of all problems.

It is needful, then, to get, if possible, some short and easy method of presenting the claim of Christ, that the work may not appear too great in the way of those who should receive his Sonship, as the heir of all things, in the divinest sense.

I treat now of those who acknowledge the blessing of Christianity, who see its forces in the history of civilization and in the institutions that are monuments of its power; but who go no farther. They enjoy sight where, without Christianity, they would be blind; but they know not who it is that sent abroad the powers of healing and made the atmosphere sight-giving, instead of contributing to the continuance of human moral blindness.

Now, the grand evidence of the Sonship of Christ, in the divinest sense, is the evidence of Christianity as something more than Deism — as really a Revelation from God.

That evidence is this: Christ and Christianity are the fulness of ages. They are the Great Sea into

which all streams of wisdom and prophecy flowed. Christ might have said, "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." He thus stands amid the ages — a central object of the providence of the Besetting God. Ages pointed forward to Him, as centuries point back to Him; and new forces were promised in Him, as new forces have flowed from Him. The same process of thought that makes me believe in God intellectually, makes me believe in Christ as the Son of God in the divinest sense; and as my spirit seems from its own self, as by intuition or instinct, to believe in God, when I commune with his works and ways with more of prayer than logic, so when I muse on the works and ways of Christ, as prefigured in the oracles of prophets and recorded in the truthful pages of the Evangelists, my heart goes out after him as the Sent of God. "While I muse, the fire burns;" and there is nothing of undue claims where he says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

As I try to analyze my convictions and see where they come from, I find, in the first place, that the soul is greater than logic — that we have sentiments that logic never gave — affections and sympathies, as well as reasoning faculties and argumentative powers; and something of my belief in Christ and Christianity is to be attributed to the power of these affections and sympathies, that make the heart "fall in love" with some things which God has made for it.

I find, next, in the life of Jesus — in the facts given of his career, evidence that God was with him in

the highest sense; and then, too, the structure of Christianity itself, as a Religion, unfolds the most convincing evidence that he who built it was of God, and his claims are divine.

I then read those claims and find Him connecting himself with his religion, its growth and power, as the stock and root of the vine are connected with, and are the vitality of, the branches. Around his Personality, through the ages of progress, as while he lived on earth, I find the mission of his religion connected; and I cannot receive Christianity — I cannot see it any where, without seeing Christ and the claims of his sublime personal relation to our race.

But, as I have said, the one grand evidence of the Sonship of Jesus in the divinest sense, is, that he is the fulness of the ages, and from his fulness ages yet to be, are to derive their noblest power — the grandest forces for progress.

The first of these positions is proved by the annals of the world — not the Bible only, but human histories bear witness to the fact, that Christ is the One Being needful for our race — the Mighty Power of God, "made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

No matter what our views may be of the Jews as a people, the fact lies plain on the pages of history, that through them the divinest things given for human progress, before the advent of Christ, were bestowed, and the wine is consecrated, though the chalice be earthen. Their religion stands out in bold relief; and their literature, while it is the oldest, is yet the most inspiring of the nations of antiquity.

And this religion which is thus standing out and so marked of God, points beyond itself. It is not complete. Its excellence, above all others, does not banish a loftier ideal, and its sublimest bards sing of a Promised Being; and just where the Prophet assumes the most unequivocal attitude of prophecy, he speaks the clearest of the Coming and Fate of One whose fulfilment is Jesus Christ. This is seen by reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and comparing therewith the life and death of Jesus and the testimonies of his Apostles. Philip might well preach Jesus from this prophet, to the Ethiopian Eunuch, who read in the book of Isaiah without discernment of the meaning.

But if you receive the prophecies of the Old Testament, and read them with a less strict adherence to the letter and become mindful only of their spirit — taking the sweep of the prophetical wing rather than the detail of its feathers, you shall feel there is a mighty current of prophecy bearing on towards the Coming of such a personage as Christ; as the land-breeze fans the mariner to his great delight till he sees the land, and hears the bells ring from the sacred towers.

The need of such a Being was confessed by the condition of other portions of the world outside of Judaism; and when Christ came, there was something symbolical in the Greek who came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." To him, the best things of modern progress are to be traced; and the wonderful rapidity with which Christianity

was spread among the nations, with no element of conformity to the world, can only be accounted for on the ground of the ages of preparation for its advent and the necessity for it, and that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

SERMON XII.

CHRIST MADE A PHANTOM.

EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH, IS NOT OF GOD.—1 John iv. 2.

And did ever human folly go so far as this, asserting the unreality of Christ's bodily presence, and making him but a phantom? Even so is the testimony of history. The apostle was not "as one that beated the air," in his opposition so frequently expressed in his epistles. He had been with Jesus. He had leaned upon his breast. He had felt the heaving of that breast, the beating of that heart, and he arrayed himself firmly and intelligibly against the philosophy of his times, that really, in effect, made Jesus Christ a phantom — an existence without bodily proportions and substantiality.

And what a great error is that, in any form, that makes Jesus but as a vision of the night — something like the ghost in Hamlet, when Hamlet cried, "He is here! he is here! he is gone!" Truth affects us in proportion as it is distinct in our apprehension, stand-

ing out in bold relief; and to give the highest truth the noblest embodiment, so that it might in the fairest and most glorious proportions be taken into the mind, God sent his Son, a living, human, tempted, struggling, conquering being, a representative or image of himself. Dear as the support of our grandest hope should be the argument for his reality as having come in the flesh — the seed of Abraham, the son of Mary, the perfect man, the conscious, willing, and disinterested sacrifice.

But there were those in the time of John the Apostle who maintained the inherent evil of matter, and that all spirit, or mind, was good. They recognized all intelligences as so many emanations — rays thrown out from the Great Spirit, as scintillations are thrown from the sun, retaining the purity of their source. To exalt the purity of Christ, to make him the illustrious soul they desired to recognize him, they were forced to deny the reality of his bodily presence, and maintain that it was but show, without substance. That he actually died upon the Cross they could not allow, and some argued that when the cross was taken by Simon the Cyrenean, a change was made, and the Cyrenean was actually crucified, while, in his shape and appearance, Jesus passed away. How absurd the conclusions to which theories drive men! for this gives to the Cyrenean the glory of the death on the cross, which is really the crowning of Christ's life on earth.

Against these ideas the apostle protested. He that confesseth not that Christ was really a man, a proper

substantiality, is not of God — is not instructed by the divine Spirit — hath not the truth.

John's opposition to this vagary of the Gnostics intimates or suggests to us that we must be careful that we do not, in effect, make Christ a phantom, a poetic vision, a dreamy something, a sublime ideal unrealized in flesh and blood; a mythological creation, that vanishes at the touch of philosophical criticism. We must do nothing to undermine the actuality of Jesus, removing him from the proper personalities of history, lest in hours of mortal need we find, that where we want something as palpable as Thomas found when he put his hand into the pierced side of Jesus, we have really but a phantom, whose lips of air melt ere a word drops on our hearing.

There are many who do not weigh well this matter. They deem it of little consequence whether they have an ideal or an historical personage as the embodiment of excellence. They say the idea is sufficient, and rest satisfied with that. They talk of Christianity being as old as creation; that it is but the growth of the idea of the race; but they overlook the essential difference between the effect of a mere idea and an actual person, and that if by any subtlety of metaphysics, or play of poetic fancy, or theological vagary, we make Jesus not to have labored and suffered, died and rose, as the Gospels represent him, the real, regenerating power of his example is gone; there is no reality in that example; it is but as fine poetry, or fine music, and the whole of Christ's resistance of evil is less than the actor's performance. Like the frost-work on the window pane, so beautiful

in the dawn, one warm touch of sunlight carries it all away.

The *real* affects us far differently from the *unreal.* Two portraits equal in beauty would affect us differently, were one from a real face, and the other but a fancy sketch. We should be more apt to say, in reference to the former, "I should like to see her," than of the latter, "I should like to see some one like her." How different is the effect upon different travellers when they come in sight of certain localities in the Holy Land. They will be moved much alike by undeniable facts, such as the elevation where the holy city stood, the Mount of Olives, Bethany and Bethlehem, with their hill-tops and sides; but very different when the matter in hand refers to the geographical localities of the details in the life of Jesus — the spot where he was born, the sepulchre where he lay. Alike they feel the poetry, the sentiment, the sacred teachings of all the incidents referred to, but only in proportion as they are *sure* that they are not dealing with *fancy*, but with *reality*, are they moved by standing on hallowed ground. We cannot regard what we fear is a phantom, as we can what we know is a memorial of the hallowed past. We stand in fear of the coming of some proof, some reasoning, some new incident, that will take away our former conviction, and all the poetry and beauty over which we were growing sentimental, leaves us like Hamlet's ghost again.

> "It was about to speak, when the cock crew,
> And then it started like a guilty thing
> Upon a fearful summons."

Shakspeare and his works afford an illustration.

Not long since, there was a sharp criticism in one of the literary journals of our country on some of the attempts to clear up some of the obscurities that hang around portions of the life of him who has added great worth to existence by his works. "Little, very little," it is said, "is to be gained by such labors; and instead of wearying ourselves in researches and studies upon such matters, we ought to be enjoying the works which are in themselves a reality, a visible substance." But is this reasonable? Can we enjoy those really visible works as well, as deeply, without any fixed ideas respecting Shakspeare himself, as with some? Are the works the reality they would be, or have they the same visibility they would have? I trow not. That beautiful work, "The Artist's Married Life," has another reality, another visibility, when you read it not merely as a beautiful, touching and instructive fiction, but as the picture of a real life — the life of Albrecher Durer, the German painter. So with the works of Shakspeare. It is worthy of any man's attention to ask, Were these works the product of a single mind? Did the Almighty ever pour such affluence of genius into one human soul? Did greatness like this spring up amid humble circumstances, and what were those circumstances?

So wedded are men to the admiration of greatness in distinction from the works of greatness, that it is vain to tell them not to waste their time in removing obscurities from the memory of the man. We cannot admire what is the product of many minds as we can

what is equally great, and that was produced by one. It is absurd to say that the victories of Napoleon would be the same to us if we divided the genius that wrought them between his Marshals, rather than attributed them to that magnificent, though terrible soul.

There is a poor philosophy that pulls down the greatness of individuals by its talk of their being but reservoirs of the ages, whereas greatness is really individuality — something as distinct and personal as the head of Webster, or the eye of Clay, or the dignity and majesty of Washington.

Our admiration of beauty, truth, power in ideas, is a different thing from our admiration of the same in persons. Socrates and William Penn affect us far differently than the ideas which they represented, acted, lived, however beautifully the idea may be set forth by orator, divine, or poet. And yet it is said that it is not the Shakspeare of flesh and blood that we should be concerned about, but that other being who has come down to us robed in poetry, and who speaks to us — a spiritual essence addressing the thought and the divine image we bear within us. This is he of whom it is worth our while to take any note.

But this will not do. It will not do for those who think, of whence comes the genius we meet in those wonderful works? Did a being capable of all this ever come in the flesh? What did such a soul, if such a soul there was, do with common life? When genius cries out against his sphere, his lowly life, his small means, the removal of learning's aids from him,

is he rebuked or mocked by what Shakspeare had? Aye, the book and the man are two things. Milton wrote poetry; in that poetry he speaks of losing his sight in the cause of liberty. Did he do so? He did, and the thrill that comes to the heart as that sonnet on his blindness is read, is a shaft of fire from the undeniable fact that despite the physician's warning, Milton wrote because liberty was imperilled, and he had a word to speak for her cause. I asked a blind man once what was his conception of his mother. "She is," said he, "a beautiful thought." I regarded the answer as beautiful; but he confessed that if he could have but one moment of sight, he would choose to use it in seeing a human face. How different to him — what a greater reality and more beautiful visibility — would be the sight of his mother's face, than was his beautiful thought!

No, no, it will not do to set up that kind of criticism that says, what the man has done is what we want, not the man. It is base ingratitude. It lowers most shamefully the estimate of men. Men are to be valued for what they have *been*, as well as for what they have *done*. I value Sir Walter Scott for his character as seen in his efforts to retrieve his fortunes, more than I value his novels, great and immortal as they are. I deprecate the efforts so abundant in our day to depreciate the importance of historical Christianity, that says, "Perhaps Jesus lived, and perhaps he did not. He may have lived; he may have been a good man, but it matters little or nothing. Let us take what he taught that is good, and live it."

I pity those who thus dismiss Christ as a phantom that has spoken. Dream or reality, fable or historical fact, it is all the same to them. Not so with John's estimate of what man would need. He that confesseth not that the Christ of whom my gospel treats, who is there portrayed as I saw him; he who denies that that excellence came in the flesh, is not of God. He denies God's greatest benefaction. He accepts not the grandest thing ever done for humanity. He does not believe that the highest ideal of character has been realized; the best of all possible revelations of God has been lived, to see which, is to see the Father. But to us who receive him, his words are spirit and life, for they were lived; they were the spirit of the most beautiful life.

Our reverence for our nature is concerned in this matter. We judge human nature as it appears for judgment in personalities. We say it is the saddest thing in all history that we find virtue so fragmentary as illustrated in characters. Our grief is that it takes so many geniuses to make one perfect man. But in Jesus we find all virtues comprehended. In him the balance is perfected, and we see the glory of an harmonious development of our nature. To make this a phantom — to take this away from among beings once clothed in flesh, is a robbery of humanity — is a despoiling of History of its crowning character, its chief moral glory.

It is because of this that I reject with moral loathing that rationalistic criticism that makes Jesus only an Historical Myth or hardly that, — that attributes

to exaggerated admiration or homage of seen or supposed excellence the exceeding beauty of the character of Christ, as given by the Evangelists. It makes the Idea form the Man, instead of allowing that the Man formed the Idea; and sets up the most remarkable of all suppositions, — that is, that while directly opposite to what Christ was, was the desire and expectation of the Jews, yet men fashioned that character out of what they had been cherishing. The Idea was, this theory says, in the Mass before it appeared in the Individual. But where is the proof? Where is the evidence that such an Idea existed before Christ lived and thus gave it to the world?

No, it will not do to lose the flesh and blood animated by the noblest of all souls, and go floating away with a phantom Idea. It is not something that *may be*, but something that *has been* that is ours in the character that makes the centre and the glory of the New Testament. Aspiring man is not mocked in his hour of grandest moral effort by his Example of All Excellence passing into nothingness by the thought. "No one ever lived thus!" but as the traveller climbs the steep rock, and hangs dizzy in the air at a perillous height, and is animated to greater effort to climb the crags by the traces of some one having gone before him and a name written above him, so the fact that Christ has conquered — really, truly — has a mighty influence to encourage to the noblest efforts to reach the highest of Christian character.

It is because of this that I deem it a matter of Practical Religion to oppose the doctrine of the Trin-

ity that effectually makes Christ a phantom. If He was the very God, it is impossible, in the nature of things, that he should be the tempted, struggling being he is represented, as the Evangelists picture him. Theologians describe him as having a life within a life—as acting a part, and they will enter into detail to show how nicely he regarded prophecy, and how many things he did with sole reference to the fulfilment of some ancient word. They even express astonishment that he did not burst from the cloud that veiled his Godhead, and blast those who insulted his last hours!

It is not possible that to such a view can be attached the moral power that belongs to "the simplicity of Christ." If behind seeming sensibility and suffering I know there is a superhuman power, the power of the Example is gone. There is behind the outward seeming a calm, mighty and sovereign Spirit that reviews the whole and contemplates it, as Plato's God is represented contemplating the eternal Ideas and working through them in the creation of the world.

No, Christ is a distinct and subordinate Mind. He went away into solitude, on the mountain top and by the sea shore, to pray. He lived with God in a more intimate companionship than any other, and while we accept him as the New Testament presents him, we do not have to play at shadows—now seeing one Deity and anon another, but the Father is enthroned in undivided supremacy, and to Jesus we look as the Mediator and Redeemer, who, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

But are there not those who cling to all that John

wrote and that Paul believed, and yet nevertheless make Christ a Phantom — visiting them in time of feverish excitement, of entrancing devotion, or when the imagination is wrought upon by some affecting incident. To them Christ might well say, "A little while and ye shall not see me. And again, a little while and ye shall see me." He is a transient guest in their hearts. They do not follow him as a soldier his leader, the poet his theme, the artist his grand ideal. Christ to them is away off in the Palestine of the past, or in the far off future waiting to take the throne of Judgment. Christ a Phantom! Alas, that I should say it, but it is so — it is so to thousands who ought to know the difference between passionate enthusiasm and a steady, strong and obedient love.

What we want is such a sight of Jesus as will exert a transforming power. It was this kind of seeing Jesus that wrought the vast change which took place in the first centuries of the Christian Church. It gave new elements to thought. It made life more to be desired. It poured into the channel of human activity new forces of civilization and progress, and every department of social life felt the power of the grandest of all lives.

Phantom though he may be to many, Jesus has filled the world with his Presence. It cannot be denied. It is a moral, spiritual power. It has its judgment seat in our midst, and men of the world, of the bar and the senate, instead of attempting to set aside his Authority when it crosses their path, try their power to bring his consecrated name to the support

of their position. Christ is no Phantom. He is before us in social usages, laws, institutions, — in the best blessings of our homes, the best aids to social improvement, the happiest tendencies of the wondrous activities of the world. He repeats his miracles by the beneficence he inspires, and breathes a reverence for man that gives an interest to every form of humanity and makes the effort for the most debased an acceptable act of worship. He addresses our immortal nature, and still repeats, "I am the Light of the world — I am the Resurrection and the Life. If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. I am the Bread of God. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

Accept him, O ye who are in constant unrest. Let him be more than the Phantom of the devotional hour. Adopt no theory that dissolves him into a thin shade — that denies him present existence and activity, his Mediatorial and Redeeming mission. He lives. We may know him, and over our souls may come the power of his love, as we feel the coolness of the air reviving our languid energies; though the fountain that thus ministers to our comfort is unseen and shines in its rainbowed glory afar.

SERMON XIII.

UNBELIEF HELPED.

AND STRAIGHTWAY THE FATHER OF THE CHILD CRIED OUT AND SAID WITH TEARS, LORD, I BELIEVE! HELP THOU MY UNBELIEF.—Mark ix. 14.

Where the confession of unbelief is made with tears and made to Christ, the smallness of belief will be compassionately dealt with.

He made no unreasonable demands. "I have," said he, "many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and in this spirit Paul treated those who were to him but babes, and were to be fed with the milk of the word. "Him that is weak in faith receive ye," he said; and honest doubts were more respected than the credulity that swallows without tasting.

The scene with which the text is connected is one of peculiar impressiveness.

A lad was brought to the Saviour who was terribly diseased, so that he was subject to epileptic fits, and soon as he came into the presence of Jesus, he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. It was awful to

see him. He was dumb, and tore about like some ravishing beast, gnashing his teeth, so that no wonder the Apostles or the seventy were affrighted and could not heal him.

Jesus accepted the case as one of those where the outward appearance had beguiled away faith, and to calm the father and the multitude, doubtless he asked how long the lad had been thus afflicted, and the answer of the father was, "Of a child." Then he went on to tell how the poor creature had suffered, and how into the fire and into the water he had been thrown by the contortions and agonies he suffered; "but if," said this father, "thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us."

There was something here that might indicate a want of confidence in the power of Jesus. One thing was certain, the Disciples could not do any thing. Hope was all baffled by their effort, and the poor father of the writhing and tossing lad might think that the hope of having the son healed was "too good to be true." And then too his language only betokened the wish for *something* to be done. He was not lifted up to the great desire for the complete cure of his son, and all his thought was, Help us, if thou canst do any thing.

Calm as the moon that rises to move upon the tide and control them, Jesus looked into the face of that father and said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

Instantly the father cried out, and with gushing tears, too, "Lord, I believe! help thou mine unbelief!"

Then, while the people were running to the spot where the lad lay, Jesus healed him — he lay still as if dead — exhausted, so that many said, "He is dead!" But Jesus stepped forward — took the boy by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

When the disciples were in private with the Saviour, they asked him, why they could not heal this case? His answer was significant, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

By this, I recognize our Master as making faith dependent on severe spiritual exercise for its noblest energy and most triumphant power.

Here, then, we have an important matter connected with Belief. It teaches most plainly, as the whole tenor of the New Testament teaches, that faith is a matter of culture — a thing to be nursed and tended, — to be fed and exercised — to be disciplined and fitted for the most frightful exigencies of life. "Lord, I believe! help thou my unbelief."

Christ compassionates unbelief — the unbelief that tells its story with tears — that sees what it would have remedied, but has too little hope that it can be realized. He did not array his force against the poor father who spake as though he doubted the power of Christ, because he saw how honest and simple that doubt was. The man had caught the impotency of the Disciples. Their ill-success had weakened his hope, and he writhed with his son who wallowed, foaming at the mouth, on the ground.

Here, then, is the great lesson. We must not attempt to catch the spirit of belief from other Christians, but from self-discipline under the guidance of

the Saviour. Thus he can, and will, help our unbelief. He says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and Life." He and His Religion are identified. The distinguishing glory of Christianity is, that it is a Religion manifested in a Life. It has been lived. Christ is the revelation of God. We see God as we see him. He is as a word which clearly expresses an invisible thought. He is spoken of, therefore, as such, and there is a sublime meaning in the Scripture, "And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." St. John in saying this, also said, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

O there is the grand help for unbelief to behold the glory of Christ — to see and appreciate the beauty and power of his life — the matchless symmetry of his character — the budding, blossoming and perfection of the flower of his being. Hence the grand language of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

There is something remarkable in this passage. Paul had been treating of the giving of the law when a vail was on the face of Moses, in mercy to the people, who were dazzled by the brightness of his luminous countenance: and in describing the privileges of the Christian, Paul spoke of Christ's face, that face unveiled — that face unveiled and shining, shining not with a corporeal light, but with the light of the knowledge of God's glory.

This light did not dazzle the eye, as in the case of Moses and the people, but illumined the hearts of the Christians; so that the contrasts here made are highly instructive, to show the relation of Christ to us, as the great help for unbelief.

The knowledge of God is glory's given in the character of Christ. His face is put for his character. In that character, as light in a mirror, is concentrated the highest and best knowledge of God; from that character, as light from a mirror by a lens, that knowledge is transmitted to our hearts; and that knowledge thus shining in our hearts, lights up all the beauty and glory of immortal love and eternal life—it touches every affection and sympathy, every desire and passion, as light touches the objects in a room into which it is brought; and we learn to appreciate the moral grandeur of that declaration which says, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."—Rom. v. 1—5.

It is not then by the manner in which Christians live, that we are to be helped in our unbelief. Christ lives, and to him must we go. He only hath the power we need. He only has fasted and prayed till

the "fulness" of the Divine gift came, and he no longer had it "by measure."

It is indeed well to help our faith — to strengthen and cheer it by appreciating what Christians have done. Just in that degree in which they have let their light shine before men, that men, by their good works, are led to glorify the God of the religion that so works,— just in that degree the lives of saints are valuable as helps to faith.

So the Apostle presents a grand catalogue of the examples of faith before the times of Christ, and represents these examples as presenting an array of personages who look down on the Christian racer bent on running the full course of duty, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith."

To return, then, to the text and its connection.

Beautiful to the eye of the father was the lad brought to Jesus, when the spasm was not on him.

So is a true faith in Christ. It is the child of the heart. It is the image of all that is parental and divine in the human soul. The affections so naturally fasten upon it as upon the child given to the arms and the bosom — to the kiss and fondnesses of maternal and paternal love.

We so speak of a favorite idea of an author, an artist, a schemer,— we say, It is the child of his heart. It stands out, as it were, to his eye as a child born to him, in whom he has garnered up great hopes, and with whom is linked all the happiness of life.

More justly may this be regarded the Christian's faith in immortality, with the light it sheds on present

duty, joy and sorrow; so did Socrates regard his fainter and less beautiful hope of life beyond death.

When Socrates held his last conversation with his scholars, it seemed at one time that all the arguments for the immortality of the soul had been overthrown, and as it was a custom for the Greeks to cut off their hair and throw it into the tomb at the time of the burial of a friend, Socrates took hold of the long, drooping locks of one of his disciples, and asked if that pretty hair would not be cut off on the morrow, — the time he should be dead. He was answered "Yes;" and then he added, "If you take my advice, you will not stay so long!" and explained his meaning, that it was more fit that the death of a great hope be mourned than the death of a friend.

But the beautiful faith of many a heart does not so much die as it may be said to be affected with spasms. It is tortured. Its harmonies are untuned, and it is a mournful thing. It is as uncontrollable as the poor lad to whom the Apostles or Disciples could bring no help, so that the sorrow of that father is but a picture of the troubles of him whose faith is not healthy, strong and happy. There is just enough of life in their faith for them to say, "I believe!" but there is weakness enough to make them add, with tears, the confession, "Help my unbelief!"

To Christ must the heart come, and the result of patient waiting upon him shall be, the lanquid pulse of faith shall be quickened — the "veins shall feel the rosy tide," and as Christ lifted up the lad and he arose to tremble and to fall no more, so shall belief be

released of all the spasms of unbelief and the fire and the flood be feared no more.

Take to Christ thy faith. Its weakness will not be despised. Thy tears will be pearls in the Treasury of Christ. Bring to him thy soul by adopting the simple rule, to try by the spirit of his life all doctrines and theories, all creeds and articles.

Test the Trinity by this and it is seen to be an error; for the life of Christ was the life of a subordinate, humble, prayerful, tempted being.

Test Native Depravity by this, and it cannot be received as Christ is seen taking children in his arms as heirs by birth of the kingdom of heaven. The great question pertaining to the death and after happiness of infants are all answered; and there is something approaching to blasphemy in the acts of those portions of the Church which will not admit the unbaptized infant into consecrated ground for burial, but must place them apart and speak of them as "These that in trembling hope are laid apart."

Test by the Spirit of the Saviour's life that doctrine of the exclusive Church that stamps no virtues as good save those which blossom within its own special boundaries, and see it refuted by Christ's conduct to the Gentiles — his picture of the Samaritan — his readiness to approve goodness in every form, telling his disciples it was no reason for denying excellence to one who used his name with reverence because he followed not them.

Test by this standard the application of the great principle of Love, that is so often limited by the sys-

tems of men, and you find it has a sweep of infinity. The example of Christ pours inexhaustible light on the meaning and the extent of the commands to love God and to love our neighbor. There is no limit in either; for Christ, by the spirit of his life, showed that the character of God as humanity's father is to be ever kept in view, both in reference to the prodigal and the mysteries of life; and when the lawyer would mystify the command to love our neighbor by asking, "*Who* is my neighbor?" Christ answered by a parable that did but harmonize with the spirit of his own life, and which such a spirit could alone have originated.

And so with the monstrous doctrine of Endless Punishment: test it by the spirit of the life of Jesus and it is seen to be false. The assertion of that idea and the prayer of Christ on the Cross, are as incompatible as hatred and love. The first is like the vulture pouncing on the flesh of Saul's seven sons; and the other like Rizpah scaring them away. In her spirit of undying love we see the image of the love of God, and Christ is the grand help to cast away unbelief.

SERMON XIV.

PERSONATING JESUS.

BUT PUT YE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.—Rom. xiii. 14.

Literature abounds with references to the Stage. Poetry has much animation and beauty which it owes to the Theatre; and there are no metaphors more beautiful employed even by divines than those which send the imagination where the Actor treads, and the scene shifts, and the story of years is told in the few acts of the changing drama.

Man loves mimic life — the reproduction of the Past; and the theatre addresses the eye and ear as the writer addresses the imagination. Separated from its unessential adjuncts, a tremendous power might be exerted by the Drama to give emphasis to Paul's allusion to it where he says, "The fashion of this world passeth away," intimating the need of stretching our grasp for something permanent and fitting an immortal nature.

In Paul's time, the theatre was the grand entertain-

ment. It was the great arena of literary ambition. The most famous orators at the Bar and in the Senate sought the aid of the Actor; and the Poet's grandest inspiration found there a fit impersonation.

But it is to a *single custom* of the theatre that Paul, in the text, alludes, and that is, the changing dresses, whereby the character personated is presented in appropriate costume.

Dress strangely changes the person, and strangely affects the character of the Man. He is, in some degree, as he may clothe himself: and how clothes represent the character is easily seen in slip-shod actions where there is the slip-shod dress, and politeness of manner where there is elegance of clothes.

This serves to open in some degree the meaning of the Apostle's exhortation: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." And it illustrates also that reference made to the personation of the theatre in Col. iii. 9, 10; and also in Eph. iv. 22—24, where the Apostle speaks of putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, or throwing aside one character for another by a change in the spirit of the mind, showing that the grand change demanded by the Gospel is not a change in Nature, but of Action, Development and Restraint, as he who walks the stage a Beggar may tread with the royal step and seem "every inch a king," by a change of personation demanded of him.

But costume is not every thing. Dress does not make the man,

"For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich,"

and *professions* of virtue, holiness, religion, are but dress — they suggest a character to be sustained, a part to be performed, an end to be reached in carrying out the design of Him who called us to the theatre of God, the drama of Love, "to virtue and to glory."

Here, then, is the important point of the text: The impersonation of Christ; or the Christian an Actor.

"All the world," we are told by the great Dramatist, "is a stage, and all the men and women — merely players. Every man in his time plays many parts."

This is true. But there is one part man should be most studious to perform, and that is, To be a Christian — a true Impersonation of Jesus.

Every true Actor has one favorite part. He will generally play that on his "Benefit Night." He thinks it best suited to him; if he have genius, that part will fit him as a garment, and his effort is so completely to put it on as to be lost in it — to be the character he personates for the time being, as the insane man is the king or beggar he declares himself to be.

It is grand to see the enthusiasm of genius in the enacting of some favorite part — where melancholy Hamlet; ambitious, murderous, conscience-haunted Macbeth; sorrow-stricken and kingly Lear; or gloomy Richard, pass before the eye as in reality.

You see there acted poetry. The great thoughts of the Dramatist are incarnated for the hour. The performer throws himself, as it were, into the very experience of the character he has chosen, as the poet, thrills with the joy or sorrow, the horror or remorse of

the character he reproduces in his poem; as Shakspeare rioted with Falstaff and wept with Cordelia and Juliet.

The vast distinction between Talent and Genius is seen in the transcendent power of the latter to be what it represents — to make the allusion complete, so that the fire of the soul is contagious, and we feel the cold storm that beats around the defenceless head of King Lear, yet not so cold as his daughter's neglect that prompts the prayer from the old father's lips that they "may know how much sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!"

It is in this sense that we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. "Eat his flesh and drink his blood" — high wrought metaphors for entering into his most vital experience and living as he lived, by the spirit of filial loyalty to God, as he lived the life of God and said, "I and the Father are one."

We are to accept him as a character in which we are to transform ourselves — to feel as he felt, to think as he thought, to resolve as he resolved, to endure as he endured, and to infuse into our whole being the spirit that moulded his beautiful character.

There is nothing unnatural here. The exhortation of the text is reasonable; for there is no influence grander than the power of an assumed character.

We see this everywhere in life. Every successful man is the result of this power. He set before himself what he would be — he lived it — he wrought for it; and whatever his choice was, whether to be a Merchant or Minister, Mechanic or Artist, Poet or Painter,

the character he loved he assumed — he did his best to be it — he magnified his office — he put on the character till he felt the soul beating in accordance with the dress.

Whatever helps to the feeling of any character which is to be personated or acquired, aids the perfection of the efforts of the man. We see this in the Fireman's dress, and the various symbols that belong to that character's employments. We see this in the costume of the Soldier — the gay coat, the cap, with its graceful plume, the epaulet and sword, the glittering gun, the adornments that speak of War, Bravery and Victory.

The man seems a different being having put on this or that character; and he is following an ideal as truly as the student at his books, the painter at his easel, the sculptor at his marble, or the poet with his pen, "with eye in fine frenzy rolling."

Here is the great justification for a man's *professing to be a Christian*, though he is not, in *character* or *life*, in all things, a Christian.

There is no hypocrisy in this act. He is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; he is personating a character in order to catch the spirit and genius of that character; he is a Christian Actor in the great drama of the Redemption, and a voice says: "Honor and shame from no *condition* rise; *act well your part;* there *all* the honor lies." The *aim* makes the Man.

The expression, "to put on," in the sense of the text, did not originate with Paul. It was common among Greek writers. We read of those who were thus and

so, "having put on, or clothed themselves with, Tarquin." So the disciples of Pythagoras are represented as having put him on; and so too Plato is said to have been put on, as also his master, Socrates, by those who received them as their instructors in philosophy. So in the text, Jesus is to be put on in like manner, as a guide and example opposite to the characters referred to in the immediate context.

The Apostle did not call, in the text, to the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ as though it was something to be taken as clothes are taken. He referred to no mystical ideas concerning the vicariousness of Christ's sufferings or righteousness; but his idea was precisely what the idea of a great lover of the Drama is when he calls on the Actor to put on more completely the character he is to personate. In other words, seek a right conception of the character to be sustained; study it; enter into it more and more; become more and more possessed of its spirit; seek every means that will help to the possession of the passions and emotions that sway such a personage, and that are to be expressed in the representation.

