



Division SCC
Section 2963

L. O. H.

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

✓
WILLIAM B. O. PEABODY, D. D.

WITH

A MEMOIR, BY HIS BROTHER.

BOSTON:
BENJAMIN H. GREENE,
124 WASHINGTON STREET.
1849.

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NOTE.

THE Memoir of Dr. Peabody down to the last year of his life was prepared by his brother, where it was abruptly broken off by the writer's death. A friend, intimately acquainted with both, has completed the unfinished memoir, and collected the notices of the brother which are subjoined.

The Sermons were selected and printed under the supervision of another of Dr. Peabody's friends. They were in type before the recent political convulsions in Europe began, which must be remembered in reading Sermon XIX.

Another volume of selections from the writings of Dr. Peabody will probably be given to the public.

CAMBRIDGE, December, 1848.

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MEMOIR.

MEMOIR.

It seems proper that some account of this faithful minister of Christ should accompany a selection from his writings. Perhaps it may be thought that the task of preparing such an account should have been confided to a less partial hand ; but to obviate this objection as far as may be, I propose to draw the larger portion of it from my brother's correspondence with his familiar friends, and from some of his discourses which contain materials suited to the purpose. The tenor of his life was very even and noiseless ; little diversified by striking incident, which gives to personal history its usual charm. But there was an evident progress in his intellectual and religious character, to the very last. The traits of that character were also of more than common attractiveness and excellence, and in his later days they were tested by severe, if not peculiar, sorrows. Perhaps the knowledge of his example may inspire others with the wish to make such progress, and with the power to endure with fortitude afflictions similar to his.

WILLIAM BOURN OLIVER PEABODY was born in Exeter, in the State of New Hampshire, on the 9th day of

July, 1799. His father, a man of many amiable qualities, had long resided there, enjoying much of the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, and happy in the affections of a large family-circle. He was fortunate, also, in the instructions and example of an affectionate and religious mother. Both of his parents lived long enough to see their care of him in infancy rewarded by the usefulness of his maturer years ; his mother, who at an advanced age became an inmate of his family, went not long before him to the grave. His father found enjoyment in exercising a liberal hospitality, which brought the elder portion of his family much into connection with society, and the society of his native place was unusually intelligent, cordial, and refined. Nor was the beneficent influence of such a circle lost on him, as it is very generally on the young ; he was attracted towards it by his native delicacy of taste and feeling, and by the interest which he early manifested in subjects of reading and inquiry, to which much of the attention of that society was given. Those who knew him at this period remember him as a gentle and retiring boy, engaging with ardor in the active sports of childhood, but very seldom, if ever, in the strife by which they are apt to be attended ; pursuing his studies with attention and fidelity, and performing all his tasks in a manner creditable to himself and satisfactory to his instructors, never, in any instance that his friends can now recall, incurring punishment or grave censure for any serious misconduct or deficiency. Few incidents of his boyhood are preserved ; and such incidents are rarely worth remembering as affording indications of the future character. But it may be truly said of him, that the same traits of gen-

tleness, discretion, humility, and conscientiousness that marked the man were early manifested by the child.

In the year 1808, at the age of nine, he was placed by his father at the academy in Atkinson, New Hampshire. He was there an inmate of the family of his relative, the Rev. Stephen Peabody, an excellent and venerable man, whose character and peculiarities have been described by one who knew him well, in a late number of the *Christian Examiner*. Mrs. Peabody was the sister of Mrs. Adams, wife of the first President Adams, whom she strongly resembled in character. Her husband was what is sometimes called a clergyman of the old school, of dignified appearance and manners, but invariably kind, and even playful. His sermons were composed amidst the boisterous mirth of a troop of boys at his fireside, and possibly a critical auditor might have discerned some evidences of the circumstances under which they were prepared ; but while he endeared himself to the young by his unfailing good-humor and kindly sympathy, he gave them an example of unpretending goodness which was not without a lasting influence upon their characters. William remained under the charge of Mr. Peabody and his excellent wife for a few months only. In the autumn of the same year, he was admitted as a student at the well-known academy at Exeter, then, as for many years after, under the care of Dr. Benjamin Abbot, who still enjoys, in a holy and serene old age, the love and gratitude of all his pupils who have not gone before him to the grave.

Dr. Abbot was the friend and neighbour of William's father, and he felt at all times a deep and friendly interest in the son. He possessed in an eminent degree the

power of winning the affections of the young without ever forfeiting their respect ; never mistaking austerity for dignity, nor suffering the habit of authority to betray him into anger or coarseness. The other instructors were, in general, young men who devoted a year or two to the business of teaching before entering upon their profession. Of those who were thus employed while William was a member of the institution, some are yet living who have reached distinguished eminence. Among the dead may be named Henry Ware the younger, whose talent and religious excellence were then as obvious to his friends as they have since become to all. Under the tuition of such men, the academy well deserved the reputation which it has for many years maintained and continues still to bear ; and that he won their regard may well be mentioned to my brother's praise. Without being deeply interested in some of the severer studies, he was at all times diligent and faithful. He betrayed an early inclination for poetry, and wrote many pieces which exhibited a facility of versification quite remarkable in one so young. Among his efforts was a translation of one of Virgil's Eclogues, far superior in fidelity and grace to what is commonly expected at the age of ten. What is of far more importance, his moral conduct was always regulated by pure and lofty principle. No instance is remembered in which he incurred the slightest censure ; his teachers regarded him as one of those — not constituting, by any means, the greater proportion of the young — who understand the purpose of education, and know how to estimate its value. He was, however, modest, distrustful of his own powers, and, though studious and attentive, slow to believe that he

was able to excel. This was one of his marked traits through life ; he always underrated his own powers, never imagining that he could make any strong impression by the force of talent, or that he could accomplish any thing except by earnest industry.

In the autumn of 1813, he was admitted into Harvard University as a member of the Sophomore class, the same general remarks which have been made in regard to his earlier conduct and proficiency are no less applicable to them in his new position. He did not aim to attain the highest excellence in the usual course of college studies ; — his diffidence would not have permitted him to consider it within his reach ; — but his rank as a scholar was always respectable, and in the correctness of his moral conduct he was excelled by none. There was always an atmosphere of purity about him which the contagious influence of evil could not penetrate. Nor was he by any means inactive or self-indulgent. He availed himself of the opportunities for general reading which the college library afforded with equal ardor and discrimination, and he thus acquired a mass of information which surprised those who knew him best, and was turned to good account in after life. His memory, exact and tenacious, made all that he read his own. In the later portion of life, when such reading grew distasteful to him, he drew upon the stores of information which he had thus acquired, exhibiting a fulness and accuracy of knowledge which are not commonly retained after an interval of nearly thirty years. His example, as respects this miscellaneous reading, is not to be implicitly recommended. It required a stern intellectual discipline afterwards to change the somewhat discursive

habits of mind which he had thus insensibly acquired, — an effort rarely made by those in whose minds, as in his, imagination is more powerful than reason. His manners were reserved, as his disposition was retiring, so that there were not many of his fellow-students with whom he was on terms of intimacy; but he enjoyed the warm regard of a few, and the esteem of all. It was impossible for him to offend by vanity or undue pretension; his estimate of himself was always far lower than his friends, or even those who knew him slightly, would have made. There were no incidents in his college life particularly worthy of remembrance; but it was evidently with him a season of improvement, the fruits of which were manifested in his after life. The part assigned him at the annual Commencement, in the year 1816, when he received his first degree, was an English poem; in which he evinced a degree of taste and talent quite equal to the expectations of his friends.