The theatre-goer follows up the representation of the same character a score of times by the same actor, expecting to see that character put on more and more — new points made — new beauties brought out, the freshness of original thought exhibited — so that the Hamlet, or Lear, or Richard of the same actor is a far more perfect thing at one time than at another, if he have the genius of his Art.

All that the Man professes to do, is to have the

Character in view, and to labor to personate it. So when I say I am a Christian, I do not take that name in vain — I do not mean that I am like Christ. I only say I put him on — I feel there is no glory attainable by man like the glory of acting well that part. What I have assumed to be, helps me to be the Character desired ; and it may be that some little stroke in every day's performance may aid the realization of the sublime ideal.

"Practice makes perfect," is the familiar proverb ; and only by practice can any worthy end in the way of Character be achieved.

I meet frequently in the city of my residence an Actor I used to see on the Stage in my boyhood, who is regarded as one of the most successful in putting on the line of characters he personates. I remember when he began and how he was laughed at ; but he determined to put on the characters with which, I am told, he now finely clothes himself, and he assumed to be certain personations till he acted his part well.

A woman died in France, not many years ago, of premature old age, in consequence of the zeal and genius with which she put on the Character of the old and decrepit. The effort of the mind went into the very marrow of the bone, and she became what she assumed to be.

We cannot be Jesus — we can only put him on — only aim for the spirit of his life and infuse it into others.

Here is acting, on a real and not a mimic stage.

Here is a personation worthy of our highest effort.

Success here makes us to reproduce Jesus, and to be owned by Him.

While Jesus lived on earth certain Greeks came to his disciple Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." They were led to him. We cannot so answer a request. Let the Master be seen in his servants. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

SERMON XV.

THE SILENCE OF JESUS.

AND HE ANSWERED HIM TO NEVER A WORD; INSOMUCH THAT THE GOVERNOR MARVELLED GREATLY.—Matt. xxvii. 14.

The theme suggested to me by this text is the silence of Jesus.

His silence was as marvellous as his speech; and there is no method of studying character that affords better results than to notice the restraining of speech — the eloquence of silence.

Much is said, and well said, on the teaching of Jesus — his manner and method as a speaker; how independent he was of times and circumstances; and how, in his peasant's garb, and by the hill-side or the river-shore, he forced the confession from his hearers, "Never man spake like this man!" "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes," and the people marvelled at his teaching — at what he said, and how he said it. His eloquence was from a divine impulse, from a heart that spake its utmost conviction, and rolled out the burden of love for the world.

He was troubled by no interruption. He was always ready to bear questionings, and no teacher was ever so patient to repeat himself so long as repetition promised anything.

But *there* was the limit. When speech was useless he was silent. When God could speak best with his "still small voice," he asked for no rumbling earthquake, no surging and roaring wind, no flashing and terrific fire.

I have read and heard many sermons and essays on the speech of Jesus, but not one on his silence. And yet, as I have said, his silence was as marvellous as his speech. It gives us fine revelations of his character. It presents us valuable lessons for social and domestic life. It furnishes an example we ought not to forget; for the prophet Amos has this reference to an evil time—"Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time." The prudence of Jesus is seen in his keeping silence; and never more so than where he answered no more questions, or thrusts, and the governor marvelled greatly.

The text refers to the interview between Jesus and Pilate, after Pilate had shown that he was not governed by principle in any form. He vascillated between what he knew was justice to the accused and the favor he desired to obtain from the Jews.

Jesus had been submitted to insult upon insult. The Jews had no power of life and death over any criminal, and knowing that any charge involving merely matters of religion would avail nothing before a Gentile magistrate, they changed their ground and

accused Jesus of a political offence against the authority of Rome, asserting a direct and unequivocal falsehood. "We found this fellow," said they to Pilate, "perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay tribute unto Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." They knew this was a falsehood, for he had answered them on a former occasion, when they attempted to entrap him, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." And he, himself, had paid tribute.

When the accusation was made, Pilate came in and asked Jesus the question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered that he was a king, but explains and limits his meaning by stating that his kingdom is spiritual, his throne is the truth.

Pilate seemed satisfied at this. He goes out and tells the Jews that Jesus is an innocent man. He finds no fault with him, and to the last he maintains the same idea, but renders it a nullity by his conduct in yielding to the people.

He tried to shift the responsibility by sending Jesus to Herod, and became reconciled to Herod for the purpose, and sent Jesus to him as a Galilean, and therefore coming under the jurisdiction of Herod. Herod sent him back to Pilate, and Judas sees that his Master has no design to deliver himself by miracle, and he goes to confession, restitution and death.

Jesus stands again before Pilate. The clamor is loud and strong against him from the chief priests and elders, and to their accusations he answers nothing. Pilate speaks to him — "Hearest thou not how

many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word;" i. e. he spake nothing; he uttered not one word. He stood like a lamb dumb before his slaughterers, and at this silence the governor marvelled greatly.

Pilate marvelled because he knew Jesus *could* speak. He knew the power with which he could plead the cause of truth. He knew the influence he had exerted by his eloquence. He knew these accusations came because of the power which the wonderful teacher had exerted by his speech. He did not keep dumb because he had no words, nor because he was unused to discussion; nor because he could not bear the presence of these ecclesiastical dignitaries. Discussion and they were familiar to him; but he had to practice the instructions he had given to his disciples. He had enjoined on them silence, when speech was vain. He had forbidden them to throw pearls where they would find no gold setting; and where there was only talk and no heart, he bade them leave the place and go elsewhere.

He had not only taught this, but he had practiced it. At Nazareth they marvelled at his teachings and his wisdom, but they brought up his humble origin against him, and he wasted there no more words.

Many such instances you will find which illustrate, that so soon as he discovered that the disposition of the people was wrong, he retired, and in silence found confidence and strength.

How eloquent was the silence that followed his words — "Let him that is without sin among you cast

the first stone at her." He stooped and wrote as it were on the ground. One by one, slinking behind the pillars of the temple, the accusing throng went out, "being convicted of their own consciences." He left that thought to burn its own way to the seared conscience, to arouse sensibility; and where most teachers would have kept on talking, he kept silence, and conscience rose in the soul with that solemn and awful grandeur with which the full moon rises from the sea.

So also when the Jews had accused him of breaking the Sabbath, because he had performed works of healing on that day. He was in a synagogue, and the day was the Sabbath. There was a man present who had a withered hand, and he was bidden to stand forth in the sight of all those who were watching to see if Jesus would heal that day any one. Jesus asked them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil?" and they held their peace. That silence was ominous. It was a revelation of disposition and character; and never was Jesus so moved as at that time. He looked round about on all the persons in the synagogue. There they were in their seats of power, ranging from the most distinguished to the humblest. Not a soul of them had pity for the man with a withered hand, because they were opposed to Jesus; and it is reasonable to suppose that the history of the man was pitiful. An humble peasant, with that hand withered, that, if made whole, would enable him to minister to his own needs and those of others. All was silence. The very breath-

ing of the people seemed suspended, and among all those godly people, so anxious for the honor of religion, there was not one to say, "It is right to do good on any day."

All was silence, and Jesus, in anger, looked round on all. His anger was just. It showed the energy of his religious feelings against this foul mockery of religion, and this pretended piety. His anger was right, and showed him human; yes, and it showed him divine: divine in spirit, for our irrascible emotions and feelings are exponents of the moral sense and stern duty. His anger was right, because its *quality* is indicated in the testimony that it sprung from his "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," and he broke the silence with no argument for the Jews, but with the command to the poor observed of all observers, "Stretch forth thine hand!" and it was restored whole as the other.

There was no use of speech with those enemies, and the silence of Jesus was justified by the fact that followed, for these Pharisees who could not have the Sabbath violated by an act of mercy, went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians to destroy Jesus!

The silence of Jesus was therefore perfectly in character when he answered his accusers and Pilate "to never a word." In silence where speech was vain, he could nourish the moral forces of the soul. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," was to him, as to us, a prophetic word; and there in Pilate's hall, accused and scorned, he who could wake

the dead and still the sea, who could blast the unproductive fig-tree whose life was expressed only in leaves, and who could open the deaf ear and bid the dumb to speak — he in the hour of mortal peril was silent. There he stood, still as the stars dropping their crystal light. Still as the grass springs and the blossoms unfold. Still as the subtlest forces of nature speed on their way. Still as the footsteps of God, when he visits specially the human soul. Still as the spirit goes to the resurrection.

Pilate would arouse him from this silence, and he said to him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?"

Then it was time to speak, and Jesus replied, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

There was something in that answer that made Pilate eager to release Jesus, but he was defeated by the appeal of the people — "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend!" And then Jesus was exposed in mock apparel to the populace, and Pilate said, "Behold the man!" Jesus was silent. Why should he speak as though reasoning ruled the world, when passion is too often the master of thrones and authority? Why should he speak, when he had foretold the issue that had begun, and which was unfolding every hour? He kept silence. He was great in doing so. Speech under the circumstances would be a luxury, could it be indulged innocently; but the

nobility of Jesus was seen in that unbroken silence which he preserved while Pilate washed his hands as symbolical that he was free from guilt in yielding a just person to be crucified by popular passion; while he saw a notable robber given up to freedom in his place; while he was scourged at the pillar; mocked within the fortress by the soldiers; and insulted in various ways till he was given to the death by crucifixion. They had put a crown of thorns on his head; they had put on a mock robe of royalty; they had placed a reed as a sceptre in his right hand; and then they had bowed the knee, crying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" He kept silence; and then they spat upon him, struck him on the head with the reed they had used as a sceptre, and tore the robe off with violence.

He kept silence. There was no dignity in speaking. Speech was vain. It would only have added new material for insult; and not till some good was to be done was he to speak.

And what a revelation was that when he *did* speak! He was bearing, on his lacerated and inflamed back, the cross on which he was to be hung, and as he was too weak to bear it, and might die ere he reached the spot of execution, the load was taken from him, and laid on one Simon, a Cyrenean. Jesus was now relieved, and he heard the rush of the multitude, and the voices of women bewailing his fate.

It was the first voice of pity since Pilate's wife told her dream and implored her husband to have nothing to do with Jesus; and now that mournful lament,

that cry of bewailing as for the dead, came from woman's voice to his ear, and he paused a moment on the rising ground, and turned his face to the lamenting throng. All haggard was that face of Jesus. The pure was going to the execution with two criminals. The miracle-worker would use none of his wealth of power to buy his own safety. He was submissively in the hands of God, as well as in the power of the people, and towards those mournful, pitying women, he gazed and said:—

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the childless! Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

He spake to turn the minds of those women from himself to their own duties, and the great lesson of the future; of that impending judgment which should tell of the iniquity of that people as full, who that day were to crucify him.

And that day he made no addresses; nothing came from his lips but brief sentences — a prayer for his murderers, as he was lifted on the Cross; his word to the penitent thief; his regard to his mother, and his commendation of her to John; then the exclamation of overwhelming agony, thus resolved into "I thirst," and the triumph of returning consciousness, "It is finished!" ending with the exclamation of filial piety, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

How significant was the speech of Jesus after he had preserved marvellous silence! It is in silence that great thoughts grow. It was so when David said, "Thus was I as a man that heareth not, in whose mouth are no reproofs. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope." Instead of holding discussions, and making speeches, he wrote psalms. The cave was the sanctuary of God; and though at times his thoughts were as fire shut up in his bones, he mused and let the fire burn till there was some moral use in speaking.

The example of Jesus in reference to the time to keep silent, must not be lost upon us. His silence was eloquence. He fulfilled the prophecy, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

His example in reference to speech is frequently set forth — that we should speak the truth, speak it boldly, speak it for our own soul's growth, and the good of others; speak it in charity as well as firmness; but as important is his example in reference to silence, and we need it as much.

We sometimes forget that the world is not wholly ruled by talk; that it is not possible at all times to find an unperverting hearing; and we need the discipline of silence. O holy silence! out of thy calm depths what strength can come! How still doth the Almighty carry on the stupendous operations in nature; and where do we feel his presence more than

when, like Christ, we are alone on the mountain? Then has the beauty and power of some blessed truth been made more apparent, and we have felt

> "Like some watcher of the skies,
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

But equally so do we find the good of silence in social life. We talk too much; and if on this ground the argument for silent worship was based, it would be the most reasonable. To Jesus let us go for an example in reference to the times and seasons of silence; and then in the difficult passes of life, we shall say our word calmly, solemnly, truthfully, and leave the issues with God, not doubting the fidelity of his providence.

SERMON XVI.

IMMORTALITY NOT INCREDIBLE.

WHY SHOULD IT BE THOUGHT A THING INCREDIBLE WITH YOU THAT GOD SHOULD RAISE THE DEAD?—Acts xxvi. 8.

Paul said this to Agrippa, when with great pomp Agrippa, accompanied by his sister Bernice, and Felix, had come to the judgment seat at Cesarea, to hear the case of the Apostle, a prisoner of State. To Felix the case seemed to be one of the Hebrew Religion rather than of State, and he would rather have sent him to Jerusalem than forward to Rome, but while Paul was pursuing his rights as an individual, Providence was working by him unto great ends. The real germ of Paul's case was a controversy of "one dead Jesus, whom Paul affirmed to be alive;" and standing now before all the array of royalty, Paul felt only one impulse, and that was, to press home the claims of his cause as a religious teacher. As though every thing turned on one point he asked Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing *incredible* with you that God should raise the dead?"

He did not go at once to the Resurrection of Christ to prove *that*, or to ask why *that* should be deemed

incredible; but he went to the question that lies beyond — to the dead as a general term — to the idea of a revival of life where existence seemed ended. In other words, what is there essentially incredible in the idea of God's renewing a life that once burned, a flame of intellect, sensibility, affection?

Here the question is brought on the ground of pure reason. It is made a question of credibility, which is the first question in all reasoning on subjects of this character; and it is always well to keep before us the stirring appeal which God makes to mind where he says, "Come, now, let us reason together." Let us look into the resonableness of these things, and see whether there is any thing incredible about them. "Is it *possible?*" is the first question, and then comes, "Is it probable?" and next, "Is it certain?" and nothing has been the cause of so much scepticism on matters of Religion as the idea, that the mind must submit its faculties to resolution as it does not, and is not called to submit them, in other domains of thought and study. Never did a gallant ship unfurl its sails to the free winds of the ocean more bravely than the Scriptures offer themselves to the mind of man; and as Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures," so Paul exhorted, "Prove all things," and the inspired historian records, no doubt, the estimate Paul formed of the Berean Jews, as "more noble" than the Thessalonian Jews, because they heard with readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures to test the accuracy of the new exposition of the Sacred Orders. So, in the text, the appeal is, What is there incredible in the idea that God should raise the dead?

But mark here, Paul does not say, Why is the immortality of the soul deemed an incredible thing? Why do you deem it incredible that spirit should survive matter? No; he went into no questions of this nature. He came forward with no new philosophy, with no subtle metaphysics, with no weapons for argumentation on the qualities of matter and mind. He did not say, Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that *the dead should rise*, should enter upon another existence; for the great thought that ruled all his ideas was that of God — his relations to man — what might be expected under his government of the world.

This, as I have before said, brings the matter in a different shape before the judgment seat of mind, than the Ancients had it. The question is about God, and not about Man; and we may quote with solemn pertinency the language of the Apostle where he says: "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead."—2 Cor. i. 9. And more or less, every thoughtful mind is overpowered by this sentence of death, and instead of looking up the evidence of a great hope in ourselves, we should look to God. And I hold one of three things to be logically binding on all sceptical of Immortality. They must accept bald Atheism, or a mean idea of the Diety, or the immortality of man. I see no escape from this when we stand in the field of our common reason — when we look at this matter on the simple ground of logic. I can waive the question of matter and mind — spiritu-

alism and materialism — the union of thought with the brain or its independency; and on a simpler basis I am willing to build. That basis is this: Any worthy idea of God necessitates the immortality of man. It is *not* a thing *incredible* that God should raise the dead.

And here is one of the great benefits which Christianity has bestowed — by giving us nobler ideas of God, it has given us new intimations from reason of our immortality. It has made that stupendous hope more credible on grounds of common reasoning; and the clear-headed thinker can no more escape this conclusion, than he can escape from the conviction that the more he exalts the character of any father, the more he is made conscious that that father's family is constantly cared for and protected.

When I reason on the credibility of an immortal life, I find myself saying, It is no more incredible that I shall continue to be, than that I should exist at all. I was not; I am; I may hope to be.

I say also to myself, — The body has wasted and changed from time to time, and still the soul, or something, retains all the life of the two score years, and as I think of the future, either of earth or beyond, I see no necessity for a new soul, or this something that holds the year together as a memory, or experience, or identity; the same mind or spirit, or whatever you may call the continuous man, will do for all the bodies that may yet be given me; and I can conceive of no other want than for an incorruptible body.

I say, yet farther, I can conceive of no reason why

mind should be extinguished, and thus become so unlike any thing else in the universe. Every where a Divine Economy is seen. There is no waste; and every advance of science is but an increase of the evidences that nothing is lost — even when multitudes are fed by the great miracle, the fragments are carefully gathered up, that nothing be lost. But to what would the punishing of mind contribute? The dust of Virgil may keep green the bays above his grave, but to what would the annihilation of Virgil's mind contribute? And when I think of the noble minds of all ages — when I see them more in the majesty of more than kingly greatness — when, as in some vast area, they gather in a glorious congregation, I feel our common reason is insulted by the idea, that all these, like taper lights, have gone out into nothingness!

And then I cry for God! — then I ask, is God dead? And I to be driven into the cold, icy waters of Atheism? How can I escape it but by those thoughts of the Deity which forbid such notions of the perishing of mind, and which give to mind a place amid the universe of unperishable things.

Now I ask the Deist to look at this. You say you are no Atheist — O no! not that. You say you believe in God — you believe in the sovereign of the universe, and that he rules the nations. But you own to scepticism on all else; all is doubt and misgiving as to the future beyond the close we call death; and you do not marvel that men wait on the Rapping or Tipping or strange Moving Phenomena, questioning, if happly some report may come from that land which

has no returning pathway. Well, brother, here is one great step. You believe in God. You are no Atheist, you are a Deist.

And now comes the question, Have you a worthy idea of God, or a mean one? Deists usually claim that they have sublime views of God, and without any definite idea of what the purpose of the Creation is, or the end to which Providence is directing its government, they will tell of an experience like that which Chalmer records when he was really but a Deist and said, "I spent nearly a twelvemonth in a sort of mental elysium, and the one idea which ministered to my soul all its rapture was the magnificence of the Godhead, and the universal subordination of all things to the one great purpose for which he evolved and was supporting creation." In other years he longed to be so inspired again, but it could not be, as he had ideas of revelation which cramped the soul in its attempts to get at the full glory of God. But it is not to be denied that the Deist has had and may have lofty ideas of God. God is known by his works. The heavens declare his glory, the earth is full of his riches, the sea has its revelations of him, and a thousand voices, with sweetest echo, speak to the soul of God; and while the Deist can know nothing of the Covenants and cannot rejoice with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses, David, Jesus, yet we allow to him some of the dearest music in the vast world of harmony — some of the richest poetry of Religion. Revelation does not ask the denial of Deism; it accepts it, and plants a starry ladder up which the spirit

may run to heights in the infinite which Deism can never reach.

Here then is the issue: Accept the immortality for man which Deism necessitates, or yield your Deism. Pertinent here is the word of Jesus, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The one necessitates the other when the great subject is seen in its comprehensiveness; but only of immortality would we now pursue the thought. As good an idea of God as Jesus taught necessitaties immortality for man; and there is a natural and inevitable connection between the first and last of the four articles in which Jefferson summoned up his estimate of the doctrines of Jesus, in a letter to Dr. Rush. In the first article he said, of Jesus, "He corrected the Deism of the Jews, confirming them in their belief of one only God, and giving them juster notions of his attributes and government." In the concluding article he says: "He taught emphatically the doctrine of a future state, which was either doubted or disbelieved by the Jews, and weilded it with efficacy at an important incentive supplementary to the other motives to moral conduct."

Here is the true thought — an improvement of Deism is an improvement of the intimations and uses of the idea of immortality; and I put the question as one of solemn moment, How can the Deist hold to a worthy idea of God, and not follow it till it assures him of, at least, the credibility of immortality?

A noble idea of God has infinite relations — it shoots out as when the frost first touches the shimmering lake and unnumbered crystals are seen every

where, and the wondering mind searches with delight the manifold variety of beauty before it. It is not enough to say, "I believe in God, I believe he is good, I will submit to whatever He shall ordain, I will be thankful for this life, and not imagine because a friend has given me silver, he is bound therefore to give me gold." This is brave talk, but it will not do for life's sternest hours. There is something in true reverence for God, that longs for his endless love — that says, "If loved once, why not loved forever?" — that, if it must, lies dumb at his feet, but cannot keep down the hope that He will break the silence and speak as only God can speak.

I fear it is a doubt about God, after all, that feeds the scepticism of immortality. The light of that great idea, God is, is not held enough to send its rays far ahead and to shoot over the cold stream to the deathless shore. We do not feed it enough with the beaten oil of solemn, midnight thought; we do not go away from the world, and in the awful solitude, where no star shines and no light glimmers, look up to see what smile may steal down through the darkness, as a mother's kiss to her babe when no form can be seen. To think worthily of God is to take hold of a chain along whose living links we may go from every possible shipwreck to the eternal shore.

Do you ask how I reason on this point? I answer: Mind or Man seems out of harmony with their orderly universe when he is considered only as a creature of Time; God seems to have failed in his grandest

work; all is incomplete, and mind, if it goes into nothingness, is the best thing extinguished.

Here properly comes up the thought of the progressive faculties of man — his capacity for endless improvement — his ever enlarging desire for new discoveries of God. If a man were to make a machine and to discover it to possess a capacity, so to speak, for endless improvement, affording the means of a perpetual display of the inventor's genius, I cannot conceive how he could ever have a heart to destroy it. Phidias threw his mallet at his statue because it would not speak — the cold marble put out the fire of genius that could go no farther; but when another sculptor saw enough in his work to proclaim him to all ages, he cried, "Kill me, but not my thought!" And however others may think, I cannot see any credibility in the idea, that the Godlike mind shall be killed. O, it is too bad a thought to cherish of the great Deity, that we are

> "Thus to pass away;
> To live but for a hope that mocks at last —
> To agonize, to strive, to watch, to fast,
> To waste the light of day,
> Night's better beauty, feeling, fancy, thought,
> All that we have and are — for this — for nought."

To have a noble thought of any person, we must have a noble thought of the purpose of his life. The *aim* makes the man; and this holds good in our estimate of the Deity. He must have a purpose, a great and noble purpose, an infinitely benevolent purpose,

in reference to man. This is essential to our idea of his Deity; and when we ask what is that purpose in reference to man, we can scarcely fail to accept one answer — Man's development, progress, perfection. Now if this be the fact, then we must look beyond this life for the sphere of man's activity. He is not developed here. He is a great exception to the growth of every fruit, the rounding of the seasons, the cycles of the stars. And there is not only the disorder and confusion which makes man an exception to the harmony between being and sphere, but we have also the fact, that the development of the soul is ever progressive — one degree of excellence only serving to lead on to another, "*intimating* eternity to man." O, it must be that Man is held in existence by some purpose of a mighty sweep of wisdom, power and goodness; and all that is dark in the lot of our common humanity shall be as the cloud that has its silver lining to be unfolded elsewhere.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Yes, why? If there is a mistake here, it is a mistake which breaks down our best thought of God — which gives the lie to the teachings of the holiest speculations of the mind, that makes the universe a mockery, and the soul must yield all that has come to it when the world was least about it, when passion was most calm, when desire was purest, when the affections were most intense and divine, and must take up with the suggestions of the perishable, when the range of thought, like the vulture, swept low amid the corruptible things of the earth.

To Christianity we owe the best of all our thoughts of God, and to make its ideas of the Deity the central light of the mind, is to see all that appears incredible in reference to immortality departing as night before the morn.

It was what humanity needed when God raised Jesus from the dead, and to that fact we may go as a fountain that has its springs amid the inexhaustible. And catching the great lessons of reason on this topic and uniting them with the facts and declarations of Revelation, we can see that there is nothing incredible that God should raise the dead — nor that he should raise the dead to circumstances of progress — nor that he should make the tendencies of those circumstances of progress redemptive to all souls. The best idea of God necessitates Universalism as logically as it necessitates immortality.

> "So God hath greatly purposed, who would else,
> In his dishonored works, himself endure
> Dishonor, and be wronged without redress."

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

SERMON XVII.

IMMORTALITY REVEALED.

JESUS SAID UNTO HER, I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.
John xi. 25.

HERE was something original, for what man, however great his pretensions, ever ventured to say this of himself, in such a place?

And how, and where, and why, was the text uttered? It was uttered in a tone of tender sympathy as though it was meant for private friendship, rather than an oracular saying to be repeated to the ear of the world and echoed through the Ages. There is always some real vital element in words spoken for the ear which are taken up and treasured in the heart of the world, and these words spoken only to Martha, have been to millions of hearts more than all else besides. Men have traversed seas of speculation and ascended mountain heights of philosophic thought, and have seen less to satisfy them than they have met in these words

of Jesus, stamped with his authority and made sublime by his deeds.

And *where* did Jesus speak thus to Martha? He spoke these words, not as Socrates spake his thoughts of the future, in the seclusion of scholastic retreating from the world, but in the burial place of Bethany, as he moved toward the grave of Lazarus. A gorgeous Oriental Spring was around him. Rural Bethany wore the beauty of the freshness of the year, but he drew from nothing about him lessons of comfort or condolence. Mighty thoughts that Nature never could suggest swayed his innermost being, and he felt the stupendous grandeur of that era which was about to dawn on the world. The era of speculation, of metaphysical research, was passing, and the grand epoch of Demonstration was to come. Dissolving dust was to be rekneaded by the vital forces of the returning spirit, and was to reappear to intimate that He who called back the dead had a right to speak authoritatively of Life beyond the Tomb.

Why did he say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life?" He said it to quiet the mind of Martha, as though he had said, "Quell curiosity and confide in me."

And this is the sentiment of all the Gospel teachings of Immortality. "The world by wisdom knew not God," nor the Future; and while the text is the glad music of Easter week, and rings on our ears as we see Jesus rising from the tomb, it presents this suggestion, that to Jesus we must look for satisfactory evidence of Immortality, and to him alone.

This is the theme of the present discourse, — "Immortality revealed only through Jesus Christ."

Let the hearer mark the terms of my proposition: I say *Revealed*—Immortality *Revealed* only through Jesus Christ; and thus I do not propose to come into collision with any notion of how much may be *intimated* of immortality to man in any department of thought.

Two things I admit:

First: It is wise to fortify ourselves with every form of suggestion and intimation of immortality, for these have their place and use.

Second: Every great truth has a multitude of witnesses of its presence in the universe, and though these may not be sufficient to establish a discovery, or to make the great truth with which they are connected clear and satisfactory, yet they do keep the mind on the alert, they preserve in it a feeling of hospitality towards new evidence, and when the great discovery is made, they fortify it, they show what men have valued in the absence of the Demonstration.

There are two classes of minds who are, I think, equally wrong in reference to this matter of Immortality: The one class declares that outside of the Bible there is nothing of hope; and the other class declares that no such demonstration as Christ gave was needed, as the matter is so clearly settled by what they call consciousness, intuitions, reasoning and philosophy.

Now, the better position for both these extremes would be, to put themselves into a candid attitude

towards the eras previous to the coming of Christ, and see, on the one hand, if there was no ground of hope; and, on the other, if that ground was sufficient.

Now one thing is certain, the idea of a future life was common to all ages. The history of religions and philosophies shows this. The idea has run thus the race, and the exceptions have only proved the generality of the rule; and in proportion as the mind has been cultivated, it has been interested in this great idea, as the more a man becomes wealthy the more he is interested in the securities of property. But still it is true, that the conviction has been as strong where there was no regard for logic and reasoning, as where the most use has been made of these; and, indeed, it might be shown, that the instinct or impulse — the conviction of a future life independent of reasoning, has been more powerful and has shown itself in sublimer deeds, than where it appears to be only a production of philosophizing. The Indian who, as "simple nature" hath taught him, looks above the cloud-capped heaven as his future home, has folded his arms and sung his death song as his canoe went over the cataract, with a sublimer heroism than Cato plunged the dagger to his heart, after he had been made to feel that Plato "*reasoned* well."

This to me is the sum of all that human speculation has done. Philosophy may reason on, or investigate, *the grounds* of this universal conviction of a future life, but it has nothing to do with *proofs*. Neither consciousness, nor observation, nor experience, nor

human testimony, outside of revelation, can bring to us the *proof* of a future life, much less of Immortality. All the array of speculation from Egypt to Greece, from amid the Pyramids to the Academies of Athens, cannot show any thing more than that Men before Christ were "prisoners of hope," shut up from a revelation of immortality.

Writers and speakers do not distinguish enough between the idea simply of a Future Life, and the idea of Immortality; and I think it will be extremely difficult to find any record, previous to the Coming of Christ, where the idea of a continuation of life beyond the grave uninterrupted by something equivalent to death, was entertained. Reasoning, independent of Revelation, is necessarily dumb in reference to any future subjection to, or freedom from, a perishable body, or a change equivalent to death. All we know of mind here is through its connection with the body, and there is no analogy by which we can get at any suggestion relative to the organization with which the spirit is to be clothed hereafter. Hence it was frankly allowed by one who presumed to be a Christian Minister, but who rejected any need of Christ to help him to a hope of immortality, that he would not undertake to say to how many successive deaths he might be subjected in the future, but he felt sure of being immortal.

Here then is one great distinction between philosophers and all other speculatists, and Jesus; Jesus Christ alone asserted "neither can they die any more;" and in the light of this declaration the Apos-

tle, spake of the incorruptible, powerful and glorious body, and the complete victory over death — death as an ordinance in connection with man, *abolished* — done away.

Again: The future life of the ancients was a life that did not preserve identity, but went from one transmigration to another, and the greatest stretch of thought in reference to the best minds only reached to some grand time when all souls would be merged into the Soul of the Universe, as though particles of light, after all the transformations they may affect, fly back to the Sun and are again absorbed there. Those who did not recognize the soul as flying immediately to be absorbed in the Central Mind, only held to its separation for a period, when, by an inevitable necessity, it became part of the Deity, and lived only in Him, in the great Renovation, as an hour is part of the day, as the Roman survived in the glory of Rome as a State.

This was especially the doctrine of the Stoics and kindred sects, but when you come to Socrates and Plato and Cicero, you will find little that is much better. As I plod through the strange and perplexing conversations and disquisitions of the Greek and Roman philosophers, I am sadly impressed with the weakness of their reasonings, and sometimes I think they were more satisfied than it seems they could have been, because their mode of investigation was so much dialogistical or conversational, in which the mind has to reason too quickly for thorough argumentation. What Macaulay says, in speaking of the Athenian

orators may be applied here: "To the conversational education of the Athenians, I am inclined to attribute the great looseness of reasoning, which is remarkable in most of their scientific writings. Even the most illogical of modern writers would stand perfectly aghast at the puerile fallacies which seem to have deluded some of the greatest men of antiquity."

It is, I think, because of this that whenever thinking minds go beyond what is retailed from the pulpit about the immortality of the soul, they find themselves "in wandering *mazes* lost"—they discover that there is more of lively sophistry, witty turnings, and subtle replying to difficulties, than calm, clear-brained argumentation, that stands the review of studious hours, when the excitement of debate is over. Men are constantly deceiving themselves and others for the moment by exaggerations and happy hits—an ingenious twitching of a favorite notion out of the meshes prepared to catch and hold it; and when these things come into sober review, the intellect disdains to be so sported with, and throws off the enchantment of the hour. Even Cicero acknowledged that the speculation on the future did not satisfy him only while he was engaged in them; they, therefore, made no deep impression—nothing came of them which entered into the very substance of his being, to spring up to his aid, as when a man opens a deep spring in the earth, he finds water there when he requires it. Half of Cicero's celebrated argument, so called, for immortality, is but an attempt to show that annihilation is no evil; and when you look into his

epistles where you see not so much of the scholar as the Man, where do you meet his uses of his exposition of Plato on Immortality? You cannot find any; but you do find him allowing the idea of no particular, or individual, or identical existence for the soul after death. See him in his elegant residence, after the death of his favorite daughter, and what are the contents of the epistles put into his hands from his friends to console him? Nothing that appeals to any settled conviction of the life beyond the power of death.

And then when you come to the argument for Immortality, as set forth by Socrates, Plato and Cicero, what are they? They are subtle disquisitions of the nature of the soul, its origin and its attributes. They begin with the supposition that the soul has previously existed, and therefore it is not incredible that it may exist again, overlooking the fact, that when there is no remembrance of a previous existence, it is the same to us as annihilation. There is no future where there is no continuity of consciousness — no memory — no identity.

Then again, we are told by these ancients, that the soul is immortal because it is a self-moving substance; a self-moving substance, they said, can never cease to be, since it will always have the power of existing within itself, independent of any foreign or external cause. But this goes too far. It ignores the Creator; it separates the soul from his Sovereignty; and sends us into dreamy theorizing as to what constitutes self-moving, which is a problem like Perpetual Motion, which must begin with discovery of substances that

will not wear by friction and which will never permit a screw to get loose.