Nothing has been thus far said in particular reference to his religious character, because, on such a subject, the language of vague eulogy is of small account. From a very early period, it was the expectation of his friends that his life was to be devoted to the Christian ministry, because they felt that his own feeling would incline in that direction, and because he was regarded as singularly fitted for that office by those who knew him best. At this early period, there was a purity and daily beauty in his life, and a freedom from the faults that easily beset that age, which gave decisive evidence of the religious principle within. But the age at which he left the University appeared too early for the profitable commencement of his professional studies, and in con-

formity with the advice of his friend, Dr. Abbot, he became an assistant instructor in the academy at Exeter. There he enjoyed the paternal kindness of that man of the beatitudes, and the society of his family and early friends ; such society as no one could regard with indifference, and which left upon him an impression which time could not extinguish in his heart. His native place was always dear to him ; he loved to revisit it. He saw it for the last time late in life, when he was himself heavily laden with affliction, and his relations, and many of his earlier friends, owing to the changes of life and the change of death, were no longer there. He thus alludes to the visit in his diary : — “ What a change ! To go back, no longer young^r either in years or in heart, — to see a generation almost entirely new risen up in the place of their fathers, and only a few ruins just ready to fall remaining to remind us of the past ! ”

Mr. Peabody remained in this position for a year, fulfilling its duties acceptably to others and with profit to himself. His gentle firmness gave him a strong influence over the minds and hearts of his pupils, and he found the occupation eminently beneficial in giving him habits of accuracy in acquiring and imparting knowledge. At the expiration of this term he went to Cambridge, to pursue his theological studies under Dr. Ware, the Hollis Professor of Divinity ; and, after passing through the usual course for three years, he began his labors as a preacher in the year 1819, when he had just reached the age of twenty. What impression was made by his character at this period, as well as by his earliest efforts in the pulpit, may be seen by an extract from a letter written by Hon. Daniel A.

White of Salem, who then became acquainted with him for the first time, and was ever afterwards his friend. That gentleman had relatives in Springfield, who were connected with a religious society which had been recently formed in that place, under circumstances of which an account will presently be given. They were at this time about to select some person as their minister, and Mr. Peabody had already been engaged to preach to them. We give the letter as an evidence of the opinion formed of him by one whose discernment none will question, and whose judgment will be felt by all to be entitled to respect. It is addressed to a friend in Springfield.

January, 1820. — “Mr. Peabody, the young preacher, is in Exeter, and I understand that he and his friends anticipate with pleasure his visit to Springfield. He has made us a visit, of which — has informed you. We were greatly pleased with him. He appears to be just the right sort of man for you, and for any good, candid, enlightened people, who know how to appreciate and cherish modest worth. He has very respectable talents and attainments for his age, and these will continually be growing and ripening with advancing years. His purity of mind and character, and his sincere piety, united with the most benevolent social affections, and delicate feelings, will render him dear to those who have a refined taste, as well as sound principles in morality and religion. You may think me too slightly acquainted with Mr. Peabody to speak of him so positively, and I confess that my opportunity for acquaintance with him is far less than I could wish. But he makes, at once, a strong impression in his favor, — an impression that every thing

essential in his character is as it should be, — and he inspires confidence that he will never disappoint any reasonable expectations. He is too young to take the burdens of a parochial charge, unless those burdens be lightened by the kindness of the people. I cannot but hope that he will suit you, and after some time become your minister, and if so, I feel sure that you will find in him a sincere and affectionate friend.”

An equally favorable impression appears to have been made upon the members of the society in Springfield. They very soon came to the unanimous determination to invite him to become their minister. The invitation was accepted, and he was ordained on the 12th day of October, 1820 ; thus beginning a relation which continued for the space of nearly twenty-seven years, with entire harmony, until it was broken by his death. All the essential facts relative to the situation of the society at this time, and to his own position, are distinctly stated in a Familiar Address, which he delivered at a social meeting of his parishioners, on the 16th of March, 1843. The following passage is an extract : —

“ It was on this season of the year 1820, that I first came to Springfield ; it was in those days when it required two days’ travelling to reach this town from Boston. Winter though it was, I well remember the delight with which I first looked upon this queen of valleys from the brow of the neighbouring hill ; even then, in its snowy vesture, it seemed to me the most beautiful that I ever saw. Many circumstances combined to produce in me some desolate feelings. I was very young, wanting some months of the age of twenty-one ; I was without experience in my own profession, having preached but a

few Sabbaths ; I was wholly unacquainted with the inhabitants of the village, not having seen more than one or two of them before. I knew, also, that this was a frontier station, which would require a degree of judgment and power which I was far from possessing. But I was met with a friendly welcome, which at once removed those feelings, and I soon found that it was the place for me where to live, and possibly to die. Here I have lived for many years, and here I hope to die. It makes me sad to think how many of those warm hands which were then extended to me are now in the dust of the grave.

“ The church to which I was invited had been formed in the preceding year. Some members of the First Church had become dissatisfied, for the alleged reason, that the course of exchanges was less liberal than in former years. This, with kindred reasons of discontent, had produced an alienation which it seemed impossible to heal. It was therefore thought advisable, by the dissatisfied party, to form a society of their own. This was accordingly done. A generous benefactor,* whose name rises up at once to the minds of all before me, presented them with a church, and thus insured success to the movement ; his example was worthily followed by his associates in providing for the support of worship in it, complying with the only condition on which his noble gift was made. Thus encouraged in the beginning of their enterprise, they went on with confidence. In number they were few ; but they were strong in character, strong in purpose, and stronger yet in the conviction that their cause was just.

* Jonathan Dwight, Esq.

“ The controversy which was raging elsewhere had not then reached this town. The separation was owing, if I am rightly informed, to causes and questions not connected with the Unitarian faith, which was then spreading in the eastern part of the State. The seceders generally held to Arminian or old-fashioned Calvinistic opinions, as they were then called, meaning opinions from which nearly all but the name of Calvinism had died away. Our church was consecrated in 1819, by some of the neighbouring clergy, and it is not on record that any inquisition was made respecting the sentiments of its members. Some of those clergymen also exchanged with me when I was preaching as a candidate to this people. The person who officiated as a candidate before me was a professed Calvinist, and his preaching was very acceptable to some of the society. The preacher who was employed to supply the desk was an Orthodox divine from a neighbouring State, who at the time retained, also, his former opinions. I refer to these facts, not as of much interest in themselves, but as parts of our history unknown, probably, to some of those who have risen up to take the places of the men by whom the foundations of the society were laid.

“ As I had received my education at Cambridge, it was inferred that I held the sentiments which prevailed there, and thus the Unitarian question was at once opened, and a spirit of inquiry excited. Many began to examine their former sentiments, and to compare them with the word of God. Of this number was Mr. Huntington, who was then supplying the desk, and Dr. Howard, whose name will always be spoken with reverence

here. Though they had often preached the doctrine of the Trinity, and had no doubts of its truth, they could not reconcile it to their conscience to dismiss the subject without inquiry. They did inquire, first examining our Saviour's testimony concerning himself, and then searching for all the light which inspiration gives; and the consequence was a conviction, on their part, that the doctrine was not sustained by the word of God. Others went through the same investigation, and came to the same result. As the ecclesiastical bodies felt bound to censure those who after the way which they called heresy worshipped the God of their fathers, their claim to power was asserted and resisted with equal zeal. The alienation spread fast and far; breaking the ties which bind men to each other, separating those whom God and nature had united, giving to religious sects the spirit of political factions, and making every church a fortress, always armed for war with the hostile party. Such were the times in which my ministry began: it is sufficient to say of them, that all who lived through them would pray that they might never see their like again. But it gives me pleasure to say that the pastor of the First Church* has been uniformly kind and friendly towards me, from the beginning to the present day; and from his society I have received many expressions of kindness and respect, and none whatever of ill-will."

In another portion of the same Address, he explains the course which his sense of duty led him to pursue in the beginning of his ministry. He had never any disposition to engage in theological or any other contro-

* The Rev. Samuel Osgood, D. D.

versy. No man ever studied more the things that make for peace ; he would have been content to be called pusillanimous, but he could not be content to incur the charge, with a consciousness of its justice, of having excited or encouraged any vindictive or unchristian passions. His course in this respect was approved by the calm judgment of his maturer years ; and its wisdom was afterwards made apparent in the kind feeling which has always marked the relations subsisting between his society and other Christians around them. It was but a few years after his settlement, that a highly respected member of the society from which his own had separated declared, that his coming had been a real and great blessing to the place.

“ As soon as I took charge of the pulpit, a question rose up before me. Should I consider it my duty to explain and extend the Liberal opinions, or should I devote myself to the personal improvement of the members of my society, trusting that the truth with respect to doctrines would make its own way in the public mind ? In pursuing the former course, I should have struck the key-note of the general feeling ; zeal of this kind excites a ready sympathy, and the want of it is regarded as tameness. Such a course would have added more to our numbers than any other, and many plausible reasons might have been given to show that it was the right one. It would have been easier, also, for myself. I remember being told by a distinguished physician, that he was seldom consulted by controversial preachers ; their sermons were written without any of that labor of mind which wears students down. But I could not persuade myself that this was the way of duty. I knew that as

fast and as far as party passions are excited, devotion and charity are apt to forsake the breast ; I was well aware that many are made Unitarians, Calvinists, Baptists, and sectarians of every name, without being made Christians by the same conversion. ‘ I therefore determined,’ if it is not presumption in me to use the words, ‘ I therefore determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.’ Since men were sent into the world, not to put on the livery of a party, but to lay the foundations of character in preparation for immortal life, I would always spend the best of my strength to impress this solemn and indispensable duty on all whom my voice could reach.*

“ In looking back upon this determination at the distance of more than twenty years, I see in it nothing to regret ; but I do see in it a strong reason for gratitude to the society which, in such times of excitement, permitted me to pursue a course so unpopular, obscure, and unlikely to add to their numbers. I have been grateful to them for many things, but most of all for this. It is not every society which would have consented to it, though perhaps, in these peaceful times, the present generation cannot understand how great a sacrifice of feeling was necessary to receive the fire of other sects without returning it, to keep the white flag flying in the midst of the war, and to maintain that moderation which requires strength of character and principle, but which is treated

* In a letter to a friend in Salem, dated March 6th, 1820, we find the following sentiment :— “ I have seen no hostility whatever toward the other society, and I am sure that I shall not attempt to excite it. I hope they will never contend, except in showing which opinions have the best influence upon the character.”

by partisans with supreme disdain. But whatever the sacrifice may have been at the time, I am persuaded that no one repents it now. They have lived to see that 'he who goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' "

It is not easy for one who knows Springfield only as it is now, to imagine how completely insulated was the situation of a minister of the Liberal faith five-and-twenty years ago. Mr. Peabody found all the support and encouragement he could ask in the kindness of his parishioners, and in particular from the venerable Dr. Howard, once the minister of the First Society, whose friendly counsels were always wise and useful; a man who, by his genuine and unaffected sincerity, and fervent piety, combined with intellectual powers of no common order, commanded the regard and reverence of all. But his labors were unremitted and severe. Exchanges with his brethren of other persuasions, he had none; very rarely any with those of his own. He has been heard to say, that there was a period of eighteen months during which he preached without an exchange or any relief whatever. His own account of some of the difficulties under which he labored is given in the Address from which large extracts have been already made, and which may be regarded as an autobiography of this portion of his life.

"I was younger, and less experienced than most clergymen when they are settled; not acquainted with navigation till far at sea. Others have those of their own profession near them to whom they can look for sympathy and counsel in their trials; it was not so with

me. I had but one such friend,* and, wise and excellent as he was, the disparity of age, and social changes that had taken place since he left the profession, rendered it difficult for him sometimes to understand my feelings. Others have those near them with whom they can exchange labors on the Sabbath; but, as you well know, there were none who would afford me that relief. Knowing that a preacher who does not keep his mind in constant action and improvement soon loses his influence with all intelligent people, I felt that my preparation for the desk must be attended to, whatever else might be left undone. I found that the field of duty was larger than I could fill. I was bewildered and oppressed,—more oppressed than words can tell. I well remember how, on returning after an absence, my heart would die within me as I came within the sound of the evening bell; it reminded me of claims that I could not answer, and wants that were not supplied. Again and again I determined to cumber the ground no longer, though I felt that in leaving you I should be going from my chosen home. I know not how it was that I persevered; having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, certainly to my happiness, however it may have been for you.”