All philosophizing on the nature of mind and what are called inevitable tendencies, must contend with these facts, namely, that no man has yet defined the distinction between matter and mind — the attributes of the one and the attributes of the other; and if the reasons be not utterly atheistic, he must allow that all mind is at the disposal of God. He that created *can* destroy; and it is far better to get at the best idea of the Creator to help our hope of the immortality of the Created, than to reason on mind and its attributes, as though there was no Sovereignty over us, and as though our reasonings did not in great part apply to brutes as to the human.

It is, I admit, reasonable to suppose that if man is made for immortality, some intimations of that fact would appear in his constitution; but these intimations are not proofs, as all life is a dependence. Every blossom on the tree has its intimation of fruit; every acorn bears the germ of an oak, but we do not feel necessitated to accept the blossom as sure evidence that the fruit will be, nor can we have any certainty that the acorn will give us the beauty and grandeur of the oak. The tree is fully clothed with fragrant and beautiful blossoms, and in autumn as in summer, the tree is bare. The ground is covered with acorns where the oak forest has been felled, and lo! a growth of pines succeeds. Hence these frequently used illustrations remind us only that the grandest array of the attributes of mind, the best

arguments for its immateriality, its self-motion, its yearnings, longings, aspirations, its capacities for endless progress, are but as the intimations of the grub which enfolds the butterfly, and speaks at best only of what *may* be; they cannot predict what *will* be. All the arguments drawn from the transformation of insects, the reviving of vegetable nature, and the contrivance of industry despite the waste of the bodily system and the change of the body, are analogies which, after all, involve the idea of death. The butterfly has a briefer life than the grub; flowers revive only as the species and not as the individuals; and who knows but that identity is transmitted from the departing particles of the body to the new materials which keep up the life of the physical system? And all these analogies, which are useful in their places, cannot satisfy either in the hour of vigorous intellectuality, nor in the time when the energies of the mind are flagging, and the touch of a kind hand is more to us than all the argumentation of the world. Not to Socrates can the soul go for satisfaction, for what was his assurance? "I have strong hope," he said, "that I am going to the company of good men, but on a matter encompassed with so much doubt, it becomes us not to be too confident." And Plato — what can he give but brilliant poetry, golden metaphysics, chased with the most subtle skill of elaborating rhetoric, and forcing us, as we attempt to follow his meaning, to be reminded of the sunshine coquetting with the April clouds, and playing all sorts of fantastic tricks at light and shade.

And as to Cicero, with his rounded periods and dignified speech, we feel, when we have read him, that no wonder he found so little to support and strengthen in his hour of mortal need.

Now when you open the New Testament, there is an utter absence of metaphysical reasoning on mind and matter, on the mortality or immortality of the soul, and the most learned and candid divines admit with Archbishop Tillotson, that "the immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible."

In the New Testament the doctrine of immortality is infinitely removed from all philosophizing. Jesus did not say, to weeping Martha, "The soul is immortal," but he did say, "*Thy brother* shall rise again." The New Testament enters into no disquisitions on the attributes of mind to set up the idea that it cannot die, for it expressly admits the power of God to destroy the soul. It presents two things for the foundation of an hope "sure and steadfast" — the authoritative declarations of Jesus, and his resurrection from the dead.

This is a vast distinction from every method of supporting the idea of immortality by referring to the soul, and its attributes, its fears and hopes, its longings and aspirations.

First, the authoritative teachings of Jesus. That he taught immortality, is unquestionable. His answer to the Sadducees, the sceptics or unbelievers of his time, presents that fact; and let it be noticed that in that prominent instance of his teaching immor-

tality, he based his teaching entirely on the assertion of God as the Scripture recorded it, and declared that the Sadducees erred, not because they did not know enough about mind, but because they did not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God — his power to raise the soul from the all-encompassing under-world of the Hebrew religion. Moreover, he asserted that the resurrected departed shall be "equal to the angels," and therefore distinct individualities; "children of God," and therefore cared for by parental love; and "they can die no more," and therefore must be in an incorruptible state of existence, as St. Paul elaborates the idea of the "spiritual body."

An individual existence, a filial relation towards God, and an unsubjection to death, are a threefold originality in the teachings of Jesus Christ respecting immortality.

His authority was substantiated by his miracles. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," he said; the coming forth of Lazarus proved that he had a union with the departed and their God.

Second, His own Resurrection we have also spoken of as a fact on which to build our hope.

He intimated it, he declared it. It was to be the great sign of the divinity of his claim. He was to come forth from the dead as Jonah came from the sea; and to him his death was only as the burial of the seed which brought forth much fruit, though while it abode alone, out of the earth, it was unfruitful. And as we look through the New Testament we find that the great fact recognized as the basis of all the

upbuilding of the Christian Religion is the Resurrection of Jesus.

That was a fact — an historical, undeniable fact; and one of the best works written on it came from one who set out to dispute it. The world must go back to the Crucifixion of Jesus — his burial; and then there is his sepulchre, and it is tenantless; and for forty days every form of evidence of the reality of the Risen One being on earth was given, and in open day he visibly departed upward. The timid became bold; a tremendous moral and intellectual existence dawned on and was experienced by the disciples; and when one is chosen to fill the place of the dead Judas, that one is a person who had been with Jesus from the beginning and who was "a witness of his Resurrection." The first ordination was to this one point — "to be a witness with the other Apostles of the Resurrection of Jesus." And this great, stupenduous, most magnificent fact was every where set forth, as boldly as when Peter treated the lame man in the Temple and said, to the people, "Ye killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." So Paul preached at Athens, and so every where with him immortality for man was based on the resurrection of Jesus. So he wrote in his sublime exposition of the Resurrection: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

There is a world of difference between resting on *a fact*, and resting on *speculation*. The one comes within the range of all minds — all can apprehend it; and then too when the intellect is dull, when the mind is perplexed, when the chain of subtle reasonings is all tangled in the brain, an example comes up to our apprehension in power and glory. It appeals to the Imagination, the grand pictorial faculty, as reasoning cannot; and hence the best minds, like Dr. Channing, of America, and Dr. Arnold, of England, have expressed their gratitude for the help to faith which came from the Resurrection of Christ. Dr. Channing has a sermon expressly on this point, preached immediately after the death of a very dear friend; and Dr. Arnold, speaking of a death in his own family, said, "Nothing afforded us such comfort, when shrinking from the outward accompaniments of death, the grave, the grave clothing, the loneliness, as the thought that all these had been around our Lord himself, round him who died, and who is alive forevermore." The same is the thought of Channing, where he says our chief difficulties in reference to another life spring from the senses and the imagination, and not from the reason; and the Resurrection of Christ meets the senses and the imagination on their own ground, and contends with them with their own weapons.

And one thing is certain, and that is, While the history of Philosophies show no fruits from the best speculations concerning immortality, the Christian doctrine has wrought wonders. However the idea lived before Jesus, he gave it a vitality, a repro-

ductive power; he made it foster the best virtues, the noblest aspirations, and the divinest character. It became a new force amid the affairs of men; and a demonstration of this is not only to be found by historically tracing the connection between the sentiment of immortality and human action since the time of Christ, but in the entrance of the Vatican Museum, in Rome, you see spread out to the eye in a long corridor, the sides lined with inscriptions taken from the burial places of the Pagan and the Christian, arranged on opposite sides. Here, as when the beings these tablets commemorate lived, Paganism and Christianity confront each other, and show the difference between Philosophy and Revelation. Here is Stoicism in its stately pride, and the sweet spirit of the Christian's assured hope in God. The Pagan is seen to have delighted in proud titles — and many names, but the Christian valued only that name which was given in baptism.

The true office of reason is now, Not to dwell on the nature of the soul, on questions of pre-existence, on self-motion, on contrarieties and tendencies, but on the verity of the Christian claim that Jesus rose and with him God has united the lot of humanity. "Now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality" — "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up of victory."

SERMON XVIII.

PALM SUNDAY.

ON THE NEXT DAY, MUCH PEOPLE THAT WERE COME TO THE FEAST, WHEN THEY HEARD THAT JESUS WAS COMING TO JERUSALEM, TOOK BRANCHES OF PALM TREES, AND WENT FORTH TO MEET HIM, AND CRIED, HOSANNA! BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.—John xii. 12, 13.

Since the introduction of Christianity, there has grown up a new power in society, called the Public. It is neither despotic, monarchial, nor democratic. It makes no part of the authorities, and yet holds "the powers that be" in check, or spurs them on to the discharge of neglected duties. Its very intangibility gives it an overawing majesty. It is independent of parties, laughs at the influence of cliques, and constantly imposes on organizations the reception of new methods or measures, making conservatism reformatory and saving radicalism from anarchy. It diffuses itself everywhere, and suddenly reveals its aggregate forces to the astonishment of the wisest social tactician, rising on either side of Olivet, from town and country, to greet with triumphal chorus the new prophet, its own anointed king.

The statesman and politician, the reformer and theologian, sadly miss their way when they overlook this power, which is perpetually modifying old opinions, removing the supports of hoary traditions, and setting the best minds on the new track for the discovery of new principles and the bringing out of new illumination from old doctrines. And by no method can the lover of genuine Christianity find more to encourage his hope of ultimate success, than by regarding this power; tracing its progress in the ages, and, despite the edicts of thrones and the decisions of councils, asserting the great right of individual regard for what seems to promise good to the many, and even when the mightiest attraction is ready to be thrown around the memorial of the past, it plucks the palm and goes forth to greet him whose Eden for man is yet future.

To preserve the integrity of our settled convictions, the results of our deepest, most solemn, and best thinking, and to bide our time when encompassed by the excitements of this power, is no mean attainment, but it is one of the traits of the genuine man. Many a great man has become little in such an hour; he has yielded to the storm and cry; the rudder of principle has been caught by the swift current from his grasp, and he has suffered shipwreck when he seemed very near a safe port where he might furl his sails in joyfulness.

Not so with Jesus. He remained the same amid waving palms and multitudinous shouts of homage as when in quiet, or where the demonstration of the

crowd was that of murderous passion. Behind all the variety of circumstances beat a healthy pulse of loyalty to God, and alike to the most obscure as to the most prominent event of life was imparted the beauty and strength of a filial spirit.

Self-control amid excitement seems to be one of the lessons of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and a lesson for "Palm Sunday."

Self-control is really sovereignty of mind. It imparts the power to act thoughtfully, with discrimination and prudence, let circumstances be as they may, and is rightly called presence of mind. What is the harmony and beauty of nature, the wonderful balance of opposing forces, and the unity of purpose amid diversity of operations? It all springs from the presence of mind — that mind which went with the birth of light amid chaos, and breathed order into confusion. God present in nature, operating to educe good from evil, and to bend the rainbow on the brow of the storm, gives us all that we admire and all that opens vast fields of thought for the searching intellect of man. Now to passion and feeling, to appetite and desire, to emotion and sensitiveness, to all that we are as creatures of excitement, mind must be the ever present and controlling force which God is to nature through all its parts. And half our troubles would depart with the serene rising and resplendent illumination of this great truth in the soul; for of nothing in connection with ourselves are we so ignorant as of the power it is possible for us to exert over ourselves — how faithful we may be to private meditation when

amid the most bewitching and commanding excitements, not permitting the allurements of society and the influence of others to steal away our strength of mind, our healthiest resources, and the essentials of self-satisfaction.

Every class, every age, needs this lesson. It is a great problem for the young to solve — "Can I be faithful to my highest aspirations when the pleadings of social temptations are around me, when ridicule or sarcasm point their arrows at me, when the narrowness of bigotry or the hatred of superstition assails my religion, or when the success of the hour would prompt me to forget that we are to act in view of the future and the record of memory, in whose power is the best reward and the most terrible retribution?"

And no matter how far the man is advanced from youth, new temptations follow his advances, and the same problem is for him to solve under new conditions which spring from other excitements, and other irritants than he has known before. And hence the need of considering, under all the phases of our mortal existence, the self-control of Jesus; the more than royal consistency of character; the divine symmetry of all that he was in his life on earth.

It is true that we can never know the same circumstances which encompassed him, but the same law of life holds good in our sphere as in his, as the same point may be touched to many a mass of crystalizing liquid, and however dissimilar the crystals which are formed, yet they shall all be beautiful and symmetrical.

Our glory is not to wait for some happy time to bring outward influences to make us good, but to touch, with a royal will, whatever influences are about us, to compel them to aid us, so that if the same hour demands smiles and tears we may give them; not as the actress, but as the summer sky, that is far above the crowd of the city, and obeys only its Maker's laws. Thus it was with Jesus that memorable day when he entered Jerusalem in triumph, vindicating the joy around him, and yet weeping at what only his prophetic eye beheld.

Our text is connected with one of the most dramatic scenes in our Saviour's career. As he had submitted to John's baptism as an ordinance of the time, so he sent for the colt on which to ride into Jerusalem in fulfilment of ancient customs that had then a sacred language and influence, as his disciples learned when the excitement of the day was past.

The scene began in rural Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, and at the time when Jesus had come to be with Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. A double curiosity had gathered a mighty crowd, for Jesus, the miracle-worker, was there by the side of him whom he had summoned from the tomb. And when he left for Jerusalem, mighty crowds, who had paused on their way to the great feast, followed him; and no sooner had his disciples brought the ass and her colt, than his disciples put their garments on the beasts, not knowing on which he would ride. But, as ancient kings in Israel took the humble position of riding on a colt

when entering the city of royalty for coronation, so Jesus thus seated himself, and in his path garments and palm branches were strewed, expressive of homage to royalty, while the air was rent with the cry of "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Doubtless strange hopes were kindled in the hearts of the crowds. They were acting as his teachings had bidden them to act, independent of leaders and hoary traditions, and while *they* had one purpose, dreaming that Jesus would be their desire, *he* was bent on other aims. He knew the conspiracy against him, and the determination on the part of the leaders to put Lazarus to death; and it may be that he chose this entrance to Jerusalem, when so great was the collection of guests there, to give the best publicity to his presence in view of his approaching death and resurrection; to show also what were the convictions of the people when left to themselves, and to convict that very people of the error of their view of the kind of royalty he claimed, and how well he knew the reaction of popular favor where religious principle is not the life of the soul.

Beholding Jesus amid the triumphal crowd, the sceptic is apt to say he made pretensions he could not maintain; but had Jesus made no demonstration that he claimed to be the royal person of whom prophets had rung the grandest bells of promise, we should be told, by these same sceptics, that we err in our high estimate of his pretensions, as he never claimed to be a king. Greatness will speak and act the lan-

guage of greatness at times; and from the reply of young Jesus — "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" — to his answer to Pilate that he *was* a spiritual king, he asserted at every proper time his pre-eminence; and when the people gathered to pay him homage as king, it would have been more violent to resist their offerings than to accept them; and the day was to show that however great the homage paid to him, it could not alter his purpose to be only a spiritual monarch, nor win him to the least dependence on them for a rescue from the fate before him.

Behold, then, the mighty crowd pressing their way from Bethany, up the Mount of Olives, preceding and following Jesus, while the choral of "Hosanna" becomes like the sound of seas when the echoes float far away and die murmuringly in the distance.

Fleet messengers have gone before, and throughout the holy city has spread the rumor that Jesus is coming to Jerusalem, and coming only as the royal guest comes who receives unasked homage. Crowds of those who had come from all parts to Jerusalem to the feast rush towards the eastern gate of the wall, and as they press up the sides of the Mount of Olives, you see the waving palms in their hands flashing like the green waves of the sea in the sunlight, and it seems as though the space was filled with a forest of moving palm trees. And now the choral on the western slope of the mount comes up and meets the choral of the moving crowds on the eastern slope, and the floating hosannas fly amid the branches of the

olives, bidding their drooping tops to wave with the applause of the hour. And now the two crowds meet — the crowd from Bethany, and the crowd from Jerusalem — and the enthusiasm is intense, for it springs not only from the greatness of the deeds which had given the prophet of Nazareth his fame, but also from the thought that the most golden prophecies of many ages were now fulfilling.

Amid the multitudes were the ever jealous and narrow Pharisees, and they venture to open their dumb lips and speak *to* Jesus, but not *for* him. They ask that he would bid his disciples still their cries, that thus the outer multitudes might cease their hosannas. To these croakers Jesus replies in all the royalty that belonged to his intrinsic character, as he said, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

This answer shows that Jesus was up to the height of the enthusiasm of the time. He was swayed by some greatness of emotion that made John the Baptist to exclaim to this same class of narrow minds, that they need not boast of being children of Abraham, as though that was essential to the fulfilment of the divine promise, "for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Christ vindicated the enthusiasm of the hour. He was no foe to the outbursts of popular feeling; no great soul ever is. To the masses the shout and the choral are as natural and proper as the retreat to the solitude on the part of the scholar and the Quaker. There is something noble in the zeal of the hour, the

roar and heaving of excited multitudes, and it goes up to God as a part of his great economy as truly as the billowy anthem of the seas and the thunder of the plunging cataract. Jesus did not rebuke the shouting of hosannas. Nay, if human tongues were silent, the very stones would cry out the shout of glory, for the birth-hour of a new era had come, and the stately palm trees marshalled along the avenues of travel, must now be made to furnish the waving plumes of victory, and be evermore symbols of peace.

But now the descent is bringing Jesus in full view of the holy city. There spread out before him were the palaces and temple, the thronged streets, the busy marts, the strange variety which makes up the life of a great city. To him it was not the splendor of the palaces, nor the expressions of power and wealth, that most moved him; for a city is most interesting because it concentrates in one area all methods of thought, all aims and purposes. It is the theatre of ruling forces. It is the grand concentration of whatever has excited the imagination, inflamed desire, fired the intellect, or stimulated the ambition of man. The city is this world's epitome. It is the mirror of human nature, the judgment seat of all pretence to integrity, all assumed strength of principle, all the nurtured virtue and piety of the secluded home, the rural quiet.

Amid enthusiastic multitudes, whose hosannas doubtless became more fervent and lofty as they came in sight of the city of David, Jesus paused as his solemn eyes looked full on the sacred bounds of Jerusa-

lem. He paused; not to tell what should be done when the triumphal throng should enter the city, but he paused *to weep;* to recall the voices of the past, and to tell as though to vacant air the sorrow of his soul. I doubt if Jesus was conscious that moment that any body was about him. He saw the city, the inevitable fate impending over it, the passions that were undermining all strength; and that city now so joyous, so ready for the great memorial feast, so abounding with wealth, learning, enterprise, skill, genius, was, to his vision, compassed with victorious armies, and their triumphal progress was not to be stayed till the torch was applied to the temple and its walls were melted to the ground.

He wept unselfish tears. He wept as a patriot might weep. He wept as only a prophet might shed tears. He wept with a sorrow too mighty for any but the Son of God to know.

But he set up no private grief against the joy of the multitude. Into his thoughts it was impossible for them at that time to enter; and like the patriot who folds some mighty bereavement in his heart and goes forth to public duty, Jesus went on to the end of his journey; and while his heart might have broken, had it not been held by the love of the Father and by reliance on his purposes, he saw the whole city moved by the shout of hosanna, and the baffled Pharisees admitting that they prevailed nothing, for the world was gone after him.

To the temple he moved. He drove the iniquitous money-changers from their tables, and heard the

sweet voices of children chanting his praise. He looked round on all things about the temple, and, without taking one step outside of his sphere as a religious reformer, he left Jerusalem in the evening for the quiet retreat of Bethany. There, in view of his own death, he could talk with one who had known its mysteries, and of his kingdom with the sisters who had been made by him to smile when tears were the only food of their eyes.

What admirable self-control is here! What strength of purpose living amid all possible excitement, showing its healthy pulsations with every beat of the heart, and reducing to proper bounds everything that promises to absorb the attention and harm the symmetry of life. This is religion in its loftiest meaning. It has no exultation to be followed by depression; but it is ever the beautiful and sublime thing God would have it to be, as the sunshine is the same whether spreading over the snows of the Alps or shining through a dew drop.

Jesus calm, Jesus enthusiastic, or Jesus weeping amid the waving palms, is the sight for us to behold and to study. To be great he needed no peculiar array of circumstances, for the life of a harmonious nature went out into all possible circumstances, and whatever the emergency required, that he was. He made nothing of all the homage about him but what we can make of the daily world we see. Men all about us are ready to shout hosanna when their kind of king or opportunity seems to have come; when great deeds have unquestionably been wrought for

humanity; when dead hopes have come up out of the grave to smile new courage into the heart; but reliance is not to be placed on these manifestations unless there is a religious life behind all, to support and to perfect them.

The enthusiasm of the multitude never betrays a truly great man. He remembers how trees blossom in spring time, when there is not enough of life in the tree to bring one tithe of those blooms to fruit; and this moral may be applied to all the details of life securing us against forming our hopes when only the promises of excitement are given. We must go away from the sparkling fountain, the playful jets, the rainbow hues, and seek after the spring, the reservoir, the lake, if we would decide what we are to expect when the trial hour comes, when the hot summer is about us and ten thousand streams are failing.

So was it with Jesus. He looked far away from the tumult of the hour. He felt glad at the enthusiasm of the crowd. He beheld something good in it; but it did not betray him, and therefore he was not surprised when the change came, and some who had shouted "hosanna," cried just as loud, "Crucify him!" Like him let us seek the abiding grace of God, rather than the favor of man; that is certain, this is fluctuating; that is the palm the Revelator saw, this the palm that perished.

SERMON XIX.

THE GREATNESS OF CHARITY.

BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Charity *has* a greatnes whether considered as a principle, a motive power, or a perfecting grace of character. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity; these three; but the *greatest* of these is charity."

No one can suppose that the Apostle Paul intended to depreciate the value of Faith, or the importance of Hope. Of both of these powers he spake magnificent things, and you can hardly open his writings, or the record of his journeying, any where, without instantly meeting some brave speech concerning the majesty of faith and the beauty and joy of hope. He gives a catalogue of the noble examples of faith and tells what grand issues flow from its abiding in the man, giving that perception of eternal things which wins the best energies of the soul to work for God and his truth.

Of hope he says equally good things, for he declares "We are saved by Hope," and that it is the rejoicing of faith; and hope, he says, it is that "maketh not

ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart."

But yet you will find in no portion of St. Paul's writings any contradiction to the sentiment of the text concerning the greatness, the pre-eminent greatness of Charity; for he elsewhere declares it to be "the bond of perfectness," and the life of God in the soul of man. Whatever Paul dilates upon — whatever glory he ascribes to any grace and powers — whatever he commends to the attention of his readers or hearers, we may safely say he would make subordinate to Charity. The greatness of Charity, may then be our theme as *demanding* attention.

And first of all, What is to be understood by Charity? It is not that sentimental thing that often goes by its name, that has no appreciation for principles, sees no importance in doctrines, and imagines the world can be saved as well by error as by truth. It does not deal in ambiguities of speech; nor by giving new meaning to old words, does it become able to use the technicalties of all creeds and pronounce the shibboleth of all sects and parties. It does not break down the dominion in the soul of frankness and honesty, clearness of conception and candor of expression, as though opinion must go like Mahomedan women in public, with a veil on, and peering out only from the corner of one eye. If this were Charity — if this timid, retreating, disguised and lisping thing were Charity, then had Paul no claim to the virtue he so extolled. Charity, as set forth in the New Testament, is something the opposite of this. It is the

generosity of the heart shining through all the sternness of the intellect. It is good manners in disputation, and impels to such a weilding of the weapons of war, that you cannot but admire the man, however you may feel the stroke of his sword or the plunge of his spear. "Charity," says Paul, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." It is honest and frank. It is a kindness of feeling that rejoices to unite where it can unite with others in great works; and when it refuses co-operation, you see the refusal is not passion nor littleness, but principle and consistency. Charity is but another name for Love — love in its noblest and most comprehensive meaning, — love like that of God, that rejects one people and instals into power another, to reach the great end of Universal Redemption.

Charity that abides with Faith and Hope must own their existence, and be hospitable towards them; and that pretension to Charity which requires the abandonment of all the distinction of faith, and the reason for our hope, is too foolish to betray the intelligent mind for a moment. The Charity that is exalted in the New Testament, is the heart purified to the acceptance of every thing human; that is eager to see any proof of goodness any where; that delights to work for righteous ends with those who may differ in doctrines; and honors what it sees is virtuous intention, though the stroke be against that which the mind cherishes as the perfection of beauty. It says, as a zealous and sometimes rash spirit has expressed himself, that "in the applications of Christianity as a regenerating

power upon Society, there is a broad ground, into which God is bringing men of the most diverse tendancies in other respects. I love to meet them there. They are my brethren; for I will account every man of incorrupt life, of devout aspirations, of quick and human sympathies, of an earnest benevolence, my brother."

Surely we may believe that to the eye of our Heavenly Father a Charity like this is greater as a principle of life, as a discoverer of the truth, as a power to develope a true character, and as a motive to all Christian duty, than any faith or any hope that would set up a less liberal standard of judgment and co-operation. All other greatness is small in comparison with this; and *why* is it so, may well command our attention as a question of much importance.

I have four reasons why Charity is the greatest of great things; and the first of these is this, *Its Endurance*: That which is stamped with the greatest perpetuity must have the most of God and must be most like God. The greatest things only are eternal, and in the immediate context the Apostle says, "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Prophecies fail when the thing prophecied takes place; that is the limit set to it on the part of God; tongues and languages by which the truth bestowed through the Jew can be imparted to the Greek or the Barbarian, must fail when eternity makes its revelation and the chaos of Babel shall be removed to make way for

celestial order and unity; and knowledge once prized becomes valueless when grander heights of truth and experience are reached, as the man puts away childish things; but Charity never faileth — Love has a continuous life. It is not a thing of limits. It is no prophecy, interpretation, or knowledge, that is to be swallowed up and lost in the sight of grander things than the soul ever dreamed of beholding. It is, in comparison with these, like the identity preserved in the consciousness of the man, despite the entire change in his physical constitution. It

> "Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

And nothing stamps more clearly as error, the theology opposed to our Great Hope than the fact, that it proposes to make a portion of one race happy in Heaven by the annihilation of the greatness of Charity — the broadest, noblest, most disinterested exercise of Love. On this ruin it builds its Heaven.

Before it can have a Heaven for the few it regards as the redeemed, it must have the social susceptibilities, the most enlarged sympathies destroyed, either directly or indirectly. What a sarcasm it would be to write over the portal of such a heaven, "*Charity* NEVER *faileth*." No, no; this idea cannot be the truth of God. If there is any thing destined to immortality that thing is Love. "He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;" and this love, so exalted by the Beloved Disciple, was a love that went

out towards all — that proved its height and strength heavenward by the breadth and extent of its power earthward.

Love is greater than faith and hope, because it survives changes of faith and hope. It is the identity of the soul's life in the noblest sense, for it is the most enduring of all things. It is the inflowing of the very essence of God.

Hence the next reason for esteeming Charity as the greatest of great things and that is, *The* NOTHINGNESS *of all things without it.* This the Apostle asserts in the text chapter, and asserts it most forcibly. He says: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling symbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." What a splendid array of gifts and graces is here made, and yet it seems possible that they may be as bubbles and not substance — gas and not diamonds. Prophetical insight, the scrutiny of the keenest mental power, the mightiest energy that scatters mountain difficulties, the profuse distribution of wealth, and the bravery of martyrdom itself, all — all are hollow where Charity is not. They are the royal clothing of a ghost. So true it is that Charity is the greatest of great things. It gives a Divine substance

to human graces, and at its bidding, that which otherwise were but perishing beauty, starts, like Jairus' daughter, from its shroud, and moves to beautify the home and give happiness there as only the true daughter can.

But again, Charity is the greatest of great things, because it sways the will. This is an important thought, and there is no question in Philosophy that can be more profitably discussed than this, Do the Affections sway the Will? One thing is certain, and that is, God proposes to sway the will by love, by the affections, by an over-mastering power of Charity. "Thou shalt love," is the first and it is the second commandment, and these embrace all duty to God and man. To bend the will from one object to another, we must give to that other object the predominance to attract the sympathies, directly or indirectly — as men will do what is hateful because of the affections which they cherish towards the one demanding the service. It is because of this that sin is most dangerous when the temptation comes from those who have our hearts in their keeping, and we are prompted to look at a deed that is terrible to our moral nature, as some thing that must be performed :—

> "That is a step
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies."

and so man goes to his ruin — he sees Satan through the disguise, but is soon beholding only the Angel of light into which by the clothing he is transformed.

That which a man loves most, rules him. If he has many equal loves, they each are ruling powers for a time; and that it is so, is evident from the contrasts seen in men,— now you look on the man of business, cold and repulsive towards every thing but the commerce of the hour; but again you see him in his home, and he is as attractive to all genial spirits as flowers are to the bees; and so too in the social circle, — the bow so tightly drawn to send the arrow to the mark in the morning, becomes the bow that sends the soft stroke across the viol to bring from its strings the sweetest strain.

It is because of this fact, that wherever man has thought at all on the Philosophy of the Will, he has exalted the power of kindness. Daniel Webster once said, "I can be persuaded to some things, but I can be driven to none." So says the Will everywhere, and the lines of Hudibras are lines of truth,

> "A man convinced against his will,
> Is of the same opinion still."

What he prefers, he must love; what he loves, he must prefer. And that surely is the greatest of great things that sways the Will — that is the engineer of the innermost energy of the man — that is constantly expressing its supremacy as where the story shows us the Philistines who had stolen the Ark of the Tabernacle and staggered beneath the burden, while the Jews, who loved it, bore it along over the hill with ease. Duties that we love not are clogs. He that clings to the world rather than to Christ, must look

the solemn fact in the face — that he loved the world more than Christ, and *that* love sways his Will.

It is not inability — it is not natural or moral infirmity of the Will that keeps us from becoming more godly. It is our loves — our affections that are more fed and strengthened by sinful desires, than by Angels food. Hence when Dr. Chalmers aimed for more of the Christian spirit, the wisest thing he did was to attempt a course of discipline to make more successful his efforts at "the sustained contemplation of Divine things," mark that, "the *sustained* contemplation of Divine things"; his desire was to keep the highest things always highest in his soul by his thoughts upon them — to overcome all the influence that made him let himself down below the platform of the true Christian.

And this suggests the fourth reason why Charity is to be esteemed the greatest of great things, and that is, It is the fulfilment of the Law. This is not said of Faith; it is never said of Hope; but it is said of Charity or Love. Faith without Love cannot work, for Faith worketh by Love. Hope without Love is selfish, and nothing selfish is Christian; and therefore Love is the grand essential.

There is no duty in which Love does not have a part. It is the only power by which we can act as God acts — for to Him does not belong Faith, and he cannot be said to Hope, but the whole universe and the Holy Scriptures are eloquent with the truth that He loves. "We love Him," said John, for himself and his fellow believers, "because He first loved us.

Beloved, if God *so* loved us, how ought we to love one another!" "God is Love" — heaven sings it — earth repeats it, and the sea has no other meaning in its roll, —

> "'Tis nature's wild, unconscious song,
> O'er thousand waves that floats along."

He that wishes to do something as God does all things has only this to do — exercise a pure love — an enduring, an edifying, a will-swaying love. He who performs one act of disinterested benevolence, acts so far on the high plane of the Deity. Every addition to that one act, helps so much his advance toward the greatness of the Father; and a multiplication of like acts is the triumphal passage of the soul along that path to which Jesus invited mankind when he said, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." i. e. by acting on the principle of Love.

This then is the greatest of great things — to love, to show love by deeds of love — to give love for hatred, to do this because we recognize the soul that can be brought into harmony with right and good in no other way. We can imitate God, not in the strength

of our faith, nor in the might of our hope, but in the pureness and victoriousness of our Charity. We want what God has — Charity for those who have no faith or a wrong faith; who have no hope or a narrow one; and it may help us in the right way to remember, that it may be, *we* are more wanderers from the true greatness of gospel faith and hope in the sight of God, than our conceptions of that greatness make us consider others as wanderers from the truth because of their less liberal creed. "Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity. But the greatest of these is Charity."

The greatest! what strifes the world has seen for the thing deemed greatest! When will the world see a nobler strife — for the greatness of Charity! Sometimes it would seem as though that age was dawning, — as though the veil of the holy of holies was rent and the high priest of Humanity walked face to face with the world! But the shadows fall and the night is dark again; the beautiful stars are hidden; and even Christians go groping about as though Christ was not the Light of the World. His example can be quoted for no greatness but that of Charity; and what were the most touching of his parables but the two that told the story of the Prodigal received by that fatherly love which covers a multitude of sins, and the story of the wounded Jew saved by one who was despised of his nation. What to Jesus was the story of how priest and levite might have been defiled by touching the blood stained traveller; and what cared he for the spiritual pride of the elder brother who shrunk from contact with his father's son! There is

no defilement where the aim is to do good; there is no moral contagion where the spirit is right; and Howard and Elizabeth Fry, coming from among the vilest criminals, were more pure than many a priest in his cassock and many a bishop in his lawn. Yes, he whose life is governed by love, who compares his love, not with human conduct any where, but by the true faith and hope, shall be pure — pure as

> "A sacred stream
> In whose calm depths the beautiful and pure
> Alone are mirrored; which, though shapes of ill
> May hover round its surface, glides in light
> And takes no shadow from them."

SERMON XX.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

AND IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN, THEN IS OUR PREACHING VAIN, AND YOUR FAITH IS ALSO VAIN. — 1 Cor. xv. 14.

No language could give to the Resurrection of Jesus, *as an historical fact*, greater importance than this. On that fact turned the *uses* of Apostolic preaching and the *faith* of the Christian; and there is always, to me, an unspeakable moral sublimity in the position, that the Gospel argument for Man's Immortality was not built of subtle speculations on the nature and attributes of mind, but on a single fact — an incident — an event — the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead. Reasonings and speculations appeal but to a class of minds; but facts have a voice for all; and as this day is celebrated in the Churches of many portions of Christendom as Easter, I have thought I might appropriately speak at this time in consideration of the fact to which the festival of this day appeals — a festival which, by its peculiar glad-

ness, honors the greatness of the fact of the Rising of Jesus from the Dead. That event glorified the world, as the rising of the morning sun changes the aspect of all nature; or as the rising of the Spring time of the year spreads over the face of the earth childhood's beauty. And as the day would be without the sun, and as the year without the Spring time, so would existence be without the great fact of Christ's Resurrection, in contrast with what that existence is by their light and glory of that blessed and magnificent truth.

I need not spend much time in treating of the real or supposed discrepancies observable in the details of *the different accounts* of Christ's Resurrection, for the greater the fact the less is the importance of some detail that enters into, really, only the costume of the narrative. What we are concerned to know is, whether the main fact of the Resurrection is fully sustained; and not whether there is not some difference of statement in reference to those minutiæ that might easily be explained by reference to points of view, and other peculiarities, which give an individuality to the different narratives.

And then, too, the singularity and stupendousness of the event itself, must necessarily have created confusion, which, more or less, would affect the perception of slight details, while the main fact would stand out in bold prominence in irresistible might.

The Evangelists admit that the disciples had no faith in the prospective Resurrection of Christ; and the beautiful narrative of the two walking to Emma-

us, sad and dispirited, graphically sets forth what was the common feeling. When, therefore, the event came, they were unprepared for it; and while the fact might burn its way to the soul and leave its daguerreotype irremovably there, the excitement of mind might prevent all of them from seeing the same details alike, and yet one clinging so tenaciously to his own perceptions, as to be unwilling to compromise with another for the sake of a perfect harmony of detail. A perfect harmony of detail would inevitably speak of collusion.

The differences in the narratives of the Evangelists are just what might be expected on reasonable grounds, and the care and study which they impose on the reader is needful to draw out the undesigned coincidences and proofs of the truthfulness of the narrative. A perfect harmony in detail would be against all reason. It would sink the individuality of the narrators. It would make them appear as the differences of time and character forbid.

The time of the visit of the woman to the sepulchre is described by Matthew as the beginning of the day's dawn; by Mark, as very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun; by Luke, as being early in the morning; by John, as early, while it was yet dark. Now, this difference amounts to nothing at all, for John, in speaking of the time as being when it was yet dark, may be supposed to refer to the garden where was the sepulchre, and where the shadows would linger longer than without; and while Matthew speaks of it being when the day began to dawn, while

Mark states the time to be ver early, at the rising of the sun, it may naturally be supposed that neither of them spoke with philosophical exactness, or intended so to speak. The double form of expression employed by Mark has a significance, for he speaks of the time as "very early," as well as "at the rising of the sun," as though the time was somewhat indefinite, and he would only assert that the time was the morning, ere the sun had shed his light on the earth. In this the Evangelists all agree; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that what to Mark might be spoken of as very early, at the rising of the sun, might be spoken of by Matthew as at the dawn of the day.

But there are other portions of the *details* of the narratives which strike my mind with great force, because they present so many exhibitions of what would be natural in the expression of emotions and feelings on such an occasion; and they bring to the mind of the meditative reader the conviction that he is communing with a reality. How impressive is the record concerning the running of John and Peter to the sepulchre after the news of the Resurrection,—John outrunning Peter, and yet hesitating at the mouth of the tomb; and Peter coming up, and, with his characteristic impetuosity, darting down into the place where the Lord had been laid. Then John takes courage to enter, and then what a picture he gives of how he found the grave-clothes,—"the cloth that was about the head of Jesus not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." This detail seems unimportant at the first

sight, but it is not so, because the order implied in this folding of the head cloth and its being laid in a separate place by itself, speaks of the same quietness at the Resurrection as Jesus always observed at the times when he wrought his miracles. The Resurrection to him was but the awakening to an expected life, and every thing was as quiet and orderly in his doings, as with the opening of the bud into the bloom of Spring time, or with the rising of the sun.

But more than this: The idea had come to the disciples that the dead body of Jesus had been stolen away. With this thought they had entered the sepulchre, and hence their notice of the grave-clothes and of the order in which they were left. What seems to contradict a report, we are apt to notice at once. They did not imagine that the clothes would be removed ere the body was taken.

Many are the glimpses given us in these narratives of the workings of Nature; and the more we embody in our minds the characteristics of the disciples, and thus have them with us, the more we shall see that the representations of them in these narratives are justified. Of one thing I am certain, and that is, that any course of reasoning that would break down the evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus as an historical fact, would break down the evidence for the most undoubted things of History.

But there is a fact to which I now would ask your attention which deserves the profoundest thought. It is this, That had it not been for the Resurrection of Jesus, Christianity would have perished. The Res-

urrection alone preserved it, and Paul spoke none too positive when he said, "If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith also is vain." But the fact would have gone farther than this, on the ground that Christ was not risen, for no preaching would have taken place, and no faith would have been cherished in Christ. If this position be sound, then the conclusion must be, that the fact that Christianity is and has been since the times of the Apostles, is proof that Jesus did actually rise from the dead — giving the world a light such as the sun never poured from his exhaustless fount of beauty. Herbert wrote the truth when he sang of Easter, —

> "Can there be any day but this,
> Tho' many suns to shine endeavor?
> We count three hundred; but we miss;
> There is but *one*, and that one *ever*."

The proposition then is, Christianity would have perished, had it not been for the resurrection of Jesus; and, therefore, whatever is the worth of Christianity must be made the standard to enable us to appreciate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus.

What was the condition of his disciples at his death? It is common to represent them as flying from him, and having no courage to put forth any confession of faith in him. This is true; but something more is true, and is also explanatory of this fact. At the time Jesus died, not a soul had entered into the real character of his mission. They were all blind to its

spiritual meaning, its highest import; they had been so, save at times when first impressions were received and the heart took in the greatness of his thoughts with a childlike trustfulness. In speaking of his approaching death, Jesus spake of himself as left alone with the Father, and it was so. The greatness of his truths was unapprehended, and none of his followers were capable of taking up the work he had begun and bearing it on to success. When Blake, the most imaginative of painters, was called to see his devoted wife die, she said to him that the greatest sorrow of death was, that when she was gone, no one would be left that would understand him. So Jesus, at his death, might have said of his work, his religion: no one would be on the earth to understand it. He had left no record of his teachings. He had spoken freely, and wherever he had performed his wonders and made his claims known, he had done nothing that looked like an attempt to trust to the ordinary means of perpetuating one's fame. And on the most extraordinary occasions we find him referring to his resurrection as the great sign or proof of his divine authority. (Matt. xii. 38, 40, John ii. 18, 22, vi. 30.) To this he pointed the Pharisees on three occasions, as above; and I can but think that the great reason why the disciples did not recall his prophecies of the resurrection was, the humiliation to which he submitted previous to his death, which seemed to indicate that he had no power left. The picture of the two going to Emmaus, is, as I have said, a fair portraiture of the condition of mind in

which the death of Jesus left his followers. He was crucified on Friday. The next day was the Jewish Sabbath, when it was defilement to go near a tomb. Then Jesus slumbered in the mystic sleep of death.

> "At length the worst is o'er, and thou art laid
> Deep in thy darksome bed;
> All still and cold beneath yon dreary stone
> Thy sacred form is gone;
> Around those lips where power and mercy hung,
> The dews of death have clung;
> The dull earth o'er thee, and thy foes around,
> Thou sleep'st a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound."

Around that tomb Roman soldiers are placed, and they go their rounds of watching. Their presence, after the stone rolled into the mouth of the cave is sealed, speaks of the false apprehension that the dead body may be stolen by his disciples, those timid and broken-hearted creatures. That guard was placed there at the request of those to whom Jesus had prophecied his resurrection, and thus had invited their precautions. But how vain was anything of this kind, if the purpose of God was to be effected. And so it proved; and I rely for the convincing proof of the absolute reality of the resurrection, not so much on this or that argument from a collection of passages, as on the marvellous change which took place in the character and conduct of the disciples after the event of the resurrection. Something must have caused that change. That event came as a grand intellectual and moral influence; and, as never before, the disciples bowed to the authority of Christ;

they became as bold as martyr courage can make the man; they were lifted higher and higher in the appreciation of his religion; and they commenced their work in the very city where Jesus was condemned, and the first martyr died as he was pressing home the claims of the crucified, who was seated on the right hand of God, enthroned in spiritual power.

The crowning proof of Christianity as the religion of heaven, was the resurrection of its founder; and hence Paul begins his grand discourse on the resurrection state by laying down the historical fact of Christ's resurrection. The platform of truths on which, as an Apostle, he stood, he declared to be the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

First, the resurrection was established by "many infallible proofs."

Second, the impression of these proofs wonderfully changed the character of the disciples, and they became martyrs, not to an opinion, a belief, an inference, but to the reality of what they had seen. When the choice of an Apostle was made to take the place of Judas, the choice was limited to those who had been all the time disciples from the baptism of John to the ascension, and the purpose is set forth to be, that he may be "ordained to be a witness with us of his (Christ's) resurrection," as though that fact was the great central fact of the permanence of Christianity, as it really is.

Third, we see the change wrought by the resurrection was not only moral, but intellectual. The mental calibre of the disciples wonderfully increased.

The mightiest fact had the mightiest influence; and it would be a grand theme for some master mind to discuss — the intellectual influence on the disciples of the resurrection of their Master.

But there is something worthy of remark in the rapture of soul which was associated with the moral and intellectual change wrought by the fact of the resurrection. The Apostles did not receive simply the resurrection of Christ, but also the result with which that event was associated — its connection with the resurrection of all mankind. 1 Peter i. 3 — "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

But the fact that all are to be immortal, while it certainly gives us a hope of immortality as parts of the race, does not impart rapture; we want to know into what kind of an immortality the resurrection will usher us. The unclouded glory of the resurrection state shall therefore be our next theme.

SERMON XXI.

THE UNCLOUDED GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

AS WE HAVE BORNE THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, WE SHALL ALSO BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY.—1 Cor. xv. 49.

By these words I understand the Apostle to speak of the human spirit and its earthly and heavenly embodiment; or, in other words, he treats of the terrestrial and celestial vehicle for mind, spirit, the etherial essence, or whatever we may call that which survives death and constitutes man the image of God.

I intend, in the present discourse, in the light of the grand idea which the text expresses, to treat of the unclouded glory of the resurrection state; and I intend to do this with the purpose of showing that that is the best view and use of the divine ordinance of punishment, which, while it keeps in view the immortal state, does not cloud the glory of that state with the mists of a vaporous philosophy, or the dreamy fog of learned speculations.

In the context the Apostle treats of the resurrection of Christ, his headship over humanity, and the

complete success of his mission as the Mediator and Saviour of the world.

Treating thus triumphantly of the resurrection state, he proceeds to take up and answer certain objections, which he thus introduces: — "But some will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

These were natural questions for the Greeks, who saw the dead body reduced to ashes, and whose subtle speculations concerning the mind's survival were always unsatisfactory. Paul, in his reply, struck home to the idea which lay behind these questions, that there was nothing that survived death, and he referred to the seed sown: how the germ lives after the dissolution of the body, how God preserves the identity of the kind of grain whose seed is sown, and how he gives that increase which he pleases.

Then the Apostle directs attention to the variety of bodies which God has fashioned to hold certain relations to air, earth and water; all meeting the design of God and exhibitive of his skill and power.

Then he rises to the heavenly orbs, and shows what bodies are there differing in glory according to the relations which they hold as ordained of God.

And then, as he can go no farther without baseless speculations, he proceeds to set forth by the authority of a divine inspiration, and as a matter of pure faith for Christians, that there is as distinct a contrast between the conditions or the surroundings of the soul in this and the next state of existence, as there is a contrast of glory in the works of God in various

parts of the creation, where he gives one glory to the sun — a transcendant glory; and another to the moon — a mere subordinate glory.

Paul then takes up his first figure of the seed, and runs an extended *contrast* between the terrestrial and the celestial state, comparing, as I understand him, the human soul to the surviving germ of the seed.

Here, in this present state of being, the condition of man is, *comparatively*, set forth as a seed sown in corruption, dishonor, weakness, and in a natural or earthy body; and the condition of the surviving soul in the resurrection state is set forth as a seed raised in incorruption, honor, glory, and in a spiritual or celestial body.

And then he adds, "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam," or the second man, "a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." *All that distinguished Jesus from Adam, is the symbol of the difference between the celestial and the terrestrial state*, and so Paul adds, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

And then he goes on to show that this grand contrast of conditions for the human soul, is to be effected by the power of God, in the changes wrought by his ordinance of the resurrection.

The ordinance of the resurrection is as uncontrollable by man, is as irresistible in its operations, as the

ordinance of death. The celebrated Blancho White, in his wild ideas about human agency, rebelled against the idea that he *must* live again and be immortal. He wished the power of choice; but God has prerogatives he will not yield to man, and among these is the sovereign act by which the dead are raised to incorruption and glory.

Paul assumes the same ground which the Saviour occupied, and the reasonings of the Apostles are, in their real import, identical with Christ's answer to the Sadducees—"Ye do err, not knowing the *power* of God." The Sadducees did not believe in angel or spirit; and their ideas of the glory of God must have been as limited as the idea of those in our day, who cannot allow to the Deity to have one switch on the plane of entrance into eternity, to alter for good the run of a soul whose course of evil not only makes dangerous his own prospects, but mars also the happiness of others.

As I read and study the Apostle, he treats of the identity of man preserved in conditions of life unspeakably more happy than the present; it is all the difference between incorruption and corruption; glory and dishonor; power and weakness; a spiritual body and a natural or earthy body.

Where is the philosophy that can fathom the changes, the intellectual and moral changes to the soul, which may spring from these new surroundings—these new conditions of life? Who has come from that world of incorruption, glory, power, spirit, to tell us what electric changes shoot through the mind,

rousing dormant powers, quickening sluggish affections, refining the sympathies, and so bringing the hand of harmony to the discordant harp of the soul, that its music is the jubilant tones of immortal order; the rapture of a spirit at one with God?

Who can tell what influences are thrown off with the laying aside of the earthly clothing of the soul — the destruction of the terrestrial vehicle for mind? and who can tell what new influences may come with the putting on of the heavenly clothing for the spirit — the celestial vehicle for the mind?

There are great changes to be anticipated. Philosophy is dumb before the unseen future. It may begin to speculate *after* the Resurrection; but to speculate *before* is to judge before the time, and Paul cautions us to "judge nothing before the time." And nothing seems to me more absurd than to read what theologians who ignore all elevated ideas of Divine Sovereignty, tell us concerning philosophical speculations, where there is no data for philosophy to use. In its proper place, I honor Philosophy. She has shown us what a net work of wisdom is this light of the stars.

She has unbraided the rainbow and dipped all its brilliant threads into the white sea of light, and shown what glory the intervention of the crystal drops of the rain may bring forth from the sunbeam.

She has lifted her wand of power and the circuits of the winds have been revealed, and we have looked in upon the stores of the clouds and the treasury of the snows and rains.

The lightning has become the messenger, and "the still small voice" passes from city to city, from island to continent; and the imprisoned vapor works more mightily for Civilization than Samson did for the Philistines.

Philosophy, with the grand facts of principles of the New Testament, has defined the Rights of Man, and Progress is now the rallying cry of the sublimest agencies of the present era of humanity.

Philosophy is good in its place, as Jesus bade the people listen to those who sat in Moses' chair, while he guarded them against their example as men. So now, let Philosophy be honored, but let her keep in her own sphere, and not attempt to explore the Third Heavens, to speak of the future as but a continuation of the present.

The glory of the Resurrection is a matter of *pure faith.* It presents the idea of conditions of human existence in the immortal state for which there are no analogies here. Authority asserts those conditions to be those of incorruption, glory, power, in contrast with corruption, dishonor, and weakness; or, in the language of the text, the heavenly in contrast with the earthy. Here is unclouded glory for our faith. They who shun it for a miscalled philosophy, have their reward.

Here, then, are the Apostle's positions:—

First, There is something that survives the death of the body, as the naked body in the bath is separate from common garments thrown of, and the festival garments to be put on.

Second, That something is to be clothed with a heavenly body, whose attribute or qualities as a vehicle for mind, are greatly to be distinguished from the attributes or qualities of this perishable frame.

Third, we, therefore, cannot use the image of sleep, or transition from boyhood to manhood, as fit emblems of the great change from mortality to immortality, for sleep, or this transition from boyhood to manhood, does not dissolve the body and reclothe with a vastly different embodiment.

Fourth, And, so too, we are to reject the idea of their being no abrupt change at death. Death itself is often abrupt.

> "Leaves have their time to fall,
> And flowers to wither at the north winds breath,
> And stars to fade; but thou hast all,
> All seasons for thine own, O Death."

And, to me, this seems symbolical of man's great change — it is not, like that of the flowers and the leaves, that in their *individuality* are no more; but it is the throwing off of a body which the soul knows and has used, and the putting on of a body of which it now knows but this, and this by faith—it is incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and belongs to a heavenly condition, which cannot imply the presence of Sin.

This view of the Resurrection state — its unclouded glory, recognizes sin, and the punishment of sin. Sin is "the sting of death" — the sting of sin, is its punishment; and it is an object of faith for us, that all sin is adequately punished in the sinful state.

How we do not always know; but the certainty we may confide in.

And here is the great reason why I would keep distinct the punishment of Sin as a matter of this existence, and just as distinct the unclouded glory of the Resurrection as the promise of the Father; that reason is, that every transfer of punishment to the future makes uncertain all that we say of present Retribution. All our argument for the important and essential doctrine of present Retribution becomes modified; and, what is more, all our Scripture quotations in its behalf, must be used either with a mental reserve, or an honest admission, that while they seem to teach the present Retribution for sin, they are to be accepted with those limits that speculative philosophy teaches its disciples to entertain concerning the state of souls hereafter.

The moral power of Universalism, it seems to me, has come from the holding up of two facts, Present Retribution for Sin and Present Reward for Obedience, in the light of the Divine Love that created us to be holy and blessed, and which expresses itself in the present Retribution for sin, and the present Rewards for Obedience. Stupendous changes have been wrought by the proclamation and advocacy of these ideas; and whenever we choose to set up the idea of punishment as reaching into the immortal state, no man can forbid us doing so; but all honest men will demand that we use the Scriptures in reference to present Retribution in a manner that shall imply that we do *not* believe that "every transgression and dis-

obedience received a just recompense of reward," under the Mosaic economy, nor that "the righteous are recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner." Let us say, "All this brethren is uncertain. We must take these Scriptures as asserting only that there is some Retribution in this life; and cling to the idea, that whatever sin is not punished here, will surely be punished hereafter, as the child was certian that if he did not receive full punishment at school, he would have it made up at home."

This is honest talk; and let it go on to show how this theory lessens the attractions of the immortal state — makes us uncertain whether our departed are in a condition of punishment or not; and modifies all the rapture of those hours of high devotion when we were wont to muse on the unclouded glory of the Resurrection state and sing:—

"No cloud those regions know,
Forever bright and fair;
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there."

SERMON XXII.

LIFE A CLOUD.

FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN AS A VAPOR THAT APPEARETH FOR A LITTLE TIME AND THEN VANISHETH AWAY.—James iv. 14.

A flitting cloud! what is more transient than that? A moment it floats before our sight like a beautiful bird that sails along the upper sea and then darts away to be seen no more.

Such an object is, in our text, made the emblem of mortal life; but let us be cautious not to carry the metaphor beyond due bounds. The comparison is *not* between mortal life considered as a series of years and the flitting cloud, but between the sudden interruption or ending of mortal life and the passage of the transient vapor. To look over the years of the past of our lives — to take up all the experiences through which we have passed — the changes to which we have been subjected — the births and the deaths in our homes — the alternations of good and evil fortune, and the enlargement of our observations and knowledge in connection with the discoveries and

progress of our times, is to require something better than a flitting cloud to represent our life. The Cloud that symbolized the Divine Presence to the Hebrews during their forty years' journeyings, can alone serve our purpose. Only to God are a multitude of years like yesterday when it is passed, or a watch in the night; but to us, as to Job, "years speak and a multitude of years show wisdom." Years rise up like the steps of the Pyramids, and more and more extensive becomes the review of life, like a cloud that spreads more to the east and the west, unfolding new wonders by every change.

But *this* is not opposed to the sentiment of the Apostle who gave our text. His only object was to employ a similitude that would set forth the suddenness with which our hold on earth may be loosened. This is evident from the subject on which he was writing. That subject was the Ambitious Schemes of men who speak of a year, and of what they will buy and sell, and of the gain they will store up, as though life was secured to them beyond question. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day and to-morrow we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." St. James had in view a similar idea to that which our Saviour expressed in his parable of the rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully, and who proposed to himself to pull down his barn and build greater, saying to his soul, Soul, thou hast much

goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But there was One who knew more and who was forgotten in this estimate of life. God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." What to him would then be his stores! Like a cloud they would pass away, and the heavens would be naked to his sight, for he had thought nothing of the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

The issue of a single day may change all the schemes of the most ambitious, as the electric lips of the Telegraph yesterday told us of the death, after a sickness of fifteen minutes, of one of the wealthiest merchants of Boston, whose enterprise was building new factories at an outlay of a million of dollars in the new city bearing his name. How like the passing of a cloud was the passage of that life! What a change can fifteen minutes work!

To check unbridled ambition, to arrest the passing on of too intense a pursuit of business schemes, St. James expressed the sentiment of the text. It is well to ponder the lesson, and see how the eye that spreads its vision far and wide with speculating intent may suddenly be covered with the mist of the grave, and the cunning hand lie cold and still and stiff in death.

But *why* did the Apostle express this thought against too intense a reliance on the extension of years on earth? Was it to foster gloom, to cast over all human projects the shadow of uncertainty, to unnerve energy, to dispirit the adventurous, and to kill all ambition? No; there is nothing in Christianity

that favors such a purpose. It is the religion of industry, enterprise, extended schemes for the upbuilding of mighty projects; and no where is there to be found such a spirit of boundless and unconquerable enterprise as where the purest forms of Christianity are received. By the Gospel men catch the spirit of that Providence that links ages by a continued purpose; that works in the time of Abraham for glory to be developed in the day of Christ; and the sentiment of Immortality is only received aright when it inspires that nobility of activity which implies the consciousness of possessing faculties capable of indefinite improvement.

What St. James desired was, The Recognition of God. He did not say, "Give up your schemes of enterprise; release your hold on all ambition; do not talk of going to this or that city; do not pile up your visions of gain; do not trust to the future; look on life but as a morning cloud on which no dependence whatever is to be placed." He did not speak thus; but he did say, "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil." That is, "Ye forget the Sovereign Disposer. Ye indulge in Atheistic talk. Ye multiply schemes in which there is no thought of those eternal relations which belong to the highest aims of man; and no one could judge from your career that you had any faith in God or Providence."

It was to *Christians* that this rebuke was administered; and this age of ours demands it as much as

that of the Apostles. A sudden bereavement, a prostrating sickness, some awful and impressive calamity, is too often needed to break the charm which ambitious schemes have woven round the soul, and with a fearful commentary comes the Saviour's words, "A man's life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." It is better to have the Beatitudes without riches, than riches without the Beatitudes; and that life is right that never loses sight of the reverence that says, "If the Lord will, I shall live, and do this or that."

Is not this the sentiment of the opening year? To feel our dependence on God; to realize that all our springs are in Him; to cherish a consciousness that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, is the grand, central sentiment of true piety. It overarches all life with the Providence of God. It makes all scenes to have some attractions. It fills the dark with beautiful things, as the stars beautify the gloom of night. It encourages and strengthens, it restrains and subdues, as the exigences of the earthly life may require; and when death comes,

> "It is the bright, triumphal arch,
> Thro' which the saints to glory march."

But my text, as a theme for the first Sabbath of the Year, reaches farther than the thought it expresses. It is suggestive, and far more so than my time will allow me to follow, as I ask, "What is *your* life?" and compare that life to a Cloud.

We are intellectual and moral beings — we are creatures who are influenced by choice as well as by circumstances, and in view of these facts the question, "What is your life?" assumes greater significance, and more abounding with meaning is the comparison that likens life to a Cloud.

What is more beautiful than a cloud? The scenery of the clouds deserves more attention than is given to it. It is constantly changing, and when, with a poet's eye, we look upon its picturing, so expressive of the principles of finest art, we cannot but feel the truth of Percival's lines: —

> "Ye clouds, that are the ornament of heaven;
> Who give to it its gayest shadowings
> And its most awful glories; ye who roll
> In the dark tempest, or at dewy evening
> Bow low in tenderest beauty; — ye are to us
> A volume full of wisdom."

The clouds are among the most frequent of the images employed in the sacred Writings where the supremacy and providences of God are the themes. They are his chariot, the chariot of his angels, and the throne of the Mediator, the garments of Jehovah's glory; and to us they may speak of Him; and beautiful in the humblest association is the waving and folding, the flashing and the embroidery of the drapery of the palace of the Winds.

The cloud may give to us a succession of beauties, and so may human life.

The cloud shows how glorious the defiled vapors of

the earth are when once touched by the celestial transformation; so human life becomes glorious when regenerating grace hath operated, and the heart's affections are purified and "changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord."

The cloud may soften, by its veiling power, the intense heat of the sun, where the laborer bends to his toil or the pilgrim pursues his weary way; and so human life, when used to raise up defences for the exposed, and to spread a shield for the weak, may be a blessing and a joy.

And from the cloud may come the vivifying rain — the balmy shower — the blessing that wakes the sleeping bud to ripening bloom, and freshens the face of Nature; and so the man whose life is what the Lord demandeth — what Christianity proposes to make it, is the richest of blessings to those about him on whom his influence falls; he refreshes the languid spirit, and the progress of the soul he affects shows why, in the Scriptures, the good man is compared to the beneficent influence of the fruitful clouds, recalling the poet's similitude: —

> "The clouds were touched,
> And in their silent faces could be read
> Unutterable love."

And even the change which brings the dark mass where all was serene and beautiful, till the fierce lightning and the rolling thunders come flashing and pealing to the earth, has its similitude for human life.

Thy life, O man! what is it but as yon lone cloud from which alone can come the voice to clear these mists, to give life to the smothering atmosphere, to permit burdened souls to breathe free again. Why did our Saviour give the name of Son of Thunder to one of the commissioned teachers of his religion, but because that name was fitly applied in his day to the wise spirits who could, like thunder, clear away the elements of moral disease. Men like the work that is effected by thunder, but they could wish the enginery might be muffled, or act like the steam engine in the Mint, whose escape pipe is hidden and whose breathing is so low.

With the similitude thus enlarged, the question returns, "*What* IS YOUR LIFE?" your moral, domestic, social, intellectual life? What are the influences which the vital forces of your existence send abroad? To what kind of a cloud is your example, your character, your soul, to be likened?

Three answers come to this question, — from the *past*, showing what *we have made* our life; from the *present*, showing what we *wish* our life to be; and from God, in his Word and by his Son, showing what our life may be.

What is your life — my life — the life of each one of us? The irrevocable Past makes answer, and the full answer can be heard only by the consciousness of each Soul. The heart that lies nearest to us cannot know it all. It is not best that it should be otherwise. And what answer does the Past make? What principles have swayed us — what desires have ruled

us — what has been the ruling passion? In what have we made our happiness, our ambition to consist?

The text was originally, as I have said, directed to those to whom life was only Business. The City, to them, was a grand Mart, an extensive Exchange, and the cloud of sails on the river where Commerce streamed her gay pennons to the breeze, was more beautiful and inspiring than any view of the upper sea. To buy and sell, and to get gain, was not *one* of the ends of human life, but the chief end; their sun was the glitter of gold, and the waxing of their moon was the increase of the per centage of the dollar, but no table could tell when their full moon would come. They lost sight of the moral purposes of existence to which commerce and business are really but tributaries, and they made secondary the things of the family, the State and the Church, that ought to be foremost of all. Life thus became something unallied to the things of religion, the resources of faith, the conquests of truth, the achievements that restrain desire and subjugate appetite to the control of the moral sentiments. The stock book and ledger are worn, while the Bible is dusty; and Sabbaths are like the blank leaves between the Old and New Testaments, bearing but very few records.

He who, in consulting the Past, discovers that his life has really been in the mastery of the senses, and that, according as his means have permitted, he has fed his soul with the love of things beautiful and good, *knows* what a blessed thing life may be. By the cultivation of the humanities of our relations to man;

by efforts to promote the well being of our associates and our race; by elevating our conceptions of what life may be, and the strengthening of our determination to follow after the ideal, we *can* rise to a noble height of moral existence, as the vapors lift themselves from the valleys and float on from glory to glory till they wait in state around the setting sun, and retain their glory when the moon shows where their beauty exists. Happy to-day is that heart that can say, "Yes, my life is as a cloud, but it is a cloud that waits on the Sun of Righteousness, and shows what that Light of the World can do with a little vapor." What a contrast to such a heart is the memory of the unstable, who can only recall St. Jude's metaphor, "Clouds are they without water, carried about of winds." Clouds that mock the expectations that look to them for something refreshing and good.

But to the answer that the Present gives when we ask, What is our life? What do we wish it to be? or, in other words, What must it be to satisfy us, when the recurrence of a new year, or other providential occasions, shall prompt to sober reflection on the Past — to the summing up of what we have been and are as moral beings?

The answer is ancient — it is given in that appeal which the prophet made to the consciences of his brethren, when he said, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." These are the great sentiments of true life. Our nature demands them, and our nature cannot be baffled. They are your

life — they are my life; and He who made us makes no arbitrary demand in this requirement for Justice, Humanity and Humility, for they are the laws of our moral being and essential to the highest development of life. Without them man is a stunted being, whatever may be the outward appearance. By these we render to every man what is justly his due; we add to this the expression of generous sympathy and humane regard; and we boast not of our acts because of our relations to God as the Source of all power and ability.

This is truly our life, and it is exhibited in the attractive character of sacred History, and especially in the Son of God. There is a sublime sense in the language of Paul, where he declares that our "Life is hid with Christ in God," and that "Christ is our Life." Never can we know what a magnificent thing human life can become till we become like Christ in his personal relations, and obey the exhortation, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" — throw yourself into his spirit and method of life, as the true actor, for the time, is what he assumes to be — puts on the character he personates, and loses, as it were, his own personality in his professional effort. To put on Christ's purity of purpose, his enlarged affections, his boundless sympathy, his constant recognition of the Father, is to find the glory of life — to see heaven a reality — to feel the presence of God, and to know that immortality is no dream. Existence is then no vapor, but a substantiality, real as the Providence of the Almighty God.

SERMON XXIII.

THE HIDDEN LIFE.

And your life is hid with Christ in God.—Col. iii. 3.

All life is hidden. No scrutiny can detect its hiding-place, no matter with what skill of science and acuteness of philosophy it may be sought. It is here God's glory "to conceal a matter," and it is instructive to see how after one analysis following another, the secret is still as far as ever from the grasp. One theory after another is invented to answer the query, What is life? but they are all only guesses in the dark, and we end as we began, with the confession, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

So also is this true, that our life is hidden, when we consider the means of its support. We look on the fruits of the earth good for food, but though we talk wisely of the properties there combined, and tell by our chemical experiments where there is material for bone and sinew, flesh and nerve, yet often are our wisest theories baffled, and what is life to us is poison

to some other, and what to that other seems to threaten death, really imparts strength and energy.

So, too, our intellectual life is hidden. It is difficult to impress on the mind of the child the real good of his initiatory studies, and he receives with something of incredulity all you may say concerning this and that study helping the mind to grow. The best teachers, the best aids afford him no mental life, only as his individual aptitude to receive is touched and quickened into activity. Hence it is that we marvel what our children will be — to what sphere of industry they will yield themselves. So completely is their life hidden; so secret is the growth of tendencies and biases, that we can only carefully experiment and pray. The martyrdom that often waits on infant genius, the waste of wrongly directed powers, the unsuitableness of educational agencies, and the eccentricities of the gifted struggling to get out of the coils of circumstance and the despotism of blinded friends, all arise from the fact that life there is hidden. So everywhere, in the still twilight and in the awful hushed hour of midnight, how many mourn and weep because they know not what they were made for; and they pray for some heavenly intimation to decide for them where they shall direct their ambition; while others, in desperate impatience, imitate the mountain torrent and make a path; but, like the torrent, it is too often a course downward.