He did not spare his labors; and it was not long before they began seriously to affect his health. In the summer of 1821, his eyesight was so much impaired that serious apprehensions were entertained of the necessity of his retiring from the ministry. But in the following year, the prospect grew even darker. For several months he was in a state of extreme debility, which

*Rev. Dr. Howard.

compelled him wholly to desist from every kind of labor. Late in the autumn, however, he was so far restored as to be able to resume his duties. But during the whole period of his ministry, he never regained the free use of his eyes, and probably never knew what it was to enjoy the feeling of entire health. It was his usual practice to write two discourses in each week, and to these was commonly added a weekly lecture for the illustration of the Scriptures. From the accounts given us by those who listened to him in the earlier period of his ministry, there can be no doubt that his preaching was then touching and impressive. He had no leisure for the preparation of very elaborate discourses, and had no taste for controversial divinity whatever. His aim was to enkindle the spiritual life in the hearts of those who heard him; and with this end in view, he dwelt but little on disputed doctrines, and cared little for the peculiarities of sects. Love to God and man, — the attractive divinity of holiness as manifested in the character of Jesus Christ, — the qualities and graces by which man is brought into resemblance to the Saviour and to God, — these were the points on which he dwelt with the greatest earnestness and satisfaction. He was deeply solicitous to cherish in himself, and to inculcate upon others, that unfailing charity and kindness without which Christianity is but a light-house tower in which no flame is kindled. He was never inclined to ascertain and point out what was wrong in other sects, so much as the particulars in which they might be imitated, and was ever ready to express his love and admiration of the pure and eminent, who have given lustre to them all. All those, of all persuasions, who loved the Lord Jesus in

sincerity, were to him as brethren. This spirit of love was the ruling principle of his life ; and probably no hearer of his was ever induced by his persuasion or example to indulge in a spirit censorious or harshly critical towards any other human being.

From this period until the close of his ministry, he was quietly but diligently employed in the discharge of his duty. The course of his life was varied by few incidents which the public would be interested to know ; and without dwelling any further upon these than may be necessary for the illustration of his history, I shall endeavour to draw from portions of his correspondence, as well as from information derived from other sources, a faithful transcript of his mind and heart. It has already been said, that from the outset there was an evident progress and change in both. As he advanced in life, he withdrew his attention more and more from the subjects of ordinary interest and contemplation, to concentrate it upon the greatest which can engage the thoughts of an immortal mind.

Some of his leisure hours were given to poetry. He never, however, attached much consequence to his efforts in this department, and, though his productions were quite numerous and attracted much attention, never thought it worth his while to collect and preserve them. There was one of these which some yet remember, though copies of it are no longer to be found. This was a Poetical Catechism for the use of the young, which was written and published in the year 1823. He was induced to write it by a persuasion that an enumeration in verse of the principal duties of religion would be studied by children with more pleasure, and remem-

bered longer, than the common catechisms in prose; and the experiment succeeded according to his wishes. Several pieces were subjoined to this catechism, which were designed to connect whatever is beautiful in nature with religious feelings in the minds of the young. Many of these have been transferred to other publications, and may still be found in collections of sacred poetry. Among them, that which begins with the words, "Behold the western evening light," is generally known, and seldom fails to find an answering chord in the reader's heart. At the request of a relative who was engaged in the publication of a newspaper in his native place, he contributed for a year or two freely to its columns, and wrote most of the pieces by which his poetical talent became known. He also wrote occasionally for the annuals, and in compliance with the request of friends, whom he was unwilling to refuse; but his interest in the employment passed away with his youth, and though he never wholly ceased to write, he did it only when some occasion required a hymn or other production more appropriate than any that could be readily selected.

He doubtless formed too low an estimate of his poetical writings. The highest exhibition of talent is not often found in brief effusions, like the genii in the little box. His were invariably marked by uncommon grace and beauty of versification, and by deep, true, and elevated feeling; and it is hardly just to infer that loftier qualities of poetry have no existence, because they are not found where they are not wanted.

On the eighth of September, 1824, Mr. Peabody married Miss Elizabeth Amelia White, daughter of Moses White, Esq., of Lancaster, New Hampshire, a lady of

uncommon loveliness of person and of character. His eldest child, Fanny, was born in the following year. The history of both was afterwards mournfully blended with his own. No man could be more blest than he was in all that constitutes a home. In the progress of this narrative, it will become essential to dwell somewhat at large upon the admirable qualities that gave his wife such a hold upon his heart, and endeared her to all who knew her.

He was now in a position precisely suited to his taste and feeling ; — connected with a religious society, to whose welfare and improvement he devoted himself with his whole heart, and who repaid his care by a respect and love which were never impaired during the whole period of their connection, and went on increasing to the last. His mind was always active ; and he found a relief from his severer toil in the contemplation and study of nature, — a study which, inspiring as it is, is cultivated only by a few. There was no department of natural science in which he was not interested ; there was none with which he was not in some degree familiar ; but he devoted his leisure principally to those branches which circumstances made it most easy for him to pursue. His knowledge of plants and of forest-trees was very accurate and extensive ; and he occasionally delivered lectures upon them, and other branches of natural history, which were heard with interest and pleasure. It was always delightful to him to inspire a taste for these pursuits in the minds of the young, because he believed it to be intimately connected with religious feeling. In one of these lectures, he says : —

“ Perhaps you may remember the child mentioned by

Wilson, who came in with a radiant countenance to his mother, bringing a handful of wild-flowers, saying, 'O, what beautiful flowers! the woods are full of them, — red, — orange, — blue, — 'most every color! I can gather a whole parcel of them, much handsomer than these, all growing in our own woods! Shall I, mother? Shall I go and bring more?' The naturalist said that the feeling of the child precisely resembled his own. Would it not be easy to cherish that fine enthusiasm of youth till it becomes an intellectual desire of knowledge? I think it would. We know how easily the eye glides over a sweet evening prospect to the clear heaven beyond; so it passes of itself, and without effort, from the contemplation of nature, up to nature's God."

For several years he occupied a detached building as a study, situated in his garden. In this retired spot, he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the varieties of birds, and of studying their habits. This persecuted race have abundant sagacity to distinguish the idle destroyers from whom it is well that they can fly from those who are disposed to be their friends. With these they are glad to be familiar, as if to show that they deserve more attention and better treatment than they have ever yet been able to secure. Mr. Peabody's researches on this subject were curious and minute; more so than is usually to be expected from one whose mind is earnestly employed upon more important things. But he endeavoured to bring all his occupations into harmony with the great object to which his life was devoted, and he believed that this pursuit would not be without its value, if it should enable him to cultivate a taste for it in the children of his charge, before they

learn from the example of their elders to become acquainted with birds only for the purpose of tormenting or destroying them. There is extant among his papers a series of lectures, delivered before the Sabbath school of his society, in which the subject of plants and birds is treated in a manner that could not fail to engage the attention of the young. These were illustrated by drawings, made and colored by his own hand, with an accuracy and beauty which would have done no discredit to the skill of an accomplished artist. Indeed, in youth he exhibited a decided taste for drawing, and though he subsequently ceased to cultivate it, practised the art occasionally for the benefit of his friends, or for some purpose of his own. There is reason to believe, that the instructions to which I have alluded were not without a lasting and beneficent effect upon the minds of those who received them.

What requires further to be said concerning the interest which he took in natural history may as well be stated here. About the year 1830, the magnificent publications of Mr. Audubon began to draw the attention of many to the science of ornithology, which his enthusiasm and unwearied industry have done so much to advance. One of his volumes was made by Mr. Peabody the subject of an article in the North American Review ; and this was the beginning of an acquaintance between them, which continued through his life. Several other articles upon subjects connected with natural history, about the same period, may be remembered by some of the readers of that journal. Most of them, if not all, were written by Mr. Peabody, and were distinguished by a style well calculated to render

them attractive, animated, clear, and vigorous, and enlivened by a delicate and playful humor. He was also the author of a Life of Alexander Wilson, for the American Biography published by Mr. Sparks, in which the touching history of that ill-fated pioneer is feelingly and beautifully told.

In 1837, a survey of the State of Massachusetts, having reference to several branches of science, was ordered by the Legislature ; and the Governor, Edward Everett, was authorized to appoint suitable persons to execute the task. He selected Mr. Peabody to prepare a Report upon the birds of the Commonwealth. This Report was completed and published in the year 1839 ; and it is believed to have answered the end which the Legislature had in view. In addition to his own researches, he had the liberal aid of other gentlemen, who have presented similar ones with great ardor and success. His descriptions of the birds and their habits are given with a lifelike truth and animation, not less engaging to the general than to the scientific reader. It answered, also, a higher and a better than a merely scientific end. It pleaded the cause of humanity, which is so little regarded as respects inferior animals, that the suggestion of it seems to many to be little better than mere affectation. It would be well if the views which he presented on the subject of destroying birds were more generally entertained, both by those who indulge in a cruel amusement to wile away an idle hour, and by farmers, who secure themselves from a small evil at the expense of one incomparably greater, by exterminating birds, against whose depredations they can protect themselves, for the benefit of insects, whose ravages bid de-

fiance to all that man's art and power can do. He showed that the farmer is now severely suffering in consequence of this ignorance and folly, which place difficulties in the way of cultivation that no skill or industry can overcome. It is earnestly to be desired that what he and other friends of humanity have written on this subject may have some effect upon the feelings and habits which have everywhere prevailed.

It was said by Dr. Gannett, in his discourse at the funeral of Mr. Peabody, that "his intellectual qualities particularly fitted him to act upon the public through that great channel of influence to which recent times have given a depth and breadth unknown before our day, — the periodical press. The clearness and justness of his conceptions, the extent and variety of his knowledge, the ease and elegance of his style, and the calm, sweet dignity of his temper, were admirably suited to the higher functions of the essayist and the reviewer." His first article in the *North American Review*, on "The Decline of Poetry," was written in 1826. From this time to 1830, he contributed occasionally to the pages of that journal and of the *Christian Examiner*. Then the *North American Review* passed into the hands of Mr. Alexander H. Everett, his brother-in-law, in compliance with whose desire he wrote many articles during that and the five or six following years. A few of his productions may be found in "The Token," which was annually published during a considerable period in Boston; among these, "The Methodist Story" may be remembered by some of its readers. By these and other productions, he became generally known as a writer beyond the limits of his profession. It is unne-

cessary to enter here into an examination of his merits in this department. Those who are interested will probably be enabled to form their own judgment from the portion of his miscellaneous writings which it is the purpose of his friends to publish. It is proper to observe, that he was not induced to engage in this species of writing by any love of the occupation. He did it partly in compliance with the request of friends who were engaged in the publication of journals and were anxious to procure his aid, and partly in order to add something to a salary, which, though large as any given to ministers in that neighbourhood, was exhausted by a liberal hospitality and by the demands of an increasing family. In the year 1834, he thus writes to a friend : —

“ I fear that, since the enlargement of my family, my salary will turn out like our old friend, the General’s, well-saved uniform, when he undertook to clothe himself in armour at the last war. The uniform had not diminished, but the General had extended, — so that, after all his attempts to be genteel, it would not meet round him by six or eight inches. What is written under the inspiration of ambition to turn a penny will not be of the first order. They say, however, that easy writing makes hard reading. I am sure that mine is not easy writing, so that it may answer ; — and yet I cannot help saying, with Macbeth, when I have finished an article, ‘ I am afraid to think on what I have done, — look on ’t again I dare not.’ By the way, how little poetry there is which would be taken for verse if the lines were written *tandem*, as above.”

In Mr. Peabody’s miscellaneous writings he occasionally exhibited a liveliness and humor which always mark-

ed his familiar conversation, and were often found in his correspondence. These traits are so characteristic, that we give a few extracts from his familiar letters, which may tend to illustrate them.

“I must not forget to tell you that we were regaled with a concert, last Monday evening, given by some performers from Boston. The music was very well, such as I have listened to with exemplary patience at Boylston Hall when I tried to acquire the taste which Nature denied me by attending oratorios ; but these performances are always spoiled for me by the screaming of the fiddle, which, for aught I know, may be a great luxury to the amateurs, but is a great trial to me in sacred music. Those who know better say that the music was very good ; but I sometimes thought, like the clown in Shakspeare, that, if they had any of that sort of melody which could not be heard, it would be quite as acceptable. Speaking of Shakspeare, I do not envy you the privilege of seeing Lear performed. No actor’s power can do justice to my imagination of the character, and, if I mistake not, you see it as altered by Dryden or Cibber, so that the end of the play is as comfortable and happy as that of a modern love affair. Cordelia is brought to life by some humane-society process, and the old gentleman comes to the throne, where he reigns to a good old age. This result is undoubtedly gratifying to a benevolent mind, and I believe according to the truth of history, — that is, Geoffrey of Monmouth. I remember seeing Romeo and Juliet performed, when young, so improved that he and Juliet recovered and had a serious talk together ; though not called to mourn for them, I was deeply affected at the tragic fate of the play.”

Sept. 2, 1834. — “ Last week I thought I should have been obliged to follow you to the East. The change of weather had an unaccountable effect upon me, and put me so much out of sorts that I feared I should have that pretext of ill-health for a journey which Dr. P. said that he waited for in vain. But the warmer weather that has followed indefinitely postponed that prospect, and my physician now thinks that he can patch me up so as to make me last a while longer. I was oddly affected for a day or two. Circulation seemed as much suspended in my system as in the money-market, and I could not make out to walk half a mile without fainting away. I made out, however, to have a service on the Sabbath, — not very edifying, but better than shutting up the house. You speak about my sermon on the Catholics. I preached it on the last Sabbath, and it seemed to be listened to with interest. Yesterday I had an application from Mr. Sterns, in behalf of others, to print it ; but this I declined, thinking that I had printed enough in my day, and being well aware that the author is the last of the human race who comes to such a conclusion. I should be glad to have some facts which were stated in it generally known ; but it is a question in my mind whether *publishing*, as it is called, in the form of a sermon would be most likely to make them public or to conceal them.”