And just so it is with moral life — that is hidden. How strange it is that in this and that trial there can be any life; that the tread of the martyr, mastering

adverse circumstances, can be like the treading in the wine-press, and that even the Son of God was made perfect by suffering. It is this that startles the sensual when the great facts of the Bible are pressed with their lessons of discipline upon his attention. To him it is absurd that any one should say, "When I am weak, then am I strong," and that to lose life for the sake of the Redeemer is really to find it. Hence our Master compared heavenly truth to treasure hid in a field; to pearls sought for afar; to grain that grew up night and day, no man knew how; and to leaven penetrating steadily, till it touched and brought into affinity with itself every particle of the whole body of meal. On the same plane of thought the Apostle wrote, "And your life is hid with Christ in God." He meant their whole life — the best use of any and every thing, so that nothing could be done so well, or enjoyed so thoroughly outside of loyalty to Christ as in unity with him.

Yes, Christ came to touch man as though he were really dead; to give new energy and higher functions to all his powers; to anoint the eye to a better view and appreciation of nature, so that the skies should beam with the sunshine of a parental Providence, the rain glitter with his munificence, and ring the music of his impartial love, while the birds as they flew and the flowers as they bloomed should teach a lesson of trust and inspire a confidence which should give the anxious spirit repose. "I came," said the divine Teacher, "that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." O, little do we compre-

hend what life the Gospel can yet impart; what new phases of beauty it may assume; what added interest it may give to our commonest life, and how from its truths, as from the stars when Newton had taught, a diviner meaning may come to our souls, freshening old things, as a new love lights new beauty in the human face. Indeed it was well that the Apostle wrote of the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and that in him are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Unsearchable are these riches in extent; inexhaustible in their fulness, yet are they to be received as the mine yields its gold, though its veins reach down to the central fires of the globe.

In bringing home this subject let us remember, in the first place, that what Christ has for us is like everything in nature — it is hid in God. From the Creator's fulness comes every good and perfect gift, and our text, while it exalts Christ, keeps the Unity of God a sacred thing. That life that is hidden *with* Christ is *in* God. There is no life which Jesus has for us, or for any soul, which himself has created or fashioned. Whatever is *with* him is *in* God as its source and centre, and he said wisely, "Of mine own" isolated "self I can do nothing." It is all wrong, therefore, to make God terrific and Jesus attractive, as though he stood apart from the Deity and operated in behalf of man, instead of being enfolded in God, and being, as he really was and is the express Image of God. He revealed the Divine on the scale of humanity, and it is fatal to the serenest peace for a soul to lose sight of the great truth, that Jesus did all he did

do to express or reveal God. To deify second causes in nature — to attribute to laws as though possessed of inherent forces what should be attributed only to the potential will of God, is not more out of the way than to deify Jesus. God is no more removed from us in once case than in the other; but the Scriptures bring him near in nature and Christ. His is the air and the earth, the sea and the winds that lift the waters, and his are all the phenomena of the shifting seasons and the wonders of the skies. So of the world of truth and glory in Christ. "All things are of God" — Christ is "of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." And how magnificently Paul piles up the grand climax of his description of the inexhaustible wealth of the Christian, — "Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours, whether Paul or Appollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come, — all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Our life is hid with Christ in God — to Christ must we go as the only medium of communication; and however the world's great ones may win our admiration, it is enough that they all combined cannot give what Jesus can bestow. We must kneel and drink at the one fountain which God hath unsealed.

But again: What God hath hidden in Christ as our life is worth our searching. All the labor requisite to obtain any of God's hidden blessings is amply repaid by the possession of the treasure. In strange places and with strange beings God hath sometimes hidden

what proved to be our life — the life of hope, of expectation, of new effort and ambition; and it is a great thing to have pointed out to us precisely where the best thing to give meaning and glory to life can be found; and how grateful should we be that we find a grand stimulant to perform the appropriate labor in the attractiveness of Christ, — Bread and Water of Life, — Morning Star and Light of the World, — Shepherd and Bishop of souls, — the Vine, the Treasure, — the Way, the Door, the everything that can induce the soul to put forth its activity to find the best life.

But, last of all, how shall we get at the desired good? Not to priest or church, this form or that sacrament must we go as essential to our purpose. No; a personal alliance with Christ is the thing needed, as we draw out the real wealth of the heart of a friend, not by the use of intermediate persons, but by personal communion of soul with soul. Come to him as he makes himself felt in the immortal pages of the Gospels, and open your soul to him as you open your window for the fresh morning air, — not one morning for all, but every morning when the air is pure and life is needed for the atmosphere within. A traveller, describing a visit to Matanzas, speaks of the mighty power of the air there, saying, — "The atmosphere here has a kind of vitalizing life, which is a perpetual marvel to me and a perpetual delight. It surrounds you, goes through you, as it were, bathes you in an atmosphere of regenerating life. It whispers to me wonderful emotions and anticipations of the Creator's

wealth — of those hidden glories which no eye hath seen, and no ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Such is but a faint similitude of the influence on the reverent Christian when entering the atmosphere of Christ's presence. It is a new life — it inspirits every faculty and affection, and however the heart may lift its thanks for the gifts of Divine goodness in Nature and Providence, its deepest gratitude will be for the life hid *with* Christ *in* God.

SERMON XXIV.

THE GREAT CITY.

WALK ABOUT ZION AND GO AROUND ABOUT HER; TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF. MARK YOU WELL HER BULWARKS, CONSIDER HER PALACES; THAT YE MAY TELL IT TO THE GENERATION FOLLOWING.—Ps. xlviii. 12, 13.

It is a great privilege to walk about a great city, to mark the details of its greatness, to consider its chief points of attraction, and then go to some eminence that overlooks the whole, to take in the gorgeous and animated scene. It is the grandest sight on earth; for there is the same bending heaven that the country knows, and the same sunshine and moonlight fall on palace and town as on tree or stream, while the congregated life is so immense, the multiform ambition is so intense, the variety of talent and genius is so great, that we are awed as no rural scene can affect the soul. For devotional purposes, for the quietude of meditation, it may be that to walk amid the forest groves and upon the hills of the country is best; though with myself it is not so, for to be lifted to some high eminence from whence the varied life of

the city can be seen, best in my heart moves the spirit of prayer; yet however this may seem to others it must be allowed that if a man desires to feel the ties that bind him to his race — to have sympathy for all the variety of human character — to know the energy that lies behind the best achievements for the race, he must walk not only round about a great city, but, as Paul in Athens, thread its streets, enter amid its intimate life, and see the play of the stupendous forces of mind and heart at work in this great centre of human activity. The city has a portion of the same earth as the country; a like humanity are here, and here is felt a similarity of aims; but the peculiarity of the city comes of its numbers; the limit of space in which they live and operate; the combinations of art, wealth and strength which are thereby facilitated; the competitions which necessarily spring up amid the contending interests of the multitude, and the excitements which always attend on the presence and activity of great numbers. Cities are prominent waymarks in human history. With them began the distribution of rights from the few to the many; and isolated humanity, breathing the atmosphere of the hills and growing strong for liberty amid the pursuits of rural life, has found more of stimulus from the rumors of what cities were doing than has yet been acknowledged. Cincinnatus at his plough had his patriotism fed by voices from the city. Cities show us the most of man; they exhibit what life can be made; they fortify genius so that its power runs not to waste; and out of the struggles of commerce, the

breadth of view concerning human relations to which commerce leads, has sprung the best thought of what is due from man to man. When Henry the First,—called "The City Builder," gave to cities peculiar privileges to induce his people to congregate, unwittingly he laid the grand basis of opposition to the Feudal system, and the legal foundation of popular rights. The people united to ward off the attacks of the lords or barons; union gave strength; the limit of locality made them develop their resources; commerce, art and wealth increased within their walls; energy grew and multiplied; the people became wealthy, respectable, educated and refined; better laws and institutions were desired; and thus the principle of human rights, leading to political equality, was gradually developed. A great problem in the history of monarchies has always been, how the growth of cities, essential to the greatness of a kingdom, could be encouraged without endangering the power of the Throne; and never has the influence of cities in forwarding the progress of liberty and civilization been sufficiently acknowledged. Men always are more fearful than hopeful in reference to any great aggregate of power, and hence it has been more difficult to obtain for cities the honor due them, than the censure they merited; but in proportion as the true relations of the city to the State have been understood, there has been a nobler breadth of Legislation and a more rapid advancement of human progress in all departments of Art and Commerce, Education and Religion.

One thing is certain and that is, In the Bible there is no grander figure employed in setting forth prophecies of Almighty Grace than that of a great city; and it is remarkable that when the most magnificent vision of the coming in of the Kingdom of Christ, in its full glory, was given to St. John, the symbolry presented to his rapt imagination was that of a great city: "And I, John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" — i. e. after the manner of the orientals, with whom the bridal costume was varied and gorgeous in the extreme. So also spake the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in treating of the difference between Judaism and Christianity; he went to Mount Sinai in the wilderness for the image of Judaism, but to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, for a symbol of Christianity, styling it, "The city of the living God," Heb. xii. 22. And there is nothing more sublime in the Scriptures than the picture given of the offices and tendencies of Christianity in the description, by the Revelator, of the New Jerusalem, where, as though his mind was directed to the Mount of Olives overlooking ancient Jerusalem in its glory, he says: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels, and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, ever like a Jasper-stone, clear as crystal." He then speaks of the walls and gates, the angels at the gates,

the foundations and breadth and length of the city — the walls being transparent as a Jasper-stone, the streets gold, like pure glass for purity; the foundations being of precious stones, the gates of pearl; and therein, in that great and magnificent city, God was the light, the gates were never to be shut, the nations were to walk in its light, and kings were to bring their glory and honor to it, while nothing that in any wise defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie, was to enter into it. Moreover, flowing from the throne of God, was a river of the water of life, coursing through the mystical city, while on its banks stood trees of life bearing twelve different kinds of fruit, one for every month, and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations. And there no more curse was to be found. God and the Lamb alone had thrones therein; and all service was to be rendered to God, in intimate and blessed communion, where there should be no more night — night with its darkness and tears, its mysteries and pains, its solitude and agonies; but Day such as dawns and broadens on the soul when it is at peace with God and its life is loyalty unbroken.

Here is the great city around which, and within which, we should walk, noting its moral towers, bulwarks and palaces; and then going to some high mountain of the old religions or philosophies, or theorizings, and asking ourselves, Did ever man's imagination go beyond this gorgeous picture of a great city in setting forth the future of our race? If for the grandest prophecy a city was chosen as imag-

ery, then a hard problem is answered, and a great city may become a grand centre of *Christian* civilization — a focus to which all light may be drawn, and a radiator of the illumination of the world.

But let us mark the difference between ancient and Christian defences for great cities. Towers and bulwarks, high walls and fortified castles, were the defences of old; to walk about an ancient city was to mark these things; and the great story that was carried down from one generation to another was of huge walls and mighty gates — stories which we can hardly believe as we see the variety of these defences in the presence of modern arts of destruction. Then cities had to be set upon a hill, that no mountain might give the archers of the enemy a position of assault; or they must be reared, like Babylon and Palmyra, in the midst of a vast plain. But not so now. He who now walks about a great city to note its strength, its defences, its promises of superior greatness, does not mark down upon his map of survey, walls, towers, bulwarks, palaces; for he looks into the character of homes, the intelligence and virtue of families, and he counts up schools and institutions of learning, benevolence, religion. Undazzled by all the glitter and show of wealth, unimpressed by the stately palaces, unmoved by the boasts of Trade and Commerce, and disregarding the growth of material prosperity that makes the grand exhibition of thronged streets and crowded marts, — the river dotted with the white sails, amid which the floating vapor from the steam craft rises as incense, sending the thoughts

out to sea and to the infinite, unimpressed, in his deepest nature, by all this, his great question is, How true is it that God and the Lamb have their thrones and servants here? *How much is* God *the light of this city?* How much of all this glory is as the costume of this oriental bride adorned for her husband, as we think of the city wedded to Christ?

These are the great questions for this day; and there never was a time when there was more to favor the obtaining of a calm, comprehensive and accurate answer than is given in the present. We cannot fail to see that old party lines are passing away, like the crumbling walls of ancient cities; and in vain will political intrigue attempt, on any side, to keep alive what has died out of the heart. And it is a most remarkable thing that in England as in this country, and in the measures of Churches as well as in the methods of States in both countries, the old distinctions of parties, of clans are melting away, and we have now a better opportunity than man has ever known to look on all sides of all great social questions. *The era of the People has most truly come.* At least, it is dawning brightly. The power behind the Throne or the Chair is no longer the ruling forces, but the power that is held by the People, who, in all departments of the Church and the State, in all parties whether considered by themselves or in their relations to each other, are looking for what promises the broadest comprehension of great, permanent, human, Christian interests. What is wanted is something too good to bear any party name, because truly AMERICAN.

What a great city, like our consolidated city, should be, is not to be worked out by regard to any party ideal, whatever its name. It would be as wrong to think of making any party ideal the great model as to speak of Washington as a southern or a northern man. He had a gorious soul that went for a fluent consolidation of the interests of the common country; and his ambition, like the flight of the eagle, made it as easy for him to look over the Blue Ridge of the Alleghanies and stretch his vision to the White Mountains where the beams of the rising sun glittered on the crest of Katahdin, as to look over the rose bush in front of his Mount Vernon Mansion to the avenue beyond. To see the true interests of a mighty people all consolidated by an American system, an American spirit, an American energy, was the dearest wish of his soul. Happy that city which can best invoke his august presence.

But there is another name which we can summon to our aid to present the best ideal, to realize which should be the zeal of every citizen — that name is PENN. Singularly fortunate is the Philadelphian! Few cities have the name of their founder so completely identified with them as the city of Penn; few cities have so worthy a founder to remember; and if ever narrowness shall need a rebuke,—public spirit a stimulus, — regard for order and law an example, — devotion to education, morality, economy, tolerance and religion a leader, we have only to evoke the shade of PENN, and we have all we need in that first instance of a man of commanding influence acting up

to the full measure of Christian requirement. He set up the splendid thought as the leading principle of public economy, That all human interests are interlinked, and no man can serve his own interests without serving the interests of others. Even the Savage was to be won by the Justice of Love. And a Boston Reviewer has well said, "It was remarkable that such a person should come from the halls of a slavish court and under the authority of an arbitrary king, and establish a State, with the single-hearted ambition to 'show men as free and happy as they could be,' as an example to the rest of the world." And we may add, that the more men progress in the attainment of the Christian spirit, the more will Penn be honored, that at such an age he could lay out a great city with so laudable an ambition; and, as though inviting the scrutiny of the world, and caring little for its laugh, he styled his great ideal, the City of Brotherly Love. However much any age has come short of realizing the meaning of that name in the character of the City, that name has stood as a beautiful ideal, it has been a rebuke of selfishness and lawlessness, an inspiration to better effort, and an exaltation of the Christian standard as applicable to cities as individuals.

A new meaning gushes up in the heart of that beautiful name by the Consolidation under which the Election has recently taken place. With victory or defeat I have nothing to do; but is it possible to diffuse a brotherly spirit through the more than half a million of population now one city? It is a stupendous thought. That possibility made real would ren-

der this city the glory of the whole earth. God would indeed be its light. The thrones of God and the Lamb would be the only thrones here. Wisdom would not "cry at the entry of the city," as the Wise Man represents her, for she would walk our streets, she would move, with unstained robes and benignant smile, and with a Sabbath sanctity and joy, into our homes, and where labor lift its strong arm and employs its clear and cultured brain, and where trade and commerce lead on the forces of enterprise and communion with the world. Then we might, with exulting hearts, invite the stranger to walk about Zion and behold her defences — defences as impregnable as heaven itself, and means for the best culture of all her children. To secure this, we must, first of all, exalt Law as the guardian of Liberty, making the the least ordinance to be as important as what is deemed the greatest. What is Law should be applied; its application shows its character and how the people regard it, and whether they will sustain or repeal it.

Public Spirit must come next — a lively interest in public affairs, in the character of the Press, in the character, reputation and measures of public men, in the maintenance of law, the promotion of the interests of whatever portion of the city may be most remote from our own.

Then Education, and especially by Free Schools, will have our determined, generous and faithful advocacy and help. It has been well said, That "a man who cannot read is a being not contemplated by the genius of the American Constitution;" and if so, I ask,

what question touching the exercise of suffrage and its extension to all, is more legitimate than whether any man should have a right to vote till he knows how to read? I am screwed up to the negative answer. A man ignorant of the art of reading, if introduced to the exercise of suffrage, is a man brought into connection with the stupendous and all-ruling power of voting not contemplated by the genius of our common country — the grandeur of the American system. Whatever makes light of the benefits of free schools is opposed to the genius of the American Constitution, and is to be warred agsinst by all the force of an intelligent and Republican Will. The Common School is the Almighty's Jasper-stone through which streams his glory in the light of Education on the common mind, securing sunshine, beautiful and genial, where otherwise there might be darkness. Into this Light let the people be baptized in childhood, whatever may be the fate of any Church baptism.

And next comes Mercantile Integrity, which belongs to the shop and the manufactory, as well as to the merchant's counting room. By this has our city been honored in the past, and by this we can appeal with the best hopes to the judgment of men. Demosthenes, when speaking of the degeneracy of Athens, recalled what some might say, "Is not the city enlarged? Are not the streets better paved, houses repaired and beautified? Away with such trifles!" said he. "Are these acquisitions to boast of?" and he showed they were not while despicable men had influence, and

asked he, "Have not some of the upstarts built private houses and seats, vying with the most sumptuous of our public palaces?" This was a pungent question, and so long as it is pertinent in the affairs of men, we can never make splendid palaces and commercial energy and prosperity our boast, only as we find integrity expressed. With *this*, Prosperity is a noble stimulus.

And last of all, and the crown of all, comes Religion, expressed by our Church Edifices, the ceremonials of the Bridal and the Burial, and the sanctity and sober joy of the Sabbath. Without Religion morality perishes. Man must know his God ere he will know the strength of the moral obligations that bind man most sacredly to man. No interest of the City can be secured by deserting the Church or profaning the Sabbath. Religion is the patron of all good. Her restraints and encouragements are the best. She comes in the holiest look of the mother as she bends over her babe. She consecrates the child to God, that daily duty towards it may be more and better felt. She invokes a blessing in the School, and sanctifies Education as the process of unfolding the mind, as the sun opens the flower, ripens the fruit, gives the seasons of the year. She comes to the workshop and to the lad at his apprenticeship everywhere, telling him labor is a great ordinance of God and that young Jesus was a laborer, and bids him aim to do well his task as a part of religious duty, assuring him that all effort for improvement has its relation to the moral culture and condition and prospects of the soul. She

goes on, a diffusive presence everywhere, till the man is made to feel in every department of domestic, social and business life, as he thinks of God, —

> "All may of Thee partake:
> Nothing so small can be,
> But draws, when acted for thy sake,
> Greatness and worth from Thee.
> If done beneath Thy laws,
> E'en servile labors shine;
> Hallowed is toil, if this the Cause,
> The humblest work divine."

Join the elements of duty thus presented, and we may be able to speak in Scripture language, with more than its original meaning, of "the crowning City, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." The city will be great. To walk round about her will be to walk about Zion, and to find something worthy of telling to the generations springing up around us. God will be known in her palaces for a refuge.

SERMON XXV.

PRESENT PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN.

EYE HATH NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NEITHER HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN, THE THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM.—1 Cor. ii. 9.

I count it a misfortune for any one to postpone a happiness that belongs as much to the present as to the future. Especially is this lamentable when the present enjoyment would give vividness and reality to expectation. And still greater becomes the sadness when the happiness involved is of the purest and noblest quality, addressing itself to our spiritual faculties, and designed to interest us most powerfully in the great duties of religion. Such is the condition of those who pervert our text by regarding it as referring to the future life, and not to the privileges of the Christian in the present state. As a consequence they look beyond the grave for what might be found in their daily paths; they have indistinct and dreamy ideas of what heavenly happiness is because they make it a thing so foreign from the joys of common

life; and hence the loss of to-day runs through the years of mortality, as they have far less of Christian experience to draw upon than they might have treasured up.

But to many a reader and hearer the text will seem manifestly to refer to eternity, "for," say they, "it speaks of what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive; and what *can* this mean, if it does not mean such a reference?"

I answer, there is nothing in this language that makes any such reference necessary, for it may be applied to the reverent student in any department of research and study. To him who goes forth to study nature as God's thoughts fashioned and organized into realms of wonder and beauty, there are always surprises of which he never dreamed, new beauties in common things, new grandeur in the simplest forces, and new sublimities in the vast workings of familiar elements.

Hence what an enchantment there is in the pursuits of the naturalist: the eye won by novel sights, the ear by new sounds, the imagination quickened by new wonders leading expectation on with wakeful curiosity. And nothing is more plainly an argument of the power of Christianity than the fact, that by its inspiration men have gone on to the study of nature, hopefully and joyfully, as never before, because of its philosophy that all things are full of good.

And hence the men of progress have moved on, and eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have

entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared to be unfolded to those who love his name, and who read it equally written in star-light and in the veins of the tiniest flower.

And how true is the language of the text in setting forth the approach of the reverent mind from mere natural religion to the discoveries of the Divine Word! Nature is, indeed, suggestive; it inclines the soul to desire something more; and men, while they have felt the grandeur of the heavens, have looked on the stars and planets with sorrow that —

> "In *solemn silence*, all
> Move round this dark, terrestrial ball."

They want a voice amid this silence; they want some member of "a multitude of the heavenly host" to sing; and they invoke wind and water, air and fire, to become a preacher and let one word echo through the starry aisles of this vast, this stupendous cathedral of God. But this could not be; and a better thing was given — the Revelation by Abraham, then by Moses, then by the Prophets, bringing to the soul better visions than the eye hath seen, or ear heard of or imagination conceived.

How true this is, is easily seen by contrasting the rapture of description which Psalmist and Prophet have indulged in when describing the blessings attendant on God's revelations, in comparison with their descriptions of Nature. Indeed they have used Nature the most rapturously when they were borrowing from it similitudes to set forth the treasures of

Revelation. Thus, too, was it with the Saviour. The sun, the rain, the birds, the flowers, harvests, spring time, and whatever he referred to in his teachings, were all glorified by the use made of them in setting forth something of which they were but signs and symbols.

And how appropriate is the language of the text in describing what was to be the experience of a reverent soul, in our Saviour's time, approaching the Gospel! How few had any conception of the glory of his mission, and how justly did he so often speak of the Kingdom of Heaven being a mystery! In his preaching he, as it were, held up splendid pictures before blind eyes — poured extatic music on deaf ears, and brought forth glowing and magnificent visions for dull and cold imaginations. The people advanced from mere daubs to a vast gallery of fresh wonders as they understood the teachings of Jesus; and it was none too bold language when our Saviour said to Nathaniel that he should see Heaven opened, and angels ascending and descending. Stephen enjoyed this glory despite the malice of the mob and the threatening of death.

And by every instance of true conversion from the creeds of men to the Everlasting Gospel, the language of the text is justified. Never before had the eye read, or the ear heard, any thing so broad and grand and satisfying; and the heart bound to narrowness of conception by a narrow creed, finds a liberty better than it ever dreamed of — the whole universe now being given to its range of love and hope. Says a

good man, who came to our Order from the ministry of the Episcopal Church, when speaking of his conversion: "How light my heart felt! how joyful my spirit! how warm my devotions! how fervent my gratitude! If it did not impart to me another sense, it quickened and enlivened those I already possessed. I thought that the sun looked brighter; the music of the birds sounded more melodiously; the fruits of the earth tasted sweeter; the flowers smelt more fragrant; and the very air of heaven felt more balmy."

How many have imagined that though they must believe in the Great Redemption, yet they never would be free from doubt and misgiving; but to these has come conviction, like the sun when it leaves no mist upon the river, no shadow on the hillside. They found that for them God had prepared feasts they never imagined, raptures unthought of, comforts when the fountain seemed failing, and flowers in the desert places.

And forever more, like God's bow of promise, the text may be kept before the soul to tell of the new reaches of Gospel Experience possible to the believer. God will be perpetually surprising him; for what are all the tendernesses and kindnesses that wait on our daily way, prepared by those we love, but types, — faint and small, indeed, but nevertheless types of our Creator's preparations for those who love him — springing up in their path like the unfailing promises of Spring.

> "Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
> As more of heaven in each we see."

Now was I not right in saying it is a sad thing to find men postponing a happiness that belongs to the present? Instead of applying the text to what may be the experience of to-day, they inscribe it on the Curtain of Death, and wait for the rolling up of that veil as the only time of fulfilment.

The text has no such reference, either as first written by the Prophet, or as cited and applied by the Apostle.

It was quoted from the prophet Isaiah lxiv. 4, not literally but in substance. Here it refers to the wonders which God works for those that wait for him — such deliverances as the Psalmist so often celebrates, and that inspires the best songs of the faithful in all ages.

"O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.

"As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

"When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

The Apostle, in citing this Scripture, did not do so to illustrate any theme pertaining to immortality; but

rather to set forth how superior were the attainments in spiritual things of the *heart* Christian, rather than the *head* Christian. To him is given a wisdom and spirit of Revelation such as the leaders of the world never knew; and that eye did not see, nor the ear hear, neither did it enter into the heart of man to conceive the revelations to be given to those who loved God, is evident from the treatment of his Beloved Son. Had there been sympathy springing from some conception of Christ's real work, he would not have been rejected.

In the next verse to our text it is affirmed, that these prepared things are revealed — not by an introduction into Immortality, but by the operation of immortal Truth. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Like water that no man could find, God made the springs to leap up, as to lonely Hagar in the wilderness, and to run along, broadening and deepening, like the waters of the river, to Ezekiel.

To nothing are Christians more blind than to what the Truth can do for them *now*. It is not a mere Savings Bank, but an ever-communicating Life; and the Gospel, as a matter of faith, and also as a matter of lively experience, may be to every believer, —

> "Like to some dear, familiar strain,
> For which we ask and ask again,
> Ever, in its melodious store,
> Finding a spell unheard before."

SERMON XXVI.

GO HOME TO THY FRIENDS.

GO HOME TO THY FRIENDS, AND TELL THEM HOW GREAT THINGS THE LORD HATH DONE FOR THEE, AND HATH HAD COMPASSION ON THEE.—Mark v. 19.

This was said to one who had been the terror of the neighborhood — a wild, roving, miserable maniac. He had made his dwelling place amid the tombs, and in the dark and dismal night he might have been heard, like some lost spirit, screaming in agony, as he cut himself with the sharp stones and threw himself upon the broken rocks. He would at times fly up into the mountains, howling like some wild beast to his den, and more fearful because he was a human being and no one dared to hunt him to his cave and send the death winged arrow to his heart.

Indeed, there was more than usual sanctity thrown around the mad one in those times — they were thought to be in some way singularly used by the Deity, and were regarded as sometimes inspired. The unearthly rolling of the eye, the writhing of the face,

the matted and flying hair of the head, and the violence of action, made them appear as though they were not of mortal mould; and in Gadara this roving, wild, howling and superhumanly, strong maniac was the common object of reverential horror.

Chains and fetters were as strings on his limbs. Fastened upon him in some hour when nature was exhausted, when from some wound he had bled till he was weak, those bands were snapped asunder in an instant when the fury returned and Samson appeared in him again. And then, as though exulting in his new found strength, he would leap to some high rock and sit there upon his throne with gibbering speech, and with his eye fixed on something no other eye could see —

> "Every sense,
> Has been o'erstrung by pangs intense,
> And each frail fibre of his brain,
> (As bowstrings when relaxed by rain
> The erring arrow launch aside,)
> Send forth his thoughts all wild and wide."

This fierce being came dashing down on the sea shore when Jesus was stepping from the fisher's boat, having just crossed the lake. From some eminence he had been watching the approach of the boat, and there had been that in the career of Jesus which was just fitted to arrest the wandering mind of the maniac, as the idiot seems aroused and has something of intelligence when the lightning writes its awful characters on the air.

Seeing Jesus landing, the maniac ran, came to Jesus, knelt at his feet, and piteously cried out to him.

Fastening his eyes upon him, as the moon looks down into some dark and awful cave, Jesus said, "Come out of him thou unclean spirit!" and the man quivered, and writhed, and rose, and then stood a sane man before the Redeemer. The eye lost it wildness, it came as a star from out amid dark clouds and shone in calm and sweet beauty.

The lip had no more gibberish, and the voice articulated the clear thoughts of a sound mind, using a cool brain.

No more did the man run for the tombs or the mountains, but accepted clothing; and when the people in the neighborhood heard of the change, they came out to see, and they did see the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, like a converted savage, who has sounded the war-whoop for the last time, clothed and in his right mind. "And they were afraid."

Now the man could smile at their fears; and no doubt the contrast of his countenance — of what they saw with what they remembered, gave him a superhuman awe, and they gazed as they would have gazed on a spirit from heaven.

But the hour came when Jesus must leave — the people prayed him to leave — they felt that judgments were due them, and they feared lest he would bring them soon. They knew where such power resided as could do the work which had been done, there was power to bring vast evils upon them. They prayed

him to leave, as the worker of iniquity feels bound and scourged by the awful presence of the good man.

But there was *one* that would have him stay; and as Jesus could not stay, that one — that redeemed maniac — desired to follow him, to keep ever in the coolness of his presence — to feel his influence as the tides feel the sway of the calm and majestic moon.

Jesus steps into the ship and is about to push from the shore, and again the Gadarene asks, "Let me go with you. Thou hast given life its value. Thou hast brought order from confusion; and let the mind thou hast calmed be thine — let it serve thee — let its energy that once was given to the wild life amid the mountains and the tombs, be given to make the way smoother. Let me be a monument of thy power — a symbol of the change thy religion is to work for man."

But no! Jesus knew that a perpetual miracle could alone keep that mind sane, and he was to be served not only amid the excitements of the world, but also in the quiet of the home — in the retreats of secluded life, where the roadside talk, the fireside conversation, serve to help on his cause as truly as the public debate and the labored sermon.

And therefore there is meaning in the Saviour's answer far more than the one to whom it was addressed. "Go *home* to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

Carry thy religious zeal home — let it be expressed there. Do not ask for a public field, but cultivate a little garden from which the passer by may catch sights of beauty, and be won to love and duty.

Jesus went over the lake, and the Gadarene went home.

What a fear thrills the heart as he is seen approaching! He comes indeed, not wild and furious, but how soon will the calmness disappear and his howl speak of the wild beast rather than of the man!

But it is no suspension of madness which they see, but a true enthronement of reason. He is cured. It is with him as it was with chaos when the Spirit of God brooded over the waters, and light came to develop order and beauty. He is sane; and he who so many times returned home a terror, now enters a blessing — the hand of the great Prophet has been on him — the stormy Galilee of his soul has felt the omnific word, and its quiet waters reflect the hues of heaven.

He is welcomed. What tears of joy run down the cheeks of the members of the household! How they gaze at him! How he smiles to see their wonder! How the little children climb to his knee and put their fingers in amid the combed locks of the tamed lion! What a jubilee is in that Home! He has told them what great things the Lord hath done for him; and with an unction such as a deep experience only can give, he has spoken of the Lord's compassion. And there we leave him, a joy to the household — a wonder to the neighborhood — a most persuasive

voice for Jesus; and who can say but that his indirect ministry was as effectual for Christianity as any ministry of Christ's disciples! And does it not seem to say to us, Carry thy zeal home, if thou would serve Jesus; and if the greater field is not for thee, be careful to serve him in the smaller? The *quality* of the work is shown as well in the latter as the former.

But this is not precisely the lesson I felt given to me by the text; that lesson was rather this,—What a fine sample is this Gadarene of those whom Christ sends home, changed from curses to blessings!

In improving this idea very briefly, let us consider, —

1. How one spirit may disturb a whole household, — make every means of happiness vain — render all the resources for enjoyment of no worth. All these resources only say, How happy we *might* be! What means of making life a beautiful thing are granted to us! But one inmate poisons every cup, renders every means of enjoyment a nullity! There is a relief when our sorrow comes from sickness, accident, the visitation of God; but when it comes from *moral insanity*, the arrow is barbed indeed, and strikes and rankles deep. How much there is of this — from intemperance, dishonesty, passion, selfishness, sensuality and meanness!

I have looked on the elegant mansion, with its glittering marble, where the evidences of wealth were seen in every thing that met the eye,— where through the heavy folds of the satin and lace at the windows, is seen the bright lights and the splendid paintings;

and there, rejoicing in the luxury which riches can bring, sits the unsuspicious wife, whose heart is to beat like a bird imprisoned at the entrance of one who is not mad by the visitation of God, but by his own folly. He goes to prove that virtuous principle can do more for happiness than wealth.

He enters the house a living curse — a throbbing ulcer — a quiver of barbed arrows, more mad than the Gadarene, for *he* paid homage in *his* madness to goodness, while this self-made maniac spits at it, and gives for tones of love the gibberish of fools, the mirth of the bar-room, the dregs of the bacchanalian feast.

He leaves the home only to be an object of fear and torturing anxiety, like the Gadarene in his wild rovings.

2. But our theme hath another lesson, more pleasant, and that is, Jesus can transform this wild spirit and send him home a blessing.