Dec. 17, 1834. — “ I suppose E. keeps you advised of all that goes on here, — or rather does not go on ; for a general palsy seems to have affected the social system. We should be glad even to have phrenology back again ; for we are fast hastening to that ideal state in which the individual shall be every thing, and associa-

tions of every description be done away. We looked to the lyceum for relief, but Dr. — began an extemporaneous anatomical lecture last Wednesday, to be continued, — how long was not stated; but I fear he will hold on till the house is as thin as one of his skeletons. I confess, however, that I admired the man's courage; for I never dared to follow the ancient clerical practice so far as to announce the after part of the sermon for the after part of the day, having fears lest the after part of the audience, meantime, should disperse past recall."

Oct. 1840. — "I am rather curious to see how far the anti-Sabbath-and-clergy mania will extend. I see that my old acquaintance, Mr. —, is engaged in it; and if he is at all zealous, the movement must be on its way down hill, since that is the only direction in which he could charge with vigor and effect. I was a good deal edified with —'s explanation, that their desire was to have the Sabbath more spiritually observed. In answer, I should say, that to put a friend on trial for his life is not the happiest way of clearing up his character; the danger may be, that it will throw a suspicion over him in the minds of many, which, but for this ingenious process of purgation, never would have existed. If they have any doubts themselves, the best course they could pursue would really be to keep the Sabbath, and see if it might not do them some good. She quoted to — a remark of Mr. —, that to oppose such investigations implied an apprehension that the institution might not be able to stand it. This reminded me of the time and again when I have called my children away from my neighbour's mill-pond, — they thinking my caution very preposterous, no doubt; but it was not from any alarm

with respect to the pond, but simply from the fear lest they should fall in, — a view of the subject which they could not be made to understand. Well, if it is any comfort to them to employ their energies in this way, I do not know why any one should object. They may dig down to the foundation on which Christianity rests, and satisfy themselves that their teeth and nails are inadequate to the operation of removing it, so as to clear it away, or make it stand more to their minds. When they learn to make the best of things as they are, the instruction will be worth what it costs them.”

“By this time, I suppose you are comfortably established in your new house. When I made a similar removal, I set against the increased distance from town a clear view of the sky, which I think is better than the finest landscape, and well worth a few added steps every day for the sake of reaching it. In the sky, you have perpetual variety, while the lower prospect is always the same; but they are both good in their way, and I rejoice very much in having them united. I think you have chosen the right season for removal. We always feel more at home in a new habitation after having had fires in it, nor do I think we ever get the home feeling before. The storm that seems in preparation to-day looks very much like the vanguard of winter. The real autumn is always pleasant to me. As has been said, ‘I love the Sabbath of the year’; but I rejoice less in the Saturday afternoon; though there are no sermons to prepare, and Nature does her own preaching more effectually than any human tongue.

“Our own household wheels keep in motion, and go on smoothly, with the exception of those slight difficulties

which are found in every domestic concern. No railroads have as yet been laid in domestic life ; and when they are, the human engines will get off the track oftener than the cars. . . . —'s principal recreation is finding fault with Amelia for her worldliness in always doing for other people, when she ought to spend her time, like a cat watching a rat-hole, in the care of her own heart."

The farther he advanced in life, the more his taste and feeling inclined him to devote himself exclusively to subjects relating immediately to his profession. The only one in which he engaged with enthusiasm was the study of the Bible ; this he always strenuously urged upon his hearers from the pulpit, and by his lectures, not so much in the way of philological research, as to find its spiritual meaning. His interest in these inquiries went on increasing to the last hours of his life.

It was on the evening of the 16th of March, 1843, that the meeting of the society took place before which was delivered the Familiar Address from which extracts have been given in the preceding pages. The members of the society assembled in a social party, at the house of their minister, bearing with them many evidences of that liberality of which he had always a large experience, and all animated by a spirit of kindness and good-will. In his own words, " To be surrounded by so many kind and faithful friends, to see a large society assembled in harmony, to see my own house lighted up with joy and gladness, is one of the greatest blessings which a God of love could bestow."

In order to present a more vivid picture of this interesting occasion, we give a letter written by one who was present and entered deeply into its spirit.

“It was a gathering together of a whole congregation, rich and poor, high and low, in expression of their love and sympathy for a pastor who for twenty years has been laboring with untiring zeal for their welfare for time and eternity. Neither did the expression of good feeling stop here. The whole people seemed as much bound to each other as to their pastor. For once it seemed to be a living reality, not a barren doctrine, that we are children of one Father, — bound together by one sentiment of love and sympathy. Each one seemed ready to grasp the other by the hand, and exclaim, ‘It is good to be here.’ The whole day on Thursday was one of great excitement throughout the parish. Though it was considered best to have none at the house but the ladies composing the Committee of Arrangements and their aids, yet, after having busied ourselves in packing and transporting our offerings, we all found it difficult to employ our hands about any of the ordinary business of life; — our hearts would be at the parsonage, and each one, I believe, felt anxious for the hour of assembling to arrive. We were from the hours of five to eight in gathering together. In the course of that time, the house was literally filled with people. Supper-tables were spread in the kitchen and dining-room, and arranged in a tasteful and beautiful manner. The bedroom had been converted into a library for Mr. Peabody; this and the front parlour were filled, as were both lower and upper entry and staircase. The eastern front chamber was filled with beautiful and appropriate gifts for the pastor, his wife, children, and domestics, to each of which was appended the name of the donor or the note which accompanied the gift. The room was

crowded with articles which I shall not attempt to enumerate. Every thing useful and desirable that could be thought of was collected, and the first idea on entering the apartment was that you were at a fair. The house was throughout the day thronged with messengers bearing their offerings, and Mr. and Mrs. Peabody were overwhelmed, as you may suppose. You never saw any being look so lovely and happy as Amelia did. Mr. Peabody met each one with a cordial grasp of the hand, but his heart seemed too full for words. At about half past eight, copies of hymns such as I inclose for you were circulated, in preparation for the religious services of the occasion.

“ The first hymn, written by Mr. Peabody, was sung to the tune ‘ From Greenland’s icy mountains.’

‘ Bright eyes and cheerful voices
 In the pastor’s home to-night !
 The youthful heart rejoices,
 The burdened one grows light ;
 For all with him are bending,
 In sympathy of praise,
 To God, whose love, descending,
 Has crowned them all their days.

‘ Yet when we thus assemble,
 And all the past review,
 The firmest well may tremble,
 To think what death can do.
 The loved ones of our number,
 The holiest, and the best,
 Are sunk in that calm slumber
 That gives the weary rest.

‘ But sons, their sires succeeding,
 Each vacant place shall fill ;
 In all these changes reading
 The lessons of His will

Who spreads his banner o'er us,
 With waving folds of love,
 And gilds the scene before us
 With mercy from above.

' Now for that near communion
 Which binds all hearts in one, —
 For heaven's delightful union,
 In this cold world begun, —
 For that glad faith which raises
 Our dead to life again.
 Let the pastor breathe his praises,
 And the people say, Amen !'

“Fanny played the piano ; several fine voices accompanied her, and as the piano was close to the door, the time was given to those in the entry, and taken from them by the rest. Throughout the house, the song of praise arose. You know the inspiring effect of such a union of voices ; — truly we felt that ‘ heaven’s delightful union ’ had begun below. Next came Mr. Peabody’s Address. He took his station upon a chair in the front entry, next the front door, — and was heard by those above stairs quite as well as by those below. He is not yet well and strong ; and, after alluding to the memory of those faithful friends who welcomed him here, ‘ those warm hands that were then extended to him, — now in the dust of the grave,’ his feelings overpowered him, and he was obliged to stop and have fresh air and cold water before he could proceed. You can imagine how touching from him would be a review of his ministry here. Tears fell fast, I assure you.

“Next followed the second hymn, sung to the tune of ‘ Dismission Hymn.’

‘ Thou, whose mercy kind and tender
 Blessed the morning of our day,

Shining still with equal splendor
On the later hours of day ; —

‘ Thou, who in the hour of trouble
Sendest angels from on high,
All our thoughtful joys to double,
All our anxious tears to dry ; —

‘ Since thy never-failing kindness
Thus regards us from above,
Shall we live in selfish blindness,
All unworthy of thy love ?

‘ May that blessing still attend us
Long as life’s swift circle rolls ;
And in dark temptation lend us
That strong safeguard for our souls.

‘ Let the Heavenly Shepherd, keeping
Watch on Zion’s holy towers,
Save us, while serenely sleeping,
Through this night’s defenceless hours.

‘ When life’s short and hurried story
Ends in death’s profounder rest,
Crown us with immortal glory
In the mansions of the blest.’

“ A short and fervent prayer, with a benediction, closed a service in which a whole people had united with grateful, overflowing hearts. Of course, after this, all were too much subdued for the gay tone of hilarity and congratulation which had preceded these touching services. We spake one with another, in softened tones, of all that we had enjoyed, and soon after took leave of the pastor and his family, and sought our own homes, there to repeat over and over again the story of our joys.

“ I did not mention in the right place that Mr. Peabody invited all the children of the society to assemble

there the next afternoon, at six o'clock, bringing with them their parent's copy of the hymns. The children's festival was a pleasant thing. There were 117 assembled, — some of them accompanied by their parents. After *being fed*, they all engaged an hour in sport, after which they marched to the piano to be counted. The children filled the room, each with the hymns in hand. They all united in singing the first hymn. Mr. Peabody then made them a short address. After alluding to all the kindness he had received from their parents, he told them that there was one favor they could show to him. He then gave a beautiful and touching account of John Abbot Emery,* and told them the favor he would ask of them would be, so to conduct themselves in life, that, when arrived at maturity, he might feel with regard to each one of them as he did with regard to him, — proud to be called his minister and friend. They then united in singing the second hymn, after which a prayer and benediction closed the service. The children soon took their departure, well satisfied with their visit."

To every human eye, this might have appeared the happiest period of Dr. Peabody's life. There was every thing in his domestic relations to make him happy; his admirable wife exerted a deep religious influence herself by the winning beauty of her own example, and

* Son of the late Robert Emery, Esq., of Springfield, and member of the class of 1843 in Harvard University. He was a young man of singular purity and promise, loved and honored by all who knew him. He died at Exeter, N. H., after a short illness, in the early part of his Senior year, October, 1842. At the request of his classmates, Mr. Peabody delivered a Funeral Address, the week after his death, in the College Chapel at Cambridge, which was published.

thus powerfully aided that influence of his for good over the hearts of others which it was his great ambition to possess. They had been united for nearly twenty years by a deep sympathy and affection, which were becoming deeper and more tender as they went farther on in life. His children were affectionate, and full of that promise which is a priceless treasure to a parent's heart. He enjoyed the cordial respect and good-will of all his Christian brethren, of every name, and the devoted love of those to whom he had ministered so long. Even his spirit, not usually sanguine or very ardent in his hope, was lifted up by the conviction that his labors had not been in vain. There was a general and earnest interest in religious things, which gave the assurance of a richer harvest in the time to come. But his faith was yet to be severely tried, and to be made perfect through suffering. It was decreed by Providence, that she who had been the light of his existence was soon to be withdrawn, and to go before him to the eternal world.

I have already spoken generally of the character and influence of this excellent woman ; but a more extended view of both will seem indispensable to all who knew her, and may not be without some interest and value to those who knew her not. It may seem to some to be drawn by a too partial hand ; to her friends it will certainly appear inadequate and cold. She was one of those who seem born to be loved, who win the regard of strangers at the first interview, however transient, and inspire an enthusiastic affection in those who are privileged to be near her. In youth she was eminently lovely, and the charm of expression was undimmed when the bloom of youth was gone. Her manners were cordial,

kind, and graceful. Her presence gave brightness alike to the social meeting, the chamber of sickness, and the retreat of poverty, because whatever she said was felt to be the beautiful expression of a generous and sympathizing heart. There was no disguise about it, — all was perfectly frank, open, and sincere. She never thought of herself when there was an opportunity of doing any thing to promote the happiness of others ; and all was done with a perfect self-forgetfulness, a ready and unconscious sacrifice of her own wishes and convenience to theirs, and a scrupulous and delicate regard to their feelings, which no jealousy or suspicion or embittered feeling could resist. There was no scheme of rational benevolence into which she did not enter, no errand of mercy which she was not ready to do. All this was so free from the slightest taint of affectation, that it may have seemed to many to be nothing but the result of the impulses of a generous nature ; but those who knew her intimately saw in it the fruit of self-discipline, watchful and severe ; of a constant and most faithful study of the Scriptures, with the determination to make its precepts the unfailing rule of daily life ; of fervent love and habitual imitation of her Saviour, and of private communion with her God. It was thus that she shed a pure and cheering light around her, winning hearts to virtue and religion by the beauty of her holiness.

It ought to be added, that the graces of her mind were in no respect inferior to the other portions of her character. She had much power of reflection, and wrote with facility and elegance. A little work of hers written some years ago, for children, attracted much attention, and is not yet forgotten. But the powers of her

mind were applied, with singular fidelity and earnestness, to the securing of her own improvement and the performance of her duty by the constant and intelligent study of the Scriptures ; to become familiar with their spirit as well as with the words ; to search into their whole meaning, and to derive lessons from them for the conduct of her life. Thus the views which she would sometimes give of certain passages were always judicious, and not unfrequently original ; and they were felt by those who heard them to be the result of the most serious thought and the most earnest inquiry.