Jesus cured the Gadarene of a madness the most terrible. The man thought himself possessed of a legion of devils or demons, and every fibre of his being was on the rack, pulled and tortured by these invisible powers. Christ tamed him — not merely for his own relief — for his friends — for the influence he would exert at home — but also for all ages — for us, to say, The wildest soul of wickedness can be transformed — desperation can be charmed to mildness, chaos can become order.

And Jesus has proved this. His religion has tamed as wild creatures as any that now live to terrify

the household, and to suggest chains and prisons. Yes, to God be the glory! the Gospel has equalled the miracle of Jesus! The moral maniac has been tamed! The ferocious tiger has departed, and the serenity of a true, manly soul has appeared — like the passing of the thunderous clouds that made night awful, and the coming forth of the morn, pouring her baptism of light on hill and tower and on the rolling river and the home. So I have felt the change when I have seen what the Gospel can do.

But here is my last word: Do not let us shake all this off with the passing hour, because we are *not* maniacs and cannot go home as such. But let this be our question,— Where do we stand *between* this extreme and what we should be? Here is the terrible maniac, and there is Jesus — where are we? With which have we the most features of character in common? God help us to be like Him who never entered a Home but to make it better and happier.

SERMON XXVII.

VISITATIONS OF GOD.

AND JACOB AWAKED OUT OF HIS SLEEP, AND HE SAID, SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, AND I KNEW IT NOT.—Gen. xxviii. 16.

There is a vast difference, many times, between the reality of an existence and our knowledge of it; between the ministries of life and our appreciation of them; between the omnipresence of God and our uses of that truth.

We little know what a palace we lie down in when our lot seems hard, our heart and limbs are weary, and our pillow rocky as Jacob's. The world has rejected more glory that came in dreams than it has accepted from the demonstrations of experiment; and yet it would be miserable indeed, did not the beauty of dreams linger around the paths of its journeyings. "Where no vision is, the people perish."

Grand as the universe is, door after door to inner glories being thrown open by science and philosophy, yet the world of dreams surpasses all that the eye hath seen. Indeed, it is the dream that gives to what are called the revelations of science their chief charm,

stretching the vision far away from the demonstration, and sending it afar, till upon a throne of stars the soul kneels to worship God. There in thatsleep of utter abstraction, the philosopher is beholding a new path from earth to heaven; the flying feet of ascending angels are but the speeding of his questionings, and the descending messengers, who come with such radiant wings and smiling eyes, are the bright answers to his thoughts, and he awakes to tell the world how he has seen God, and anew may be uttered the promise of a blessing to all the families of the earth. Every new truth or principle is such a blessing. And so, too, the Christian, in his meditative moods, has flashes of glory come over him till the dawn is beautiful, the grey mists all faded into the crimson light, and he awakes to say, Surely God is here, and I knew it not. Not that he had ever doubted the omnipresence of the Deity, but had often failed to apply his faith, as he might, to strengthen, to comfort, and to bless.

There is a knowledge of the reason, and a knowledge of the heart. There is a knowledge that embraces the whole, but does not recognize the parts. The one speaks of the omnipresence of God, but the other is necessary to feel that truth in its relation to all times and places. Jacob, as he went toward Haran, and lay down to sleep when the sun had set, knew God was as much there as any where, but that knowledge was as a hidden spring, of which no lip drinks, and he started in surprise when he woke with the joy of his dream still upon him, as though the ladder had

been let down for a divine visitation that otherwise would not have been. This is the difference between the knowledge that *stores up facts*, and the knowledge that *uses facts;* as where David prayed to know how frail he was, that he might become better before God. He could not hide from himself that he was mortal; that he might pass away suddenly; but he wanted to have this knowledge to strike home to passion and desire, that he might use it to high ends, as they use it to low aims whose cry is, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Thus the sensualist uses what he thinks to be knowledge; and in the steady pursuit of pleasure, he sets an example of persistence to be copied by those whose estimate of life is formed on a spiritual basis.

The patriarch Jacob, at the time the text presents him to our view, was fleeing from the presence of Esau, who had been terribly wronged by him, and whose wild strength it was feared might be directed against the life of his twin brother. Jacob had deceived his blind father; he had, by an actor's art, obtained the blessing that, once given, could not be transferred; and the bitter cry of Esau was awful to hear, when the deception of Jacob had been successful. In his passion, Esau had spoken of vengeance on Jacob when his father should be dead. The mother heard of the words, and speedily prepared Jacob to depart to the home of Laban, her brother, in Haran. Jacob, blessed by his father Isaac, departed. He was approaching the city of Luz, when night overtook him, and the gates of the city were probably

shut, so he prepared to lie down to sleep in the open field. He took a stone and folded some garment upon it, and lay down to rest, with the stars above him, not, we may believe, without remembering his God, whose protection and mercy he had so much need of then. He knew God was there, but that he was there to give him assurance of favor, to open to him new visions of glory, was an idea that did not possess his mind, a guilty soul as he then was. But "he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending upon it." And the Lord stood above it, revealing himself as the God of his fathers, declaring to him that the land whereon he was lying should be given to him and his seed, and that his seed should be numerous, and be spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south, and that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. The divine communication was closed with an assurance of the divine presence, favor and protection. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." He was filled with awe, and exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then he took the stone that had been his pillow, and according to the fashion of his times, poured oil upon it, after placing it up as a pillar, a memorial of the visitation of God. He called the place *Bethel*, that is, The house of God.

What an unexpected glory had that night of fear to him! Had he gone into the city, he might have met associations that would have sent him to his sleep in a different mood than his solitary journeying had brought to him, as he had left the joys of home, the presence of the dearest objects of his life, and with an accusing memory that was to follow him many years till again he sees God in a surprising manner, even in the kindness of Esau's face.

This incident may open to us several interesting and profitable themes, such as the unexpected visitations of God; God coming with blessings and promises to the guilty; and the effect of God's gracious visitations in rendering places sacred, and making them, as it were, the gates of heaven.

And, first, let us consider the unexpected visitations of God.

Let us pause a moment to notice how the wording of our topics seems to imply that God is not with us at all times. We speak of visitations from God, of his coming to us, of his drawing nigh to us, and the Scriptures abound with such language. The Psalmist, beholding the magnificence of the heavens, exclaimed, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" So when trouble was upon him — "Remember me, O Lord; O visit me with thy salvation." And so at the gate of Nain, when Jesus met the funeral throng, and had compassion on the widowed mother whose only son lay upon the bier. He gave life to the dead; the

young man rose up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. "And there came a fear upon all; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." Jesus adopted the same method of speaking when he was asked by one of his disciples, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This method of speaking is not merely imaginative. There are persons who dwell near us for years and we know but little of them; they go away from our thoughts; they are never really near us; but some incident occurs that reveals some element of their character with which we were not acquainted; we find they sympathise with us in reference to something that is dear or sacred, and they come near to us as never before; we open our hearts to them, they enter, and take a place there. So we speak of how distant a person was whom we met in some circle; we sat by their side, but the wall of China is not higher or broader than seemed the wall between us; the isolation we felt in the same room, by the same fire. Every day persons come near us, and go away from us, according to the action of our sympathies. Persons continue near each other like two blocks of ice; and again they are as the intermingling colors of the rainbow. Some,

seemingly united in the holiest of bonds, have only

> "To behold
> Unfitness rising daily like a shoal
> Before affection's anchorage. To grow apart
> In one large roomy house, and solitary
> In nuptial company."
> "There the kindest acts
> Have as it were a calm severity,
> And coldness in the doing."

By the same general law of sympathy it is right to speak of the visitations of God. We speak of a person being distant when it is our feelings, our thoughts, our surmises, that create the distance. California was very distant to thousands till they sent their sympathies there and drew it, as it were, near to them. So with any place. Not that the place is affected at all, but our hearts are. So with God. Our thoughts do not travel to affect him, as an embassy acts upon a king to make him pliant and merciful to persons in his power. No; he is without variableness or the shadow of turning. God is to us like the air charged with electric vitality. We bathe our bodies, we apply the means of quickening the action of the bodily organism, and we go forth into the cold air to receive strength. It is not the atmosphere that changes, but our bodies. There, in its vastness, utterly beyond our power to affect its temperature, is the boundless sea of air. Into it we must go, to be affected by it as we have prepared ourselves to be affected. So, reverently be it spoken, is the relation of God to us and

our relation to God. Poor and mean is the comparison, as are all comparisons that attempt to image God, but it will grow in greatness and significance the more we study it. It will at least impress the fact upon our minds, that if, to us, God is not in a place, or if he is there only to haunt us as an object of terror, or is there to overwhelm and oppress as mere Almightiness and irresistible will, the fault is in us; the evil is in our conceptions, our superstitious and our guilty fears, our ignorance or unbelief. The invalid shrinks from contact with the balmiest summer air; so the invalid mind shrinks from the presence of God, and wants nothing so much as the spot where it can say, God is not in this place! Like Adam, it would hide from the Omnipresent.

Seeing, then, the justification of the language we use in speaking of the visitations of God, we may speak of them. How much are they needed! Sweet to the soul are the visitations of friends — the coming of the parent, the brother, the sister, the dear one, to our home! New feelings are awakened, and the bride in the Canticles employs no burning speech too enthusiastic for the soul. To the stranger it seems as though we were passionate, wild with wine, so fervid is our speech, so exultingly do we act. But sweeter to the soul is the visitation of God; and the language of the rapt spirit has been censured as the speech of a wild love, and the unbeliever has shown what a mass of vice lies amid his sensibilities by speaking of the devotional hymn as "amatory poetry." But even he has answered himself by using the same

language towards an abstraction called Reason, Truth, Liberty, which the Christian wrote in adoring his God and glorifying the grace in Jesus.

Yes, nothing is more needed, and nothing is more joy-giving, than the visitations of God. They come to the fervent prayer, to the wrestling soul, to the tempted crying for help, to Jesus on the mountain top, by the grave of Lazarus, in Gethsemane, on Calvary. But they come uninvited; they come like a dear face that brings a heaven suddenly into our home; they come to chase away our tears, to show the dead glorified, to teach us submission, to revive our failing strength, to keep unspent the meal and oil. They come as the wind changes, to give us the odors of spring's blooms; or as the rain,

> "That loves to come at night,
> To make you wonder in the morn,
> What made the earth so bright."

They come as Jesus to the impotent man at Bethesda's pool, who "wist not who it was that had healed him." Truly has the divine word said, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Yes, and this was said when the sin of Israel was in full view; when they were "a disobedient and gainsaying people."

And here is the primal source of the great scheme of redemption. It was free grace communicating itself unto the world. It is in these things that God's

love is best shown. He comes as the mother whose kiss is felt through the dark by the child. The child could give no reasoning why he knew it was his mother's kiss, but only the simple affirmation that he knew it was her. No other being, it may be, ever came so; and what a rapture to the child to wake to such an unseen visitation of love! Even so comes the Lord, our Maker and Father. It is by his unexpected visitations that we are most blessed. The surprise startles us into new life. And those times are visitations of God when some wonder arrests our attention and impresses us with awe; when the joy or sorrow of life carries us away from the finite to the infinite; when the appliances of devotion lull the troubled spirit into a calm, and thoughts of God rise clear in the soul, as stars come out in the twilight. The mother with her child, feeling how boundless is the love she bears it, and what a treasure it is; the young bride with a joy that overflows into prayer; young lovers sitting silent in the moonlight, with affections as pure as its mellow rays, and hopes as hallowing; the rich man thinking of the happiness his charities have bestowed, and the poor man grateful that his little can be so much; the philanthropist seeing a gleam of success, and the martyr standing up amid desolation, but feeling that the earth is soon to bud and blossom as the rose; the dying saint lying with folded hands — emblem that this life's work is done — and with eyes closed like the flowers at eve, are all visited of God. He is there when they know it not. He is the joy, the hope, the promise, the glory of the hour.

But he comes also to others. Our second topic is, God coming with blessings and promises *to the guilty*. Surely this was the approach of God to Jacob when he lay in the open field. How guilty he was! How awful his guilt in the light of the holy stars! What terrible wrongs he had inflicted upon his brother! What imposition he had practised on his old, blind father! A mighty journey he had taken that day, showing how swift of foot he had been, what speed fear had added to the pilgrim's steps. He lies down to sleep. The rocky pillow is not so hard as the weight is heavy at his heart. But kindly sleep visits him. The starry heavens bend over him as though he had never sinned. The night air sung around him the softest lullaby. All tumult is hushed within his breast, and Jacob sleeps. Why steals the smile over his late troubled countenance? Why dilates the breast so gently, that heaved so heavily? Why such happiness in sleep? He is dreaming — dreaming of a path opened from earth to heaven; it is peopled with angels with winged feet flying to and fro; and from the glorious mystery above speaks a voice to him. It is the voice of God; a voice that speaks to him *only* of blessings and promises. Happy Jacob! guilt has not exiled thee from God! The goodness of God would lead thee to repentance.

And what an influence did this visitation have upon Jacob! This recalls our last topic. The effect of God's gracious visitations in rendering places sacred, and making them, as it were, the gates of heaven.

It is here that we see what thought can do, and how completely life is what thought makes it. The plains near Luz, where Jacob laid down to sleep, were but common earth to him then. The stone he chose to lift his head as he rested, was but one of thousands. But with the morning what a change! Evermore must that place be sacred, and his pillow becomes a pillar, consecrated as a memorial of God. "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." The heart sanctifies places; and it is well to cherish a love for the places where our affections have been developed, where life has assumed a holier meaning, where we have been brought more closely into the order of nature, and have felt attracted to heaven and God. Jacob's glow of feeling transformed the open plain into a temple, and the temple into a portal of heaven. So will it be with every place where God is felt so near that the whole being is affected, and a new influence comes to the life. So ought it to be with the place of our Sabbath devotions. Thought should transform it into something sacred. It should be more than any other building. Everything associated with lightness should be excluded. That is the sacred place where the most of sacred thoughts, truth and feeling come to us; where the soul is not turned away by hideous imaginings and revolting superstitions; where Jesus is most truly found, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is the grand thought that is to be our real temple, the radiant portal of heaven; and if we will, a great thought will bend above us

more than the pointed and aspiring arches of the Gothic cathedral, and will build for us windows of glory.

Yes, and we need such windows, through which we can look — not on the city street, the rural landscape, or the burial-place of the dead; but into the world of the immortals; into the golden streets of the celestial city, and survey the river of life graced with the ever-blooming trees, where the redeemed die no more. Day after day brings its sad changes, and though we may not like Jacob fly from our kindred and loved ones, they fly from us, and we recall the lines of the poet:—

> "Another hand is beckoning us;
> Another call is given;
> And glows once more, with angel steps,
> The path which reaches heaven."

Thus we are wakened from our sleep of security — startled into consciousness of what life is, and how slender the hold we have upon it. Happy for us if when we are thus awakened, we can feel the power of our faith; and while we feel that we knew not God was in the place to bereave us, we can also realize, gratefully and adoringly, that he is here to open the gate of heaven — to send angels to tell us of the joy of the departed, that we may send back by like spirits the acquiescence of a serene trust and a devout love — Father, thy will be done.

SERMON XXVIII.

PRAYER.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY, AS JOHN ALSO TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES.
Luke xi. 1.

How John taught his disciples to pray must be left to conjecture. On that point the Evangelists are silent. We venture however to assume, that whatever teaching John gave on this matter, was directed to a practical and reformative end. The whole life of John was a work of preparation for the coming of a mightier than he, and all that we see of him reminds us of the freshening winds and wild storms of early Spring, when we catch now and then the breath of violets in the gale. That he taught his disciples the true spirit of prayer, the text asserts, and it is evident that the intention of the request to Jesus touched the topics proper for his disciples. A difference in his teaching on this point was to be expected, for the grand burden of John's prayers was fulfilled, and the Desire of all nations had come. Assuming a new po-

sition, Jesus must necessarily have a new burden for prayer, and very natural was the request of one of his disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

This request came at a time when Jesus had come forth from a place of secret prayer. His disciples felt that they should be aided in their devotions did they know how he would have them to pray, and one ventured to request to be taught. In answer, Jesus gave the beautiful, touching and all-comprehensive prayer, which we call The Lord's Prayer, whose significance expands with the expanding mind, and is alike proper when on the lip of infancy and when chanted by thousands in the vaulted cathedral.

How differently various authors of religions have taught their followers to pray, is more than a subject of curiosity. We may learn much concerning their temper and spirit, their aims and desires, from the contrast of their prayers. And never wholly idle will be the question as to the manner of prayer taught by the different teachers of the Christian Religion, as they express the spirit and method of the various sects and parties ; for great is the difference as in the case of the Wesleyans in contrast with the ritual of the English Church, in the bosom of which church they originated. New methods of religious operation — revival movements, have been distinguished as much by a new teaching how to pray, as by any other peculiar feature. And many of these novelties are worthy of study, for they reveal certain helps to religious action that *we* need, especially the combina-

tion and unity in praying for an individual or a single object. Is there not something beautiful in the monthly concert of Prayer for Missionary objects, so general among a large class of Christians on the first Monday evening of every month? So also with the division of the Year into festival days, or days preceding and succeeding the festivals, whereby the Church of England and her mother, the Papal Church, throughout their dominions, unite in the same prayers on the Sabbath, the same words falling from the lip of royalty and peasantry, the learned and unlearned. But not without meaning is the choice of more spontaneous and unartificial utterance of devotional thought and feeling, like the voice of the wind; not coming through the organ as man touches the keys, but swaying the lily in the lake and whispering amid the reeds and willows by the shore, and surging amid the tops of the pines in solemn cadence humbling to the soul.

Leaving each one to the method best suited to his needs, I would say a few words touching the importance of *vocalizing* prayer, and then speak of Solitary, Companionable, Social and Public Prayer, as the spirit of Christianity seems to teach.

Many persons do not seem to recognize any importance of *vocalizing* prayer; they carry to an extreme the idea that prayer is a spiritual exercise; but if vocal expression gives new power to the poem, the sermon, the letter from a friend, so must it be with the utterance of prayer. How often, when we cannot concentrate our attention in silent reading, we suc-

ceed in doing this by reading aloud; and there is something in the hearing of our own voice that reassures us — that reacts on the power that speaks in the thoughts we utter. I have known persons who complained to me that the effort to vocalize prayer distracted their attention and drove away the devout feeling; but this was but the trial of the spirit that enduring long enough would find the reward. Many to whom the effort to make vocal a spontaneous prayer has been an exercise most searchingly painful, have, by perseverance, obtained a freedom of expression which gave them a delight and benefit in their devotions they never knew before. The wife of Luther felt the same distractions in reference to prayer, when she could no longer have her former help in the forms of the papal church. "Doctor," said his wife to Martin Luther, "how is it that while subjects to Papacy we prayed so often and with such fervor, while now we pray with the utmost coldness and very seldom?" This fact pained him excessively; but he did not yield to the strangeness; he made that yield to him; and at last, when he stood up and laid his hand on the Bible in his solitude, the second day at the Diet of Worms, as mighty an inflowing of assisting strength came to his aid as he ever knew in the cell of the monastery.

But the great argument for attempting the exercise of vocal prayer and persevering in it, comes from the fact that, next to the greater power given to our solitary prayer, we are fitting ourselves to help others in their need. We may, indeed, by look, attitude and

other symbols, impart a knowledge to others that we are praying for them; and never would I undervalue the power of the silent prayer, as in the meeting of the Friends. But so long as there is power in the voice — a melting, soothing, uplifting and strengthening power in the tone of the devout soul, so long will vocal prayer be desirable in the chamber where companions kneel, around the couch of sickness, and above the cold face of the dead. In solitude let us ask of God to help us to the utterance of prayer, that we may be helpers to the weak in their times of need, ready to pray with the sorrowing, the tempted and the discouraged. How many times for want of this, the dying friend has expired with the vain call for some one to help the soul by prayer! I have hastened to a call at midnight, and found the friend who asked for prayer, *dead*, while voiceless stood around the bed professing Christians of different sects — none could pray. Many are the reasons why such things may be, but the most enlarged charity cannot always find an excuse.

I have spoken of commending Solitary, Companionable, Social and Public Prayer.

Prayer in solitude is the best, and I know not but the only real test of a man's piety. Secret prayer shows best how deep and real is our faith in God — his presence, his love, his providence. Jesus said much in behalf of secret prayer,— entering the closet and shutting the door, and praying to the Father who seeth in secret and will reward openly. But secret prayer is not always secresy of place. No; we

can go into ourselves amid the crowd and pray; the mariner at the helm, the sailor boy on the mast, the sentinel at his watch in the deep night, may be in secret and can pray; but the sternest want of the uplifting and guiding power of prayer is felt in the crowd, amid excitements, when temptation besets the soul; and the poet did well, when, in writing of prayer, he said,—

> "If it is e'er denied thee
> In solitude to pray,
> Should holy thoughts come o'er thee
> When friends are round thy way,
> E'en then the silent breathing,
> Thy spirit raised above,
> Will reach his throne of glory,
> Where dwells eternal love."

But out of solitude we come to find dear companionships, and then prayer is needed. Mutual prayer gives the dearest sanctity to wedded love; and where wedded life has been preceded by companionable prayer — hopes and desires carried to Heaven for its blessing, the best promises of happiness have been given. What burdens might be lifted from the soul by the prevailing prayer of the bosom companion! what energy given to the discouraged, what carefulness to the prosperous, what comfort to the dying and the bereaved! It is not enough to *talk* over joy and sorrow, births and deaths; they should be prayed over; and how much easier would dissentions be healed, and healed without a scar, were prayer to sanctify the hour of returning peace and unity!

There come hours to us all when no diviner relief can be granted than is to be brought by the voice dearest of all earth's sounds heard supplicating God for us, pleading at the throne with that intonation of love that won us first and holds us still. In sickness, when the shadow of deep gloom is on the soul, when the demon of wrath is in the breast, when the holiest vows are violated, *then* the kneeling form, the clasped hands, the face radiant with the great thought of God and his grace, and the tremulous voice crying unto the Invisible Father, have done a work that nothing else could do — a beautiful work in the soul. Companionable prayer is the grand protector of the tenderest feelings, the holiest affections; for they who have prayed together surely have one restraint more against sin — one living cord added to the band that binds them to each other and to virtue — one plank more to save them in the stormy sea. How many guilty pleasures would be escaped if the proposition for the new indulgence was pondered with prayer. What a flash of celestial light would such an exercise bring down on the demon of evil! The cup of the tempter is dropped at once, and the soul is saved.

These forms of the exercise of Prayer lead us out into the Family, the Social Circle and Public Worship. Family prayer has many benefits. Where it is not formal, but ever fresh and living, it is encouraging to every thing good and restraining to every thing evil. And beyond this in the Social Circle and the Conference room, the place of Prayer and Praise where a few meet to help each other in the way of holiness,

why should the praying be confined to so few? Why is the absence of the Minister so grievous a thing when his place can be easily filled except at the time of Prayer? I own the greater sanctity attached to prayer — the awe which hushes the lip; but there is too much hindrance from the consciousness of not excelling in this service, and perhaps more in the harsh and wicked criticisms on the painful but heroic effort. Well do I remember the first attempt of a brother in social prayer. It was a wild night in Winter. We had literally crept over the glassy and wet ice to our place of Conference, each with a lantern to light his way. We were a new band in the place of my first settlement in the ministry, and we felt bound to have our meetings and to improve them. This night was a memorable one; and when suddenly a lay brother, now in heaven after a triumphant death, broke the silence with prayer, there was a power, a pathos in his tremulous voice, that penetrated to the centre of the soul, and woke to life all the slumbering feelings of our moral nature. Why should it not oftener be so? It will be so when more of the spirit of the Disciple in our text is known. Would that we knew more of him! what use he made of the Master's teachings; for it may be his voice, used in solitude, helped many a companion in the path of life, and it may be gave holiness to the family gathering, the Conference circle, and the Sabbath day worship of the saints.

SERMON XXIX.

THE MINUTENESS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.—Matt. vi. 11.

It seems, at first sight, a great descent, when we contrast this petition with the one that precedes it in the record.

That carries us to heaven — to the multitude of spirits who, with unwearied strength, do the will of God, presenting the grand harmony to which we should strive to have earth conformed. *This* brings us down to the perishable things of earth — to this mortal body, which, with all its wonders, is nevertheless as dependant for its life on food as the humblest animal of the field or the forest.

And yet how intimate is the connection of these petitions, and how finely the union shows the comprehensiveness of our Lord! In all ages, religionists have attempted to help the soul by abusing the body. There has always been too much of that "will-worship," of which the Apostle spake to the church at

Colosse, which impelled to the neglecting of the body and the non-satisfying of the flesh. To honor the body has been a matter of small consequence, and, by denying its appetites and quenching its desires, the hope has been cherished of making the body etherial, so that it might overcome the gravitation of the earth, and find the path which Enoch took to immortality.

Jesus had no sympathy with this foolishness. He did not live in this world without seeing the ample provisions of Almighty bounty for the sustenance of the body — for the gratification of those desires which are as innocent as the first thought of the child concerning the stars. And it is instructive in the highest degree to collect, in review before us, the instances where our Lord showed his regard for the body — where he himself ate and drank, slept and rested, sought quietness after a laborious and agitating day, and exercised his miraculous power to feed the thousands who otherwise would have fainted on their homeward way. And so also when the throng was so great about him and his disciples that they had no leisure so much as to eat, he compassionately took those disciples aside into a quiet and secluded place, that the body might be cared for. To the last, this breadth of thought went with him. It was shown in Gethsemane ; it was shown on the Cross.

In the garden of his agony he was alone, and they who should have been watchful to guard him from intrusion, slept. He came — he beheld them asleep. His first thought was a reproach, but a kindlier senti-

ment immediately succeeded. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "Sleep on now and take your rest." And in his next word was implied the idea, that the agitating morrow would demand all the strength they could nourish by the sleep of that fearful night.

So also on the Cross. When his agony was at the height, and the wildest cry that ever broke from his lips sounded on the air, he resolved the oppression of soul into the fevered condition of the torn and lacerated body, and exclaimed, "I thirst," and when the pungent vinegar touched his lips, and ran with its quickening balm over ten thousand nerves, it was to him like a master touch on the harp of a thousand strings, that brought them all in tune, for the soul resumed its serenity, its majesty, and filial greatness, as he said, "It is finished! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," — and died.

Thus is shadowed forth the interest which Christianity takes in the body; and when the great aim to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, is before the soul, and the body rises as a great obstacle in the way, the proper balance may be restored to the thoughts by the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

> "We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
> Our neighbor and our work farewell,
> Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
> For sinful man beneath the sky."

Here, then, is suggested the doctrine of our text.

The great question of theologians has been,—When the soul strives to do God's will as the heavenly inhabitants do it, how shall it overcome its tendency to sin, its downwards habits, its alienation from perfect obedience?

This is the great mystery. It is the source of all the varions doctrines of Divine Influence, from the theory of irresistible and sovereign Grace, to the idea of the Quietists and the Quakers, that when they "center down" into their own minds, and put to rest all their natural faculties and thoughts, the Divine Spirit will come with its impulses and intimations to lead the soul to good and to good only All these many theories of Divine Influence are instructive. They all have some glimmering of the vital truth. At least, they all admit the necessity for such an influence, and that such an influence is somehow given. This is a grand unity of thought, and beautifully was it set forth outside of the church of Revelation, in Grecian mythology, where, in the touching story of Psyche, the union of the Divine and the Human for the restoration of man, was intimated.

And nothing is more needed than this doctrine — God's readiness to help the struggling soul — to make more than the stars to fight on the side of the faithful by infusing his own spirit into the centre of our being and uniting all the faculties in the harmony of obedience.

Jesus taught this doctrine most boldly—most touchingly. His great doctrine of the Fatherhood and consequent eternal interest in the education of each soul, poured an endless light on the whole field of inquiry, for what is a Father's love but the infusion of whatever is good in himself for the elevation of his children? It is his glory to give dominion to that which enobles—which truly educates; and faint and feeble are our conceptions of the Divine Fatherhood till we see God more present with the soul than any earthly parent can be, communicating his own spirit, and so imparting help to rise, that the soul is left without excuse for continuing in sin.

It is a great thing to discern how manifold is this grace, this influence of God. It comes to us from every form of the beautiful and the harmonious. All music and poetry expresses it. Everything that stirs in our hearts an aspiration after excellence; the longing for a purer love; the desire for more of communion with the saintly and the good, infuses this divine influence into our souls.

It is a happy thing to find a religious faith that sanctions such a comprehensive acknowledgment of God's aid, for one of the prominent evils of a narrow religion lies in its confining divine aid to one channel—to one method of operation; sometimes the church, sometimes the priesthood, sometimes special occasions of religious excitement or concern; whereas to our view God is ever present, and the sun in the heavens is no more ready to impart light and warmth to the

earth than God is to give his spirit to his moral creatures.

Christianity is God's chief manifestation and gift of himself. Everything is glorious just in proportion as God has communicated himself to it, or is to be seen in or by it; and in the Gospel he has shown the most of himself, and has given the most of himself, for the restoration of man.

And how can we travel up the grand heights of this truth but by a right beginning; by treading firmly, reverently and gratefully on the first step; that which enables us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." If for our bodily wants; if for that by which we feed the mystic torch of life; if for our bread, and the bread for a single day, we can pray, what is there, in all the vast round of human wants, that may not be prayed for and expected of God?

Our daily bread! What is more common? what is more needful? what can better show divine Providence and its minuteness than to connect that with the idea of God and his goodness?

A God to whom such a prayer can be offered as "Give us this day our daily bread," cannot be an epicurean Deity; he is no Stoic's God; he cannot be transformed into a cold law, or be hidden away behind the forces of nature and kept apart from human souls. No; he is an intimate Deity, and the picture which the Psalmist gives of Israel's God, opening his hand and supplying the wants of every living thing, may be transferred to the infinite Father of the Gospel. He is the great Bread-Giver. Mindfulness of

this want is but a symbol of his mindfulness of all wants.

Not discerning this idea, theologians have tried to give significance and dignity to the petition now before us by making it signify a reference to spiritual bread. This will not do. The idea is, Give us bread needful for the sustenance of life. Man does not, indeed, live by bread alone, but he does partly; and when the divine Providence is connected with the commonest blessing, what is the inference — the great doctrine of that idea but this: God is to be remembered in all things, and we are to be mindful of that imitation of him by which we shall regard the humblest wants of humanity.

This gives a breadth of meaning to the doing of God's will on earth that no other idea can impart. It links us as God is linked with humanity every where, and the giving of bread may be as dignified and important an employment as imparting the Gospel. A loaf of bread gives sometimes the most substantial sermon. "What doth it profit?" asks St. James, "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" It is very pious, so far as the evangelical tone may go, to say to the poor, "Depart in peace; be warmed and filled." It may express a very kind interest in them; a desire that they may be warmed and filled, and live happily; but what is this to the perishing one, who cannot live

on tones, and words, and sympathetic desires? What is this as an imitation of God?

Yes, even when the hungry and naked may be evil, where is the justification in the great doctrine of Providence for withholding that which is needful to keep them from perishing? "I will not," said a minister lately, "help feed those in winter who serve the devil in the summer." And what would he do? Leave them to serve the same master in the winter, while he repeats the Saviour's words, and talks eloquently of divine Providence from whose sheltering wings drop blessings for even "the evil and the unthankful."

Poorly dwells the love of God in that man who withholds the gift of daily bread where it might draw a soul away from the service of Satan. The church is often less humane than the State. It has less breadth of charity; less regard for our common humanity; less of imitation of that munificence to which we lift our prayer—"Give us this day our daily bread."

"The Bread Question" has been in many nations a great question; and only as the broadest humanity and the most Christian spirit are embodied in our theories for the relief and extinguishment of pauperism, can we expect to advance in duty.

And never can we be right till we have caught an enduring spirit of forbearance and long-suffering towards the destitute and the sinful.

To-day we are to eat bread as a symbol of God's crowning gift, and it shall speak to us, that as this

food admirably answers the first need of the body, so the Gospel answers the first need of the soul. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." And well may we sum up all our thoughts in the familiar verse,

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this mortal land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand!
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more!"

SERMON XXX.

FORGIVENESS.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.—Matt. vi. 12.

The law of moral reciprocity, which holds throughout the universe, is here recognized. We can ask for only what we give. Love is the only loan for love; and however a man may deceive himself, he really brings to himself the spirit he expresses. Right and wrong in the soul are as the clear or flawed glass in our windows, that lets in the rays of the sun as they flashed from their source, or perverts and twists them, making monstrous the objects of sight which are really beautiful.

Thus we are constantly finding the experience that properly belongs to us, and as is our spirit, so our life must inevitably be.

Just as true is this maxim, when applied to the relations of man to God. The glory of the morality of the Gospel lies in the fact that God accepts no homage where the spirit of the worshipper is alien from man. The friendliness of the Almighty towards

man is seen most unequivocally here. God was and is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. The ground of forgiveness with him is forgiveness of man towards man. This only can show that the man knows God; that he really has apprehended the object of worship; that he has caught any thing of his spirit; that he is impelled to pray with any thing of just preparation or regard for the great offices of religion. How important, then, is the doctrine of free grace which flashes out from this portion of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

One of the great questions of theology, and which perhaps has as much as any thing to do with dictating the various interpretations of the New Testament, is this: What are the conditions of divine forgiveness? How are we to obtain that inflowing of pardoning grace by which the life of our souls is fed, as bread feeds the body?

This is as much a *practical* as it is a *theological* matter.

God's grace is the life of all genuine godliness and morality. Our "life is hid with Christ in God." How shall we get at that life? How shall it be transmitted?

That there are laws of transmission, conditions to be attended to, is as certain as in the transmission of the telegraphic message.

The great mystery seems to be, to fathom the conditions connected with the reception of divine grace. When we look into religious biographies, what is it

that makes the majority of them so sombre, so distasteful to the young, so apt to give to the reader unattractive impressions of religion? The chief reason of this lies in the horrible ideas cherished concerning the divine forgiveness, its law, its conditions, the method of its transmission. It is all outside of the soul; having no analogy in any kind act of man towards man, but separate and distinct from all the exercises of genuine forgiveness in this world of ours.

And if thus the forgiveness of God is made a matter foreign from every thing we call forgiveness on the part of man, how can it be made a practical thing to help the harmony of social life; to add to the sweets of home; to extract from our pillows the thorns which disturb sleep and that prick imagination to the painting of terrible dreams, so that all may be made smooth as the rose which the lover gives to his mistress robbed of all that can wound?

O, after all our speculations, there is nothing so vital to human happiness as right views of God. All the disunion of our race, the Saviour resolved into ignorance of God. "O righteous Father," he said, "the world hath not known thee." His own spirit of love was caught from knowledge of that. Father "But I have known thee!" and he looked to the harmony of his disciples, and, through them, of the world, because he knew God would be known. It is love which springs from the knowledge of God that the world needs for its regeneration; and hence Jesus defined eternal life to be, the knowledge of God and of himself — his relation to the world as the exponent

of God, so that to see him, in the breadth and greatness of what he is, is to see the Father.

What means the stupendous array of powers which God has made to reveal himself, if right thought be not the foundation of religion? "Love, and not doctrine, is religion," we are told; but how has the love of mankind been made, from age to age, a nobler and more philanthropic thing, but by new doctrine, new ideas, new thoughts? The philanthropic element in literature is a matter worthy of the good man's study, but what is that but the power of thought, the force of ideas, which, by their breadth of generous views of man and society, inspire love? The thoughts which most richly inspire love are the treasures of the race, which the world will not willingly see given to oblivion. Republicanism is a thought, an idea, and it breathes a broader love for humanity; but where would the love be without the thought, the idea?

See Europe, with its mighty armies holding back free thought, maintaining the reaction of the revolutions of '48, and how has love narrowed, and the bitter sarcasm told its story, as the cannon balls have been held up in the streets of Rome, and styled the sugar-plums which the Pope sent to his children.

We talk of the "religious sentiment," and all around us we are told, by those who would be liberal, that "religion is sentiment, and not doctrine;" now what is sentiment but that which makes intelligent? and hence its synonyme, perception, or opinion. And finely has it been said, "The seraphic rapture is the

fire of an intellectual conception;" and the writer might have added, that every picture of the cherubim, who are said to love the most, is a picture of the mind bent on knowing more of God and his methods that it may love the more. Hence the great need of penetrating to the doctrine of the text, and making it clear in our minds, that we may have the spirit of heavenly forgiveness. Truly did Coleridge say, "It is only by celestial observations that terrestrial charts can be constructed scientifically." And when on shipboard, out at sea, we would know the strange windings which the ship makes on its way, how can we so easily do it as by standing close to the mainmast, and looking to the heavens, see how the topmost extremity of the mast is seen to swoop from star to to star, tracing in the firmament, as it were, diagrams of the ship's movements, more strange than the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness.

The strength of the text lies, in the comparison there used,—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

That this is the force of the text is evident from the remarkable fact, that immediately on ending the prayer, our Lord recurred to this petition and enforced it anew. It was, it would seem, the grand thing for man's consideration that he might be true to all the rest, by having the appropriate spirit.

Jesus closed the prayer, and as though our text was lingering most prominently in the minds of his hearers, he added, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

It was on being asked respecting the exercise of forgiveness, the extent to which it should be carried, that Jesus gave the direction to forgive "seventy times seven," so that the memorable cry burst forth, "Lord, increase our faith!" Yes, increase our *faith* that our love may be increased, as the depth of the fountain gives fulness to the stream. And how deep the fountain may be, was shown by that jet which sprung up in front of the Cross, when Jesus prayed, and apologetically too, for his murderers.

Let us dwell for a moment on that prayer, that great and divine act of forgiveness.

It was harmonious with his whole — the grand product of unnumbered deeds of love towards the wrong-doers. It was made in an act of prayer, when the soul takes the humblest and most sacred position, and pours the fervency of the whole being into the act. It was done when every moment brought some new act of wrong, and when the bodily agonies of the sufferer might well have engrossed all attention. It was attended with an apology professed as a reason for forgiveness, showing that nothing was kept back in the thoughts; but that the whole being was expressed in the act. Joseph was in triumph when he forgave; Socrates had his hand kissed by the executioner he pardoned; and David was lenient in the cave of Engedi to his king. The reverse of all this attended Jesus.

This spirit that secures forgiveness when exercised

by the sinful, keeps the righteous soul from sin. How could Jesus sin with such a love as he expressed? How much of his spirit we need to make a clean heart while we pray, "Forgive us our debts."

As we forgive *so* forgive us. We acknowledge our sinfulness in this petition; we desire to have that sinfulness removed — not merely the *punishment* due sin, but the *sin* itself — the sickness that causes pain that the pain may go, and that we may know the deliciousness of health. God's forgiveness to the soul! what is there in all the round of blessings like it! Without it, power shall be weakness; genius a consuming flame; the stores of wealth but mockery, and the earth's beauty an accusation and a terror.

What, what can be more important then, than the knowledge of God's method in transmitting forgiveness? Nothing can exceed the value of the doctrine intimated in the text — the doctrine of Free Grace, which only asks that we remove all hatred from our hearts by catching its own spirit of ceaseless love.

Here is the necessity for keeping distinct the nature of God as Love.

How absurd in contrast with this is the popular doctrine of vicarious or substituted punishment! God hemmed in, by laws imposed by himself upon himself, so that no forgiveness could be imparted till an innocent being took upon himself the punishment due to sinful man — not only the punishment due to sin already committed, but, horrible to say, also the punishment that might be due from the sins that might be committed after the crucifixion! How, tell us, ye

theologians of wrath, how is vengeance put away by being transferred to an innocent person? Rob Roy, the freebooter of Scotland, when he died, forgave, he said, his foes, but left his curse for his son, if that son should forgive them. In the parable of the Debtors, our Lord did not make the Creditor demand pay from some other person. No; when he saw they had nothing with which to pay him, "he frankly forgave them both," and the question was, "Which of them would love the most?" Our Lord commended the answer that said, He to whom the most was forgiven. Here is the law of love. The more frank the exercise of kindness the greater the love it excites. Love forced out is no love, no more than galvanized brass is gold.

And to my mind there is no more horrible idea than that involved in the common doctrine of Substituted Punishment, that presents God as demanding not only payment for all the debts of humanity contracted before the Crucifixion, but also for all that might be contracted till time shall be no more. This makes the poet's lines applicable, as the speech of the Father:

> "My falling glories
> Being made up again, and cemented
> With my Sons's blood."

From what treasury did Jesus draw from, according to this idea? Where did he get this love for humanity? Not from God, for God made the demand; and as reasonably may the law of Venice be supposed to have imparted the benevolence of Bassanio's friend,

as that God gave to Jesus the love that impelled him to die, if the common doctrine be true. That doctrine describes God as forsaking Jesus on the Cross; and as God retreats He pours out wrath while the sublimest exhibition of love to man is made; but inspiration declares, that "*by the grace* of God Jesus tasted death for every man." As the love of Christ shines amid the darkness of human cruelty, and he prays for his murderers, affirming that they murder in ignorance, what, O what must be the spirit of that God who impelled the prayer and opened the heavens to receive it! "God *so* loved the world," says the Apostle, "that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When did God *so* love the world? Of course, before he gave his Son — while the world was lying in sin, and all that Christ was or did was but the expression of the Divine Love. God loved the rebellious and thus the example is given to prompt to forgiving kindness. The only thing in God that "demands full satisfaction" is his love for the world. What an emphasis does this give to our Saviour's words, — "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any." He was nourishing the spirit that could do all he commanded even amid the agonies of the most terrible death; and we cannot have received his teachings aright until we see that as God is ready to forgive as we put away the spirit opposite to love, he never could have inspired the idea of substi-

tuted wrath — the common doctrine of the satisfaction of justice.

Substitution but changes the object of vengeance, and how horrible is the idea so easily received from the pulpit, that God changed the object by the acceptance of an innocent being.

No, no! this doctrine has no countenance from the text. No man has the boldness to claim that he forgives by a transfer of his wrath; but his forgiveness is something when it flows from a frank, genial, kindly spirit, that shows itself superior to the wrong, and that proves how well he has learned the truth, that though our enemy have power to wound us, to wrong us, yet only ourselves can make the wrong rankle in the heart, turning the sweets of life to bitterness, and roiling up all the morbid memories of a life time.

O, it is an hour of splendid triumph when we can contemplate a bitter wrong and pity instead of hating the wrong-doer. Our better nature is supreme then. We walk forth and no man's presence can shake us — no man's frown can be the cloud of our holiday — no man has our happiness in his keeping. We walk through God's crystal palace freely; and when we come home — when we go into our solitude — where the sanctity of God's presence is felt and the lip moves to prayer, there is no stammering in the soul, or on the tongue, and we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Forgiveness, the most difficult and therefore the most important achievement, is before us, and the

glory of our religion is, that it speaks so grandly of free forgiveness that it stamps an unforgiving spirit as a sin. That spirit, being sin, must be put away when we ask to be forgiven of God. "If a man says, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar." "And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God loves his brother also." How grand, then, is the faith that holds up to the constant exercise of love to win love — that says, God will never give over the exercise of his free grace, making every beautiful exhibition of human forgiveness to be a type of the endless love of God. Tasso, when told of an advantage which the turns of fortune had given him over an enemy, whereby he could deprive him of both power and wealth, replied, "There is but one thing I would take from him, and that is his ill will."

And Henry the Fourth, speaking of one of his enemies of League, said, "I will do him so much good that I will force him to love me in spite of himself." Oh holy Force of Love! Thou movest on our spirits as the spirit of God over the waters, to bring order out of chaos, that light may take the place of darkness.

SERMON XXXI.

CHRISTIAN LAW OF USE.

IS IT NOT LAWFUL FOR ME TO DO WHAT I WILL WITH MINE OWN?—
Matt. xx. 15.

There is a great difference between asking this question with reference to some special case, and presenting it as a general proposition. In a single case, a man's motive may be so plain and his purpose seem to be so good that there need be no hesitation in commending his proposed action; while in reference to the whole tenor of a man's life we may not be so sure that his will is right, or that he feels correctly the limits within which all just use of anything is placed.

The question of the text is easily answered in reference to the case with which it is associated in our Lord's parable — a parable in which he read a good lesson to the selfish religionists of his day, and to all who imagine that they can perform any labors that will entitle them to distinguishing rewards.

This parable is usually styled, The Parable of the Laborers, drawn from the Oriental custom of laborers arranging themselves at morning in the market place, and these being selected to labor by those who needed them for the day. Early in the morning a certain owner of a vineyard engaged men to labor for a stipulated price for the day; and subsequently he engaged others at the third, sixth, ninth, and the eleventh hours, and stipulated to give these "whatever was right," for their toil. At sunset, the lord of the vineyard, who had personally engaged these different classes of laborers, directed his steward to pay them all alike, beginning with the last comers. When those who were first engaged came to the steward, they expected to receive *more* than the others — not because more was *due*, but because they had wrought more hours in the vineyard. But they received just what they had engaged to work for; their due was given them; and instead of rejoicing that their fellow-laborers had received a gratuity, they murmured against the good man who hired them, and said he had made those who wrought but an hour equal unto them, who had borne the heat and burden of the day. His answer was plain. He said to the spokesman, "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst thou not agree with me for a penny. Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is this thine eye evil because I am good?"

In this parable our Lord answered those disciples who imagined they must have peculiar rewards, be-

cause they first engaged in his service. They had entered the service of a gracious Master, who not only secured to every laborer his dues, but who also held endless gratuities in his hands — who read motives, appreciated the aims of each soul, and who counted it more sad to be idle outside of the vineyard of Truth than laboring within.

The later called had come at the bidding of the Lord of the Vineyard, and *promptness* to accept discipleship now will find the Master's reward as in the earliest days of his earthly ministry.

The conduct of the Lord of the Vineyard was a touchstone to test the generosity or selfishness of the first laborers. Generosity would have prompted them to be glad at the unexpected bounty which the later laborers were permitted to carry home; but being selfish, they fixed their thoughts only on some addition to their due. They were disappointed as selfishness always will be. Society rests on a basis of generosity, and the selfish are at war with all the laws of social order and happiness. Dissatisfied with what they have earned, they want to be made equal with whoever may chance to be favored of fortune, and when they should congratulate a friend, they choose to murmur at Providence and eat the bread of bitterness which might have been sweetened with the thought of how much more happiness they are surrounded with than would exist were all men governed only by narrow considerations.

The Lord of the Vineyard did right in appealing to the rightfulness of his conduct. The murmurers were

too selfish for him to make his appeal to generous fellow-feeling, and all he could do was to justify his own conduct towards themselves. "Is it not lawful to do what I will with mine own?" I pay you all I agreed to pay; what is it to you if I choose to bestow a gratuity on others that sends them home happy as if they had been hired at early morning? If you have no fellow-feeling — if you cannot rejoice at the happiness of others, let this settle the case between you and me — I have a right to do as I will with mine own. Having been just to you, what business have you to murmur that I have been generous to others?

This is good doctrine. Having been just, it is lawful, in the highest sense, to be generous with one's own. No man is to be governed by other people's expectations. The great laws of human action do not receive their sanction from the expectations of the crowd, and that generosity which looks to the crowd for applause will find it gives an appetite that grows as it is fed, and is never satisfied. Like the ocean, whose grandeur is shown by the gale, and that murmurs when the winds die away, — so popular applause dies as the occasion passes, and whispers only discontent.

The question of lawfulness in the text is based on a comman law of right. It is always lawful for a man to give more than is expected by a laborer he has hired, when by so doing he violates the spirit of no obligation towards others. It is lawful as expressive of kind regard to the unfortunate, and it bespeaks a desire to

nobly use whatever of peculiar power may be possessed for the time being.

It may be that our Saviour had in view some lord of a vineyard whose heart had been touched by the Gospel — who, in compassion born of the love which only Christianity could inspire, had gone in the heat and decline of the day to cheer some sad laborers who were idle only because no man had hired them; and at the close of the day, his great heart thinking only of making all his toilers happy alike, he bids his steward give every man the same amount of money. He thought, it may be, not of favor to this or that class at all, but only of creating a fellow-feeling of common joy — all going forth happy from having been in his employ.

And this is the great law which gives Christian character to all use of one's own — no matter what we may now regard as one's own, or possessions. Whatever we have by or through which we have an influence over the happpiness of others, is involved in the duty before us. None of us can be so impoverished as to be without something to be used according to the Christian law of use. Little or much — all that we have is not our own in an absolute sense, and we aim at the true dignity and glory of life when we seek to consecrate to good ends the uses of our possessions, whether those possessions be material, intellectual or moral.

In the text where we read the word *lawful*, the meaning with which that word is used, is doubtless that of its ordinary significance in common talk; but

to us it must be made grandly significant, solemnly broad and far-reaching, before it can assume the dignity which Christianity clothes it as a word of power.

In Christianity there is no higher or lower law. All laws are compressed into one — Love to God expressed in love to man. Hence we read, "Love is the fulfulling of the law." And so universally is this law felt to be the one great principle of action, that no sooner does society begin to exist than the use of one's own is bound round with limitations, suggested by the contributions which the individual is bound to make for the general good, in exchange for the benefits which society confers, and in view of what alone makes society possible. And there is something quite suggestive in the fact, that the Lord of the Vineyard did not bluff off the murmurers, but appealed to their moral sense as creatures of law, under which he confessed, impliedly himself to be. "Is it not *lawful* to do what I will with mine own?" Not "I will do what I will" — "Mine is mine to use as I please;" but dealing as he was with the humblest class, he appeals to what is lawful — that in the use of his means he had done no man wrong, but had conferred a positive good.

Here then is the Christian law of use — to so use our means that, while wronging no man, we may be generous and humane. Justice is not sufficient; we want generosity also; and it must never be forgotten, that it is an equal violation of law when we are *unjust* as when we are *ungenerous*. Benevolence that does

not pay its debts is a poor thing. It helps no real interest of society. It is a showy, braggart thing, and exhibits the same halfness of character as is seen where scrupulous Justice exacts and gives the half-cent, and never dreams of bidding its steward bestow a gratuity anywhere.

What the world wants — what the just moral law demands is, wholeness of character — men governed by the proper balance of passions — men who move in no eccentric orbit, but who have well defined the true circle of duty, and who are like perfected fruit that shows the influence of the sunshine on every part.

But so imperfect has been the action of Christianity on most disciples that their character, in order to be accepted, must be treated as the story tells us a person treated oranges which he plucked from the tree and presented to his friends. He was observed to cut away one-half of the fruit and offered the other to his friend to eat. When asked the reason of this sacrifice of one-half, he replied, "We only give the *sunny side* to our friends."

So of Christian characters — they are but half ripened. It is to a part, and not to the whole, that we must direct attention if we wish to partake thereof with any satisfaction. They need to remember that while it is lawful for them to do that which developes this bright side of character — that brings out these amiabilities and virtues — this grace of manner and kindness of deed; it is *not* lawful to neglect any portion of their moral being.

There is no reason why one-half of the human orange must be cut off; put out of sight, in order that we may enjoy the sweetnesss of what is left. The very halfness suggests the thought, What a splendid fruit this would be had it all been ripened alike! What a beauty would it exhibit! What a flavor would it possess! What a compliment would its perfection be to the tree that bore it!

Ah, here is the great pressure upon us Christians — to produce characters that shall exhibit the perfection of our religion — a true and therefore beautiful union of justice and generosity — no moral halfness — no twisting and turning to make some *phase* of character apparent that shall win admiration.

And it is here where our peculiar faith helps us. Nothing is more practical than theology really and vitally received, for the old truth is truth still, "Every one will walk in the name of his God;" and the grand call of our Master, and his Apostles also, is to apply to the regulation of our own conduct our idea of God. "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." "Be ye followers of God as dear children."

Now the grand fact concerning the practical power of our faith is, Our idea of God involves none of those moral antagonisms which belong to the conceptions of the Deity on which all partial systems are based:

> "They put at odds Heaven's jarring attributes,
> And with one excellence another wound."

Admirably has this matter been called, "The Conflict of Ages." In vain have men tried to reconcile the irreconcilable. Confusion is confusion because it has no element of order. And by no art of logic, by no subtility of metaphysics, can a harmonious character be enjoined as the duty of all to cultivate by any system of theology that makes justice alien from mercy in the Divine character and government.

The stern old Calvinists took the best ground — that God was bound by no law, and had a right to do as he pleased, though his pleasure was to elect a few souls in his creation to eternal joy, and to doom the rest to endless misery.

They ignored all law — they refused to apply to God the moral distinctions which, of necessity, they applied to man; and hence they declared that the Divine glory was just as much advanced by the condition of the lost as by that of the saved.

They were right. Such a God as their theology supposed was a barbaric glory that consists simply in strength, and is as much manifested by the stroke that kills as by the power that rescues, for it is only a mere giant's prowess that is involved.

But when we rise to the conception of law — moral law, social law, we ask for the character of the will before we give our answer in reference to use of power — use of one's own. The universe is girdled with the law of love. It is the effluence of the Divine character. It flows out of the very essence of the Divine nature; and God governs his uses of omnipotence by the same moral law — the same harmony of

justice and generosity, which he presses on us, and which we must obey in order that we may get the fulness of good which attends obedience to the Christian law of use. This is the great thought for the enquiring to ponder. What is the character of the Divine Will involved in the theology offered to me? Is there a harmony of justice and generosity? Does it involve mere matters of so much pay for so much work, or has it surprises of grace — tenderness of regard for human happiness, and does it purpose to make all equal without doing wrong to any soul?

Let this be the enquiry and new views of God will beam beauty on the soul.

SERMON XXXII.

RELIGION A NECESSITY.

NECESSITY IS LAID UPON ME.—1 Cor. ix. 16.

There are three kinds of necessity which environ every man. One lies without him, the other within. The one is represented by the time, place and circumstances of his birth and infantile life; the second is in his logical faculties, compelling him to admit a demonstration and to yield the force of evidence that truth is truth; the other lies in his moral and religious nature, magnifying the soul above logic and swaying it by sentiments which are felt rather than defined and understood. Here the domain of Philosophy is bounded. Here the step of the moral anatomist is arrested, and he is told that there is a life beyond all organism which he cannot analyze, a spiritual existence he cannot fathom, a religious being he cannot dissect. This is the necessity that disturbs the sinner in his sins, that shows to the good man the face of God. It is the necessity that impels to the crying out for the Helper in the heavens when the art

of man has failed and the soul is like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. It is the necessity that makes religion a necessity — something more than a policy. It was to this necessity that Paul referred when he said, "Necessity is laid upon me; woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." There was no choice for him between preaching the gospel and woe; he must accept one or the other; he must take the good of preaching the gospel or the evil of neglecting it; and whatever may have been his philosophical notions concerning the freedom of the will, if he had any, one thing was certain, to be a Christian preacher was a necessity to answer the demands of his moral nature. He did not talk of merit, or worth, of any thing he had done, but opened the whole of his highest convictions in the simple utterance — necessity is laid upon me.

I take his words to speak of what they have suggested to me, and that is, Religion is a necessity. It is *not* something that may be regarded as an appendage; as something that may be neglected for a while without any real loss of good, but a necessity — a necessity for every period of life, for every exigence in human affairs — for the family as well as the individual, and for the State as well as for the family. Nothing that ought to be done can be done so well without it as with it. It is the grand sentiment of life's youth, prime and decay; for the exalted and the lowly, the rich and the poor, the weeping and the smiling, the living and the dying. It is not a thing to be shut up like a church six days out of seven. It

is like the golden light of day that visits the Spring-time as well as the Winter, brightens the smiles of Summer and gives Autumn the glory of banners with gorgeous dyes. Like night it has its young crescent and its full orbed harvest moon; its awful darkness and its myriad stars. Never is man wiser than when in view of the acceptance of Religion. He says, "Necessity is laid upon me." A necessity — a demand of our whole nature — called for by every thing to which we are liable in all the avenues and bye-paths of time, and by all the prophesied glories of the Eternal City.

Let us look into our proposition and receive its suggestions.

And, first, this is not the usual claim set up for religion, but it really marks the difference between the religion of principle and the religion of policy.

It is singular to notice the arguments which are commonly set up for religion as a cheap police, an excellent economist, a protector of respectability, a sort of life-insurance — something that may environ us without, rather than something that should strike in to the very core of our being and show itself in the quality of our life. Some receive it, says an acute divine, "as too great to be patronized and too true to be proved." These are the only vital Christians. To them religion is a necessity like the lungs, the heart, the brain. It is the breathing, the pulsating, the quickened seat of life. It is a thing that calls us, rather than a thing called, as the Saviour said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." The

reason why men are shaken from their religious ground, and become sceptics, is, most commonly, because when they had a religion it was rather the dream of the fancy than the bride of the soul; it was something that had been outside of them, now worrying, now coaxing them, and not a presence entering into the heart and taking its portion as the heir of the throne. We find such persons in the church; they suddenly start up and cry out, "I *now* know religion to be a *reality*," and they date a new existence from that hour. Before that, it was a word, a dream, a tradition; but now it is the life of life — a necessity — it is something to which they answer as the whole mechanism of the time-piece answers to the main-spring.

How religion is a necessity may be seen by considering the highest exhibition of religious heroism, and comparing therewith a grand intellectual character that has no alliance with religion, and seeing what a beauty, what a dignity, what a majesty would be given to that character by infusing into it the distinguishing element of the religious martyr. Is there any thing in that intellectual man that would not be heightened and improved by this union? Would not the understanding, the wit, the prudential faculties, and every attribute of his intellectual greatness receive an adornment and excellence which now they grievously want? If not, what means the universal lamentation over greatness void of the highest responsibilities — greatness that leaves God and is left of him. Religion *is* a necessity because it is essential to

the idea of a perfect man. "Ye are complete in Christ," said Paul; and only in him can any man be complete. Completeness demands religion as an essential element of the man, for where we meet man in history, we as much expect to learn something of his religion as of his method of living or government. Reforms not based on religion have been in vain, because this is the only substratum on which a man can build without fear of its being washed away. It belongs to the permanent and universal. Other bases unite man only with man; this unites him with God. This only presses home the idea of a responsibility that is as certain as that the Judge and Lawgiver is Omniscient and Omnipresent. Without this, there are times when evils gather so fast and thick that even a Paul, with giant determination, might faint and yield the position of danger; but with this, necessity is laid upon him — he must speak, he must act, he must sunder the dearest ties, if the cause of Christ makes such a demand, counting "all things but loss for the" excellency that is in Christ Jesus. It links him with all the epochs of truth in the past, with all that is noble in the present, with the immeasurable ages that stretch out before his vision, having somewhere amid their distances his San Salvador.

Religion, as passing all lower comparisons and becoming a necessity, is seen where the affections are touched by the mere solemn exigencies of life. A while ago, I knew a beautiful and as gentle and meek a woman, who wrapped a light shawl about her and went out into her garden and moved as at home with

the flowers. A chill passed through her frame, she entered the house, rested her head upon the couch and was dead. From the mart, where successful business absorbed him, came the husband through the golden light of that beautiful day, as happy as the whirl of business thoughts would permit him to be; he knew how the calm of another soul would pass into his own as soon as he should cross his threshhold. He crossed it with a light step and saw a cold image of celestial beauty, where was wont to be an eye of light and a lip of music. No loveliness was in the sunshine or the flowers. The gorgeous decorations of his house were but garlands in a tomb. What to him were schemes of ambition, what the visions of wealth, what the parades of costly show! They were but the hieroglyphics of the pyramids that speak no word for our mortal needs. Religion was then to him not a thing of creeds and confessions, ritual and ceremony, but a vital necessity. Yes, necessity was laid upon him to accept it or die to all happiness. Nothing else could lift him up. Nothing else could give him a vision of the future. Without it, all was blank, desolate; but with it,

> "On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses were blending,
> And beauty immortal awoke from the tomb."

Without it, he might have gone into the world and for a while forgot his sorrow, but the shock would have been renewed when he little dreamed of the lightning-cloud being near, and again for his arms there would be nothing but the cold image — the chilling clay.

O there is something awful in this necessity to meet death — to see it dash out the dearest light of existence. "In that war there is no discharge." Necessity is laid upon us. We may struggle and wrestle, but it is with fate, with destiny, with the inevitable. Our wisdom, our might, our riches may be invoked in vain. I stood with a friend and gazed one day on a massive structure which his enterprize and wealth had reared. There it stood one of the ornaments of the city — a noble front, its depth stretching a vast perspective. I spoke of its stability and beauty. "It seems to mock me," said he; "I can keep my buildings, but not my children." It ought not to have mocked him; it would not had religion been accepted in its connections with business — had he united the qualities which the Apostle demanded, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." His children and his buildings should have had their places and only their own places in his heart. He should have known what necessities were laid upon the ownership of a child, as well as those connected with a building, and obeyed the suggestions of prudential foresight.

Yes, in all my intercourse with human affections, I have seen no greater necessity than for religion — a necessity to make love pure and steady at its first springs, to hallow the bridal, to sanctify the cradle, to give sacredness to all the obligations imposed by the union of lives and happiness, and to bend the rainbow above the grave. It is not sickness, it is not misfortune, it is not temptation, it is not bereavement

that alone make the demand for religion; but the demand is equally imperative when the skies are cloudless and all things seem to go on in the order of celestial harmony. The temper, the disposition, the feelings and passions demand it for their proper regulation. This alone can cure the unrest that makes the most extensive resources unavailable for happiness; and for want of this, thousands are like the thirsty one, to whom the glory of the summer skies and woods and orchards and streams, balmy air and sweetest music, are nothing, because the well at his side is deep and he has nothing wherewith to draw. Happy for the soul is that hour when she starts up in the energy of a regenerated will and cries, "Necessity is laid upon me — O religion! I am thine." Cries thus, not with a stoic's fierceness, but with that divine sentiment that overwhelms the heart as it yields itself to its own image in another.

The young need it as well as the old. O how much they need it when they discover the stern realities of life hidden behind the gilded mist of their fancies, when they find themselves like the swimmer in a strong current where he imagined the river was still to its depths, — when the future looms up, not as a flowery ascent, but as "a battle and a march," demanding the conquering of appetite and desire, that the supremacy of the soul may be set up and spiritual interest regarded as the chief of all interests, the real life. I have seen an unrest, a battling with destiny, an irritation at the pressure of inevitable circumstances, a morbid looking into the mystery of the

future, an utter dissatisfaction with life and its inevitable conditions, which nothing but religion could cure. Yes, and I mean by religion the religion to which this desk is consecrated — the religion that proclaims God's interest in his children, his guardianship of the race, as unintermitted, through time and the ages beyond, as the life of the soul is continuous.

There is a religion for which there is no demand in our nature. It is not — it can never be to any mortal soul a necessity. It is violence to human nature. It is a mockery of the affections. It is thorns to the bleeding sympathies. To the young it gives the vision of a great burning eye; to manhood the thought merely of a taskmaster; to the aged a vision of judgment and the quakings of fear. It is not that glad and joyous thing which the early Christians knew, that made them speak so positively of the equal love of God and of the ages through which the Divine kindness would be shown to the world. It has made men wish they were brutes that they might have no idea of immortality. It has built inquisitions and tortures as the foreshadowing of the judgment and the torments of the great future; and men have shaken it off even to the acceptance of cold scepticism and bold atheism. How many souls there are in this city who tell the story of their religious deadness in a few words, and those words are, "Had I not received religion in the form in which it was presented to me in my youth, I should not be where I am now." It was a religion for which life had no necessity. It was gravel in their teeth — it was violence to all they

learned of God in nature — it sickened them of the name of religion, though that name belongs to the daughter of heaven.

Even *their* confession proves the truth of our position that religion *is* a necessity. They tell us of the past and say, "I should not be where I am now were it not for this." And is there not something sad in this tone? It is the voice that mourns a wrong guidance. It is a cry that comes up out of a depth into which the victim has fallen, when he would fain be upon the heights where the morning is beautiful and the valley is seen to be full of inspiring sights and sounds. Heed, heed, O fellow man, brother of eternity, heed the necessities of thy condition — accept the aid proffered thee. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." The Lord — the great Father of spirits, out of whose enfolding love thou canst not stir, and whose arm is mighty to shield thee. Look up! the God who built your radiant heavens, whose glory star speaks to star, has no war spirit towards thee. A beautiful necessity is that which he hath placed upon thee — it is that thou shalt find thy happiness in responding to His love — in choosing duty for love's own sake, that thy whole being may tend, in all its activity, heavenward, like the river "that glideth of its own sweet will," on its shining way.

SERMON XXXIII.

RELIGION IS LIFE.

I AM COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE, AND THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY.—John x. 10.

Life, life! is the great burden of the Scriptures. They labor to give the highest significance to life, making it a beneficent gift, a glorious heritage. At their very opening in that mystic phrase, "In the beginning!" they bear us far beyond the first "syllable of recorded time," and thought floats on amid that infinite of life that expressed itself in the elements and forms of material things, in the creation of unnumbered races of animals, in the moulding of the first human form, and then through that living soul that distinguished and glorified Adam. And down through the ages of human history, the burden of all prayer and song has been *life*, the motive force of all progress, working out the aspirations of great and noble souls. Thought, truth, faith, hope, love, sanctity, what are they but forms of life, the drawing forth from hidden fountains our most spiritual nature, and

intimating to us what are the possibilities of effort. You can tell a man's life by these. They express him. Moses thus summed up the intent and influence of the religion of which he was the medium as life; "it is of our life," said he; and wherever you open the records of inspiration you will catch sights of this quickening word. The gorgeous and touching poetry with which the prophets described the coming of Jesus abounded with images of life — re-creating life that makes new heavens and a new earth, that transforms the desert into a fruitful field, the wilderness to a garden, opens fountains in dry places, and wakes sounds of gladness where cheerfulness had long been dead. And when the promised one came, what a perpetual reiteration was made of life, life! How the meaning of that word was magnified! What a glory, even in this life, was made possible to man! What a moral grandeur was given to a human existence in him in whom, in the highest sense "was life, and the life was the light of man." All life is light. It shows us something. It makes a revelation of duty or danger. It encourages or warns. But the life that was in, and that flowed from, Christ, was all good. It was as the light that burst forth at creation's dawn, when the air was music and every motion was order. He offered life. It was the ever-recurring proffer in his preaching, and no where more beautifully than in the text, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

O there is something glorious here. The thought has come to fire the soul with the idea of ever-con-

tinuous life — no interruption, no breakage, no pouring back of the accumulated waters of strength and glory. Death is but a rock which the river leaps at a bound, and the momentary ruffling of the waters only make them foam and sparkle the more beautiful. What life may be, Jesus taught. The possibilities of our nature are shown in him. What is a throne, or the glitter of wealth, or the luxury of ease, or the glory of fame, compared with being like him! They are but as the shootings of a crystal in contrast with the steady light of the north star. From him comes the light of life; no man cometh unto the Father but by him, for only in him is seen the perfection of that spirit which makes the soul at one with God. Our "life is hid with Christ in God;" and though we struggle ever so valiantly for self-reliance, for a sense of wholeness in our individuality, there will come hours when the God within shall rise from his slumbers and shake the fabric of our hopes to its foundations, and convince us of the unsubstantial nature of our trust. Better seek for the life hidden for us in Christ than for gold; for we have a nature that mocks at all the appliances of wealth and shows when man seeks to thus satisfy it. As well try to satisfy the earth with artificial light and heat without the sun.

Here then is the basis of our proposition that religion is life. It is not merely restraint, prospect of reward, a matter of feeling and emotion, a mystic something which is called experience; but it is life — highest, truest, most satisfactory life, as surely as the beating heart and heaving lungs are essential to our

animal existence. Our duty is to heed this. Our chief danger is that we so easily forget it, or fail to receive it. Yes, fail to receive it! Thousands do, and yet claim to be Christians. To them religion is not life, — that glad, buoyant and active thing which sparkles in the eye, smiles on the lip, and manifests itself in the elastic and happy movements of the powers of activity. It is a curb, a bit, a chain, a yoke, — a something that fetters free action, that makes the soul tremble at the thought of awful exposure, and that never recals the Master's words, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," or, in other words, that they might be quickened into an ever progressive appreciation and enjoyment of what is possible to a human being.

Jesus knew what was in man. He saw a spark of moral life, and sought to kindle the whole being thereby into a glow, that man might have a life that should never end — a life that might increase in intensity, in purity, in happiness, in glory. Only as we know this can we enter into acquaintance with this experience, and solve those problems that are ever dark to the sensual, speaking of gaining a life by losing one.

Let us ask then, what is religion? and how is religion a life? Then we will show that the life of Jesus gives quickening force to Christianity; that thousands drink in that life and live by it, who have little power of understanding historical and critical questions; and close by showing that all the great occasions of life demand religion as an essential want, and that

without it reform is a powerless philosophy. This will give, I hope, a deeper, more solemn, and happy significance in our minds to the words of Jesus, "I am come that *ye* might have life, and that *ye* might have it more abundantly."

I need not tarry long at a definition of *religion;* but amid the various meanings attached to the word, I need to make one distinct, or I shall vainly speak of religion as life. The prevailing sentiment is, that religion is a mystery — a kind of celestial visitant — a mysterious birth — a something that comes like the breath of Christ to the stormy waves of Galilee, the soul being as unconscious of the source as the waters of the sea were of the presence of Jesus. Religion is made a matter of feeling, of emotion, of sensibility. Men may be as devout, as honest, as charitable, as reverent as others, and yet they are considered as having no religion unless they have known this undefinable and mystic operation. The best life, showing the fruits of godliness in the deep places of the soul, is vain as a claim for the possession of religion, because no profession is made of having known a certain kind of emotion, — a great depression followed by a perfect uplifting of feeling. Men who, judged by the religion which Christ lived, would never be imagined to know anything of religion, will freely denounce the worst imaginable judgments against men of upright life and reverent habits of thought and feeling, because a something called "experience" has not been known by the latter. This is all wrong. We know what we mean when we speak of the *duties* of religion,

the *virtues* of religion, the *graces* of religion, and it is these duties, virtues and graces which define religion to us, and show us the arrant folly of making religion consist in something mysterious, incommunicable, and foreign from the abilities of effort seeking the grace of God. Religion is a regard for God in all our desires and doings. It is a reverent consulting of his will in all that we call self-culture. It is what Jesus was, as he spake and did when on earth. It is greatness, meekness, humility, love. It is forbearance, forgiveness, charity, peace. In one word, it is goodness, goodness which has God for its father, Christ for its companion, and duty for its delight and joy. It is not a mystery, but the simplicity of right doing, honest living; it is righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy. It is the life of the soul.

When we say that religion is life, we *mean* that as the body shows evidence that food, exercise, repose and cheerful spirits are necessary to its true life, so does the soul show evidence that religion was made for it, — to feed, to give exercise, to impart repose, and to inspire cheerfulness. Never did man truly live without religion as an intellectual and moral being, any more than man has lived as a physical being without food. Agricultural chemistry is a science that is now showing what this and that plant or tree or vine needs to promote its growth, beauty and fruitfulness. By this we see what the plant, or tree, or vine, was made for — what are the conditions of its life, its best life, its most productive life; and what is religion but a kind of moral chemistry, showing

what the soul needs to promote its best development, to show what injures its powers, what checks free and happiest action, what makes it belie its promises and give amid its leaves no figs to the hand of the Saviour. Instinct, thought, feeling, sympathy, are not more truly our life, than is religion which directs all our powers to the highest and best action, — that runs the finger of the Master over the keys, winds the chords, and at last makes every sound to be the response of melody. To know convincingly what is our life, we have only to ask one question, How can we live without it? Outwardly we can live with far less appliances than we dream of. Diogenes proved that when he gave up his cup as he saw the boy drinking water from the brook in his hand; but our immortal nature craves many things. It is an emanation from the All-creating Mind. It is a centre that is to repel confusion and attract order. It is free as nothing in the world of matter is free, but yet necessity is laid upon it to be religious — to seek God, to serve him, — to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. None can be so blind as not to see that thus religion becomes life. That is a mean method of living that has it not; and history is full of examples to show that without it, the grandeur of State and the glory of splendid achievements are but a painted mask behind which the man has trembled and sunk into nothingness. O there is no lesson so awful as comes from exposing greatness that never knew the greatness of true life, — the perception of alliance with God and the steady, whole-hearted pursuit of great principles and great and small duties.

To see that religion is life, look into Christianity. What is it that makes that religion the mighty regulator? It is the life that stands at the centre, and from whence comes the light that illuminates truth and duty. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. We see in him what his speech and deeds mean. If we would feel the full force of this fact, we have only to look into the history of the church and see how men have labored to express christianity in words. How hollow and meaningless are the best symbols in the presence of the heavenly life of Christ! I never felt this more than when I first read a book entitled *The Words of Christ*, — his sayings separated from the incidents which incited their utterance. The words of Christ thus gathered seem like ruins — fragments of beauty. They need the life that gave them power, and that justified Christ's own declaration concerning them when he said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." A creed, what is it? A fleshless skeleton. It reminds us of anatomy — of death. It

> "Misshapes the beauteous forms of things,
> And murders to dissect."

Christianity is not a book, but a life. Christ wrote nothing. The book came because of the life he left in the hearts of his disciples. And the glory of Christianity is, that not on tables of stone was the Christian law written, but by the life of Jesus on the fleshy tablets of the heart of man. And we can never be too thankful that no attempt was made to draw his por-

trait in words or colors; for to know him, we must study what he did; and thus studying, his likeness grows up in the soul as we drink in the beauty of a landscape and all unconsciously an image of its loveliness is made to go with us forever.

And here is given another evidence that religion is life, inasmuch as thousands who have no critical ability, no faculty to enter into historical evidence and metaphysical doctrines, have received a new life from communing with the Saviour. They have felt there was something divine in one who could thus live; and though they had no theory about the miracles, no system of theology, no method of making difficult texts simple, no well defined creed, yet they had a solemn, a profound, an exalting conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the sent of God and the Saviour of the world. They have had a delightful consciousness of his presence and love; and the mountain air is not more bracing to the languid invalid, nor the breath of the fountain more grateful to the heated traveller, than to them is communion with the life of the gospel which comes from Christ. Talk to them of evidences of Christianity, and their reply will only remind you of the simple lines which tell the story of millions of hearts: —

"A man of subtle reasoning asked
A peasant if he knew
What was the *internal* evidence
That proved his Bible true?
The terms of disputative art
Had never reached his ear;
He laid his hand upon his heart,
And only answered '*here*.'"

But a grand evidence that religion is life comes from considering the fact that all great occasions demand it. By great occasions I mean the most prominent events in life — the memorable incidents that teach us how much we can and how much we ought to feel; the first mysteries and struggles of youth; the dawning of the responsibilities, hopes and aspirations of manhood; marriage, the birth, the death. It is well to take this view of religion as life, because what gives the best wisdom and support and happiness on great occasions, is needed in the humblest circumstances of every day life. Great occasions but magnify the wants of common existence, as the battlefield is but a monstrous picture of the miniature contest in our own breasts, and the glad festival is but the carnival mimiced by the pantomime of our own thoughts and feelings.

Marriage, what is it where religion is not? I have known it when but a form, an outward bond, no sacrament of the soul. All that tender and delicate interest which religious sensibilities impart, all that outpouring of one's own being into that of another, all that holy and touching reciprocity of feeling and sympathy that makes the others joy and sorrow our own, all that intensity of joy which flows from mutual prayer and reliance on God, was not known at all. In a little while the charm of novelty was over; love as a passion had passed its crisis; and then the common cares and perplexities attendant on every mortal's pilgrimage produced fretfulness and repining; and at length the bonds that ought to lay as

gently and firmly as a mother's love on the heart of a true child, became as the bonds of oppression, whose iron eats into the soul. And what is at last given in the picture of life there? Something that tells us that not wealth nor splendor, nor genius nor talent, can insure happiness, for lo! all this is mocked by the serene and steady happiness of religious love, of sanctified marriage in the humblest cottage, where dwell the lowliest gifted minds. And when a young immortal is ushered into being, what idolatry or indifference is seen around the cradle where religion abides not with the parent! No beaming of celestial life is seen there in that cradle, for the eye looks only as the mind dictates. But in another home the devotion of Mary the mother of Jesus is equalled, and the babe is the "feeble beginning of a mighty end." Beautiful is the ease with which severe tasks are there performed; and though the little child does indeed lead the parent, yet every step is a nearer approach to heaven. And when the gladness of its life is passed, its merry tones are hushed, and one hope after another perishes, as blossoms shaken from a tree, and the beautiful lies cold and motionless, where is life but in that heart which can say, "It is well!" Faith triumphs over bewildered and darkened sight, and the soul, instinctively suggesting all beautiful images, sings the sweet dirge with exultant hope: —

"Now like a dew-drop shrined
Within a crystal stone,
Thou'rt safe in heaven, my dove,
Safe with the source of love,
The everlasting one.

There is no event of life which may not derive a higher and more satisfying interest from the associations of religion as I have defined it; and it was because of this that our Saviour said, "Seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

We may speak of life's occasions by speaking of the individual man and his various powers, and ask, what faculty was ever improved by irreligion? What sense, what appetite, what desire, what propensity, was ever made a greater inlet to happiness by sin? What gift of mind or grace of person was ever glorified by neglect of God? O nothing has bewildered more than the vain talk of the pleasures of sin! They are all ignoble, transcient, destructive; and man becomes great only as he refuses to accept them even though the desert is before him. It is sad to think how long men suffer before they learn this truth, for there is no martyrdom like that of pleasure. Lord Chesterfield confessed it where he said, "I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which in truth, is very low; whereas those who have not experienced them, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled by their glare. But I have been behind the scenes; I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes, which move and exhibit the gaudy machinery. I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant multitude. When I reflect upon what I

have seen, and what I have heard and done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means wish to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream." And so with Byron, who owned that after the most careful recollection of his experience, he could recal only eleven days of happiness which he could wish to live over again. These were men of great gifts; but how in contrast do they stand in the presence of those who tell us of long years of happiness — of lives into whose depths run streams of ever increasing joy — whose souls are rich with remembered bliss, and who are grateful for the thought that memory is immortal! Ah, that is a foolish choice that seeks to defeat God, — that makes life a frivolous thing, and its best remembrance but as the false show of the theatre; while to the religious man, life is rather as the ascension of science amid the firmament, beauty and glory ever enlarging their boundary, and the dim perspective to be radiant soon with the newly discovered stars. The one is but gilded vapor; the other is communion with the risen Christ.

Not more truly is there something folded up in the bud that demands light and heat and moisture for its perfect unfolding and its fragrant breathing, than there is folded up with every power and faculty of the soul a demand for religion as the condition of its best and happiest exercise. That a man, or woman, might

know this, were more to me than the highest gifts within the power of earth or empires to bestow. It would open the soul to the grandeur of its nature, to the illimitable range of the thought, to the sublime prospects of progressive effort, the loftier reaches of aspiration and prayer; and the heart would confess that after all wishing and hoping, there was no greater need than of religion as life. The saddest confessions have been of those minds that tried to know every thing but Christianity, and their lamentation has come to us like the wail of some lost spirit among the stars.

That religion *is life*, let the history of man's baffled or successful efforts for reform attest. Men have found abuses leagued with the church and upheld by those who claimed all the religion, and blinded by this union and deceived by this pretension, the church has been denounced and religion deemed a tyrant. But only as a religious spirit has sprung up and expressed itself, has society been made to listen to the reformer. If any imagine there can be any alliance between infidelity and religion, let them read history and see what the past has been. Reform is a great ordinance of God, but only by a godly spirit can it be administered. It is for want of that spirit that godly words are so often vain. No momentum is given them from the heart, and therefore they fall as bubbles, and not as seed that have the life of mighty harvests within them. The words of Christ must come from a Christ-like soul, to do the work they accomplished when he uttered them. "Never man spake like this man," be-

cause never man lived as he lived, nor felt as he felt. His sympathies were pure and circled the world. Without that life which he poured into his speech, and that made his words regenerating forces, poor demoniac society will cry out to the pretended reformer, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" Never, never, O man, that weepest over the evils around thee, — never forget the Redeemer's words to the disciples who mourned that they could not relieve a certain demoniac. "This kind," said Jesus, "only goeth out by prayer and fasting;" intimating to them the religious preparation needed for the great work of religion; — like the poet who drinks in the inspiration of the stars, the roll of the ocean, the solemn grandeur of the forest, the awful stillness of the mountain, and then pours out the burden of his own soul in rapt numbers of immortal verse. "I would have," said the great German poet, "the head of Jupiter Olympus always before me." To him there was inspiration in such an embodiment of intellectual greatness; but the thought of the Christian's God, — the remembrance of his glorious image, is better than the sight of the most masterly invoking from the marble of Jupiter Olympus.

Yes, yes, religion is life, whether you consider merely the needed restraint of appetite or the perfecting of society. It alone can quicken to the best working the powers of apprehension and appreciation, and let us into that knowledge of things which opens the vast resources of happiness. Poetry is life. Music is life. They have an experience of their own. Any

thing is life that gives a better and higher activity to our powers; but it is only religion, the religion of Jesus, that comes home to our whole being and searches for every sensibility and feeling, every attribute of our mental nature, and touches it with a quickening power, giving a new sense of perception, so that there is indeed a newness given to all things. We lie in deadness, we are weary and restless, because we are irreligious. All that we have to contend with, truly religious men have conquered. They have found life where we would have died. And nothing is more needful for us than to pause and ask, what is our life? In what do we put our trust for happiness? From what sources do we expect our chief satisfaction? We are encompassed with dangers; we are environed with duties. The latter can alone shut us in from the others; for he who follows duty, follows no meteor light, no flashing beacon, no flame of drift-wood fired on the shore, no burning of chaff on the hill-side; but the steady illumination of heavenly brightness in the soul.

What we need is this; — religion made unto us life; and in the highest and most blessed sense this is the case with every soul into whom Jesus is made, — not a mystic feeling, a transient glow of emotion, a rapture and a dream, — but "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." This is something real. It releases from sin; it directs in right doing; it separates the whole being to God; it gives the special salvation of the sincere believer. For this it is better to strive than for honor, or station, or

wealth, for it is our life. That we might have it, and more abundantly with the increase of years, Christ came, and lived, and died, and rose again. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," said the great apostle. O that that life might flow into us, like the renewing influences that are now abroad and that soon will wake music in the forest and beauty by the river side, and spread over hill and valley the promises of spring.

SERMON XXXIV.

IMITATING CHRIST.

CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS.—1 Peter ii. 21.

The sufferings of Christ are usually dwelt upon by the pulpit to move our sympathies and to prompt us to reciprocal love. Such a use of them is right, but there is something for our attention beyond this. The text shows us what that is, for therein Peter speaks of the example of Christ and the duty of following in his steps. Not that we can suffer as Christ suffered, for we do not and cannot hold the relations he held; — times and circumstances are different; — duty is a different thing, making demands such as would not have been made in his day on earth. But his example is all-sufficient because of the spirit expressed — the spirit of self-denial and love, the spirit of consecration to the will of God.

But before pursuing the topic of The Imitation of Christ, it may be well to pause a few moments to consider an important fact intimated in this call to imitate our Master.

Before we can be encouraged to take up hopefully and cheerfully a line of action, we must be convinced that we have the ability to do the work employed. We are kept back from greatness mostly by want of confidence in our powers of achievement, and the question therefore is always important, Have we an aptitude for the work to which we are called? Can we succeed if we attempt? He has a happy influence over us who breathes into us the spirit of hope, — who enlarges our confidence, animates our endeavors, and presents the ideal excellence as something that wins us to successful effort. Therefore the intimation in the text is worth much — the intimation that we have ability to imitate Jesus — to follow in his footsteps.

The call to such effort implies the ability to make the effort. We have all kindred natures with Christ. We have the same moral elements, and his exaltation to the pre-eminence in all things does not prevent a like action of moral energy in us as that by which he achieved the glory of perfected holiness. We can imitate Him as he imitated the Father, and by imitating him we also imitate the Father, because of the unity of the spirit that rules in all goodness of life and conduct. To many the whole ot duty seems to be to adore rather than to *imitate* Christ. They have no confidence in their powers farther than that, and religion is to them rather extacy and emotion, raptures of feeling and ascription of praise to Christ, than the putting forth of moral energy to make his virtues theirs. But the call in the text is decisive.

The sufferings of Jesus were not substituted punishments, but the endurance of a soul that lived a life to be copied, that we might follow in his steps. It is a glorious testimony to the greatness of our capacities that is here given. We do not call all men to follow in the steps of the poet or painter, the master of music or sculpture, and why do we not? Because we do not recognize in them the ability to do so — the aptitude for such pursuits. The power of one man must be the symmetrical tree he has reared; the music of another must be frozen in the architecture of the house he has builded; the painting of another must be in the scene where the steamship and the rail car present the picture of modern civilization and progress; and the sculpture of yet another must be found in the characters he has moulded, and that stand forth in the proportions of virtuous intelligence, with the front and bearing that rival ancient art. Why is it then that all *are* called to the imitation of Christ, if it be not true that by such a call the ultimation is given of ability or aptitude to imitate him? There is no mockery in this call; and if there be not, then we are spirits like Christ in the endowments of our nature. He is allied to us and we to him. There is but one family in earth and heaven, and folded up in all of us are powers by which we may astonish ourselves and advance towards the excellence of Christ in life and character.

But the text suggests something more for our comfort, and that something more is given in the life of Him who wrote our text. It was Peter who speaks

thus of Jesus, and when we picture Peter as Christ called him, and as we mark his career, do we not feel that he presents like passions, frailties, and aspirations with ourselves? We do; but shall we deem a new nature possessed when we see him another character, and hear his thrilling words that sound like the call of the bugle to the charge? O, no! There is the same nature differently ruled. And so where we see the changes wrought by the faith of the Gospel, we can claim for our encouragement the likeness to the nature that exhibits heroic virtue, as we were made to own the likeness of our nature when we beheld the sins and weaknesses of the former state of that converted man. Too little is thought of this, and the consequence is, we are more easily discouraged than encouraged; we think more of the weaknesses and failures of our race than of the strength and successes of the great and good. We admire and praise exalted virtues, rather than learn to imitate it; and when we are wakened to some moral effort, our aim is rather to be as good as the average character about us, than to rise to some likeness to the grandest specimens of virtue in our age, or the greatnesss of Him who suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps.

I took up, the other day, a book of fiction, that is equally the delight of the child and the man, and opened it where a picture represented the surprise of Robinson Crusoe at discovering the print of a man's foot on the sea shore! A new existence through a new hope opened to the desolate one at that sight; and

so would it be with us, morally, were we to discover for the first time the footsteps of Jesus. Familiarity has dulled our sense of appreciation, and the example of Jesus does not have the influence over our lives that it should have.

But allowing the abiltiy to imitate Christ, and seeing this abiltiy in the examples of goodness in eminent Christians who have risen from low estates, what is it to imitate Jesus — to follow in his steps. We are called and annointed to no special work in the line of Divine Providence — we feel no spirit of greatness and power brooding over us — no miracles attended our birth — no stars dropped a peculiar light around our cradle, and we have no alliance to our race as leader and commander. How is Christ an example to us? I answer, He is an example as God is, by the Spirit of His life. Jesus could not be God. The sceptre of the universe must rest only in the hand of Jehovah. He will not give his glory to another. His work is not man's, and yet with a majestic beauty of thought Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "My Father!" there comes the idea of kindred natures again, with all that glory of possibilities that comes gathering and sweeping over the soul whenever we read, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." "Be ye followers of God as dear children." It is the spirit of Christ's life that we want. Our wills must be swayed as was his, by the moral affections. We must live for great ends. We must make life have a grand meaning. We must put faith in our capacities. We must pray and wrestle, meditate and study,

live in the light of great examples of heroism, and cultivate the energy of the martyr and the peace of the soul that waits when patient waiting is the severest labor. We may be thus one with Christ, as Christ was one with God. To this we are called. We speak of Christ in our sphere of duty as he spake of God in his; for in that limit in which he is our example and imitable, he lived what he taught. What he spake of the love of God, of his interest in the sinful, of the greatness of duty, and of the necessity of rising above the world in the light of immortality, he acted. He loved mankind; he mingled with sinners; he took part in all the liabilities of the affections; he wept with the bereaved, and he walked the earth with his soul in heaven. His life shames the recluse as it shames the worldling; it rebukes a narrow love as it repudiates selfishness; and whenever the heart grows cold towards humanity, when sacrifice seems unpropitious, and the spirit is ready to yield all hope for man, we have only to turn to the inspired story of our Saviour's life and find refreshment.

The possibility and the true method of imitating the example of Christ is in nothing seen better than in this: that the disheartened reformer turning to the pages of the Evangelists, finds his courage renewed, and whatever may be his work of philanthropy, he turns to it with a new zeal and endurance. O, could we group to our imagination around the New Testament story of Jesus the representatives of the various benevolent enterprises of our age, we should see how

each draws from the same life the energy needed. Follow them to their spheres of labor, and you would have an illustration of Paul's words — "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit" — the spirit of alliance to God, of devotion to man, of consecration to the ministry of love in Christ.

Here, then, is our duty — to make ours, in our spheres of daily life, "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus;" and to do this we may ask, How would Christ do, were he in my circumstances, had he my wealth, or knew he my poverty; were he surrounded with the petty annoyances that disturb my life, or were my leisure and retirement his? How shall I act that the same mind that was in him may be in me? Wherever this plea is uttered with hungering and thirsting for the return, the return will come. The commonest duties of life will have a beauty imparted to them by the fact that they can minister to the soul's possession of the spirit of Christ. A cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple — given from a Christian sympathy with want, or sickness, or affliction, shall cool not only the receiver, but shall be blessed to the giver, soothing the fever of the world that lies too much upon the soul.

To imitate Christ is not to do only great things. Blessed are they that can do great things for Jesus; whose wealth or talents, whose influence or power, gives them the means of waking the world to wonder as some new and mighty enterprise is begun, or the lofty walls of some noble and philanthropic institution arise; but the eye of the great exemplar marks

lowly and obscure efforts for his cause, and he rises to applaud the gift of the widow's two mites because the most of sacrifice or self-denial was expressed in that deed. Blessed be that greatness that condescends to be served by so small a gift; that heeds the cry of the wayside beggar, and expresses his sympathy for the heavy laden and weary everywhere. Glorious that greatness, that, acting through a nature common to us all, has left plain footsteps to mark the way to glory. Let us tread in that way; let us live to the great ends to which the possibilities of our nature and kindred with Christ calls us, and

> "Departing, leave behind us
> Footsteps on the sands of time—
> Footsteps that perhaps another,
> Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
> A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
> Seeing, may take heart again."

SERMON XXXIV.

REUNION.

A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME; AND AGAIN A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME, BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER.
John xvi. 16.

I purpose to employ my text as the speech which the dying Christian may employ for the comfort of the surviving friends, as it was spoken by our Saviour to his disciples: "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." To the ear of faith, the dying do thus speak to us, as they leave us for the realms of light and glory; and it is awful to think how literal may be this language—"*A little while, and ye shall not see me!*" Alas! for us so weak of faith, and so little trained to mount the heights of mystery and see into the Canaan of hope and trust. Alas! for us that so brief may be the little while that may intervene between our seeing and not seeing the beloved! At the evening repast they may sit with us. The light may cast illumination on their forms, and their forms shadows on the walls, and their voices blend in the pleasant converse of the hour, and

the "good night" sound as ever on the ear at parting; and what does the morrow prove? The sunshine has no such pleasant task for us as the evening light, and the air is not moved to make vocal the love that was the music of the morning — the lark's carol in our home. "As a dream when one awaketh" seems the whole. What a little while, and what a tremendous change! What a difference between the seeing and seeing not! And almost as brief seem the weeks or months during which a dear child or friend has wasted away. We may have watched them day by day, but the intensity of our anxiety, the rising and falling of hope, the alternations of the triumphs of nature and then of the disease, and a thousand undefinable things, so absorb our attention that we hardly mind the changes of the seasons, the passing of winter and the budding and blooming of spring, and are only awakened by the death that seems to be out of time — something that ought not to be — a continued triumph of winter, as it were, amid the greenness and melodies of spring.

But life's mysteries are the awakeners of faith. They lead us to be like the child looking through the gloom of the evening after the stars, till at length, disciplined and chastened in spirit, we submit to the Almighty and the All-merciful, and, gazing at the stars, our thoughts move our lips at will, and we say to the departed,

> "Oh, if amid these orbs that roll,
> Thou hast at times a thought of me,
> For every one that stirs thy soul,
> A thousand stir mine own for thee."

How sweet is it in those hours to think that though so brief was the parting time, yet brief also is the time that intervenes ere we shall meet again. "A little while, and ye shall see me." Briefer and more brief becomes the delay as our hearts give hospitality to thoughts of heaven, and we live in daily communion with the celestials. Then the Saviour's words, as the words of the departed, will come to us with greater moral significance. Let us yield ourselves to the suggestions of these words.

To *go* unto the Father is the lot of all souls born into this lower sphere of human existence — this chrysalis state of the spirit. Not that we are here *away* from God, for in him we live, and move, and have our being, and he is not far from every one of us. But nearness of locality is not always nearness of soul, hence we are said to leave God, and he to leave us. Souls may more truly live near each other, when oceans separate them, than when they were under the same roof, or met every day. It is because of this that absence endears. The heart learns to love from companionship of soul, and where this is not there is no true love. A soul is most truly going towards another as it enters into acquaintance with that other's interior being — with the realities of feeling and affection — the purposes and aims of that other. So with the soul and its going to the Father. It is to go to more intimate acquaintance and communion with God; to new unfoldings of the divine purposes; to the holy of holies, where the justification of the world is seen to be complete in the econo-

my of redemption. Jesus was always with God, and God was always with him. "I am not alone," said he, "for the Father is with me." And though sad to our sight seemed his low estate when he had not where to lay his head, yet none walked the streets of Jerusalem, or went up to the temple, with such perfect and glorious companionship as did Jesus. If the eyes of the people could be anointed, as were those of the prophet's servant on the mountain, they would have seen a sight before which the processions of priests, the retinue of state pride, would have been but as the spangles on a robe in contrast with the stars of heaven. Jesus was always with the Father. But what could he mean, then? is the enquiry as we read of his saying he was *going* to the Father. I answer, he alluded to new relations and offices that he was to hold, for he became a mediator only when he had died and was raised to heaven. He was able to open new views of the future; to inspire souls to teach plainly what he had taught in parables, for his death and resurrection were to furnish new keys to open the mysteries of the divine will, and show to the humblest Christian what kings and prophets died without beholding — things which the angels desired to look into, and which gave even to them new manifestations of God.

And what a beautiful thought is this, that when Jesus spake of going into eternity he called it going to the Father! So when referring to his ascension, he said, to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; my God and your God." This idea opens at

once to our view the great and consoling fact, that the fatherly providence of God is over all worlds, all spheres of being. Like the Christian dying away from his native land, the soul can say, "All countries are my Father's lands, and in all countries I am still his child;" and so with the poet he may say,

> "I cannot go
> Where universal love smiles not around."

Yes, eternity, as time, affords spheres of existence equally under the providence of our Father. This is the beautiful teaching of Jesus and his Gospel. To die is to go nearer to the Father, not away from him. It is to go to nearer and clearer views of his purposes; to catch new insight into the eternal commendations of holiness; to be won to the service of the creator and benefactor of all. It is such a going to God as cannot be enjoyed here where an earthly body is a veil through which the soul must look dimly at the things of immortality; here where earthly appetites, and wants, and attractions, more or less engage the attention of all, and force even a Paul to desire to depart, that in a higher sense he might be with Christ.

This thought gives us a beautiful conception of what befalls the departed: they go to the Father as they could not go here. Flesh and blood could not enter where they have entered. And should not this satisfy us? Why ask for details, when enough is given in the great fact, that our dead go to the Father? not *a* Father, but *the* Father. Daily some-

times we ask concerning an invalid absent from home, and at length we are told, "She has gone to her father;" and though she has gone to but an earthly home and a mortal parent, what a satisfaction steals quickly to the heart, and involuntarily we give thanks that it is so. We aid the stranger to thus go. No plea is stronger than the wish to go home to die; and when the going is to a home where life is to be communicated; where immortality is to be bestowed, why should we not be satisfied?

In the light of this, how pleasant is the thought of the Saviour's remark of the little while of absence, *because* he was going to the Father! A father does not withhold his children from companionship. He delights in all means by which, though separated from sight, they commune in soul. And there are more means than we dream of, given to us to feel the presence of the departed, and to be, as it were, with them; to have them with us, companions in solitude — friends of the soul.

But all this companionship may not at times satisfy us. We ask for something more than "blessings from their lips of air;" something that shall not require abstractedness from the real world around us; and this we have in the Gospel hope of the reunion of friends in the immortal state. "A little while, and ye shall see me," said Jesus, and they did see him, and know him, and never lost the feeling that he was with them, and would bless them hereafter.

To many this re-union of the separated by death is all uncertainty; but to such let me say —

There is certainly nothing *against it* in the Scriptures.

It is implied in the hope given to soothe sorrow, for we mourn, not because we believe the dead are annihilated — we feel they are somewhere, sometimes they seem very near — but we mourn because we see them not; we have no visible signs of their presence; we can do nothing for them, and cannot pour into their souls the emotions of our own, and receive a response. Life's great joy is in expressing by words, looks, things and acts, our love, and receiving these manifestations of love. Death breaks all this up. It is like an arbitrary power that forces a discontinuance of a correspondence that was the chief joy of our existence. We ask of death to give up this tyranny; to let the chain of communication be linked again; to let the fire of love fly across the living wires of the soul and telegraph thought from heart to heart. The hope that does not promote re-union is no hope for the living heart. It asks us to be satisfied with the simple fact of existence, when so long as we know a friend lives, the great wish is to meet that friend; to look at him, to talk with him, to see him smile, to hear his voice, to feel his breath upon our cheek. And the Gospel that was given to satisfy the affections speaks to each as Jesus to Martha — "Thy *brother* shall live again." Not simply Lazarus, but thy *brother*.

Such a hope is essential to any satisfactory joy in heaven. In any scene of beauty, or on any occasion of delight, we want the beloved to enjoy it with us. Even if solitude is sweet, we want some one to whom

we can tell how sweet it is; and then prayer seems not half so holy when we send it up for ourselves as when we hear the beloved pray, as the peasant bard sang —

> "Come here to me, thou lass o' my love,
> Come here and kneel wi' me;
> The morning is fu' o' the presence o' God,
> An' I canna pray but thee."

Yes, the hope is, that in a little while we shall see the loved again, but not as we saw them here, with the liabilities that belonged to earth. No; but as we see the spring bloom beautifully into the summer; a higher perfection of all that delighted; the meaning of every sweet promise made clearer; the blossom showing the fruit, and the fruit becoming golden to our sight.

The change is pre-figured by our experience respecting the dead. At first the beloved one is *gone;* then our bewilderment passes, and we go all over the terrible past — the days or weeks, or it may be but hours, or even minutes, of the fatal sickness or struggles, and how awful this liability seems! Then the past beyond the time of sickness comes back, and all the beauty of their lives is recalled, and they are with us again as in the happy days, when we did not dream of death or sickness. And as by memory we thus travel back to see our friends in the beauty we loved, so may we, by the power of faith, travel onward to see them clothed with more angelic loveliness. A little while, and we see them not; and again a little while, and we shall see them.