I cannot but think that those who are ambitious of such excellence will be gratified by obtaining a nearer view of the manner in which hers was attained and cherished. The desire to promote the welfare of others was always uppermost in her mind ; and if any thing in her example can be of aid or use to any, she would not herself have desired that it should be withheld. With this persuasion, I do not hesitate to set before the reader certain portions of her private diary.

“ From this time forward, may I be able to forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the prize of the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And to this end I propose these following rules to myself : — That when I first rise in the morning, I will try to induce the spirit of grateful praise and prayer toward my Heavenly Father, and as a help to a truly devotional exercise of soul, I will try to enter into the spirit of the Psalms. After breakfast, I will try to concentrate my thoughts on the authority of God, that I may feel more strongly my obligation to render a filial obedience to his will, and devote myself in all

things to his purposes, and not my own. And to this end I will read a portion of my Saviour's history, in order to obtain an intimate perception of his success in this obedience.

“ To-day it has occurred to me, that, to enter into the spirit of the Psalms, the most effectual aid would be derived from adopting the habit of the Psalmist in tracing every circumstance of our life directly to God, and cultivating that familiar reference to him which would soon make us perceive his agency where now we regard it not. This seems to have been the origin of David's piety, and to have supplied him with a continual flood of devotional feeling.”

“ And now for the application of our Saviour's example. Can we turn to it without seeing our own way clearly pointed out? He had a mission from his God. So has each one of us. Does it seem presumptuous to compare the two? His was infinitely beyond what we can have to do. Yes, — but his was suited to his capacity, and ours is adapted to ours. How did he prepare to accomplish it? By giving all the powers of his soul to a private intercourse with God, that he might discover clearly what his Father would have him to do. Cannot we take the same course, and will it not result in a clear perception of all our duties? When the will of God was ascertained, his next effort was to dedicate himself heart and soul to that will; thenceforth he had no will of his own. What God gave him to do was the business of his life; what he saw the Father do was his principle of action. Do we say *we* cannot see what the Father does? If we devote our spirits to the task with that single aim, may we not see the divine

laws by which God acts in the natural and moral world? May we not see them, so as to be able to make them our own governing principles? Will not a spiritual apprehension of the love of God, for instance, follow an intense application of our souls to him in order to discover it? Else what means our Saviour's exhortation, 'Be ye one with me, as I am one with my Father,' and the words, 'I have left you an example that you should follow my steps.'"

"To give permanence and reality to the impressions of duty which enlighten the hour of reflection, and to make them serve me in the labor and heat of the day, I will set them down, and in that way try to bind them upon my heart. In my treatment of my children, and such as are committed to my care, I should make all my endeavours conspire to one aim; that they may be gems in the crown of their Saviour at the last day; that he may present them to his Father and their Father, as fitted for his presence by their nurture in the principles of his morality and the affections of his life. The duties of life, — I ought to allow no distaste to stand a moment against their performance; but consider them as the work given me to do, and reflect that no work is given me that is not intended to strengthen some principle or habit which is to form my soul for its immortal duties."

"He shall say unto them, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Have we ever known, in our experience of the various relations of life, a sympathy like this? The fondest parent may feel something akin to it in relation to a very dear child; but mark his words,

— ‘one of *the least* of these my brethren.’ It takes the very strongest tie of human hearts with the very first object of their attachment, to form a comparison with his feelings for the least deserving of all.

“Does not this expression of our Saviour throw some light on the relation between us and him. Can an intimacy be conceived of more perfect than this? Could any language describe a more disinterested and comprehensive friendship, or a sensibility to another’s welfare so immediate and personal? Is it not really being the vine, of which we are the branches?”

“O, why cannot we reciprocate that friendship, and really be in him as he is in us? Every human being ought to be invested, to our eye, with the sacredness of our Saviour’s anxious love, and that sentiment should modify all our feeling toward him. We would not speak unkindly of an abandoned person in the presence of his father and his mother. And if we had any just conceptions of our Saviour’s relation to the human family, how much more delicate would be our deference for him! If so great kindness towards the wretched and the destitute warms his heart, what constant arrows must we be inflicting on him by our cruel judgments and inconsiderate unkindness to those for whom he died! Truly we crucify him again. And must not such wounds from those who know and profess to love him be far more grievous to him, than those inflicted upon him by an excited and ignorant people, who ‘knew not what they did.’ Truly, even his sweet spirit of forgiveness cannot say the same of us.

“Indeed, we are Christians only in name, — the reality has hardly dawned upon the world. Until we un-

derstand his love, and reciprocate it in suitable feeling and action, we are barren of the effects of Christianity.”

“ I am desirous to ascertain with distinctness what my duty is for the day. It is one of those days of comparative leisure, when no immediate call seems upon me for active employment or spiritual exertion. I find myself not indisposed for activity and having a wakeful interest for my religious improvement, — so that I desire to be found in the service of my Master, but see no reason to suppose that I shall accomplish any thing for myself or others ; for, having no definite purpose as an object for the day, it will be likely to pass away in unprofitable thoughts. This waste of such days distresses me, because I know the time will come when such a portion of time will seem invaluable to me, and I shall see distinctly before me objects of infinite importance, which time only is wanting to mature. Here, then, is the time ; — where are these objects ? Can they not be called up to the inquiring soul ready to embrace them ? Gracious Father ! one who longs to be truly thy servant in all things humbly waits upon thee at this time, wishing to see the exact work which thou hast given her to do. She is in time, — which is passing away. She fills relations to thee and to her fellow-beings which have their legitimate obligations. She must have something to do in this place, and at this time, which can be done by no other person, and at no other time. What, then, is her duty for this day ? She would not float at random even on the waters of life. No, — she would rather labor to attain her destined harbour, that when the evening comes she may be ready to wait on thee, to seek thy judgment on her labor.”

Mrs. Peabody's health was not firm, and previously to the summer of 1843 there had been an evident failure of her strength. She was, however, so constantly active and employed, and preserved at all times so much cheerfulness and animation of manner, that no fears were entertained of her early departure. The summer passed away with its usual course of occupation and enjoyment, — the occupations of social and domestic life, and the enjoyment of the society of many friends, as well as of a large and interesting family. This was, perhaps, the period to which her husband would have pointed, as the happiest season of his life. But the change was soon to come which was to involve all in darkness, except that religious faith which did not fail him in the hour of his sorrow.

Late in the month of September, Mrs. Peabody was attacked by illness, apparently so slight as hardly to require the aid of a physician. But in a day or two, it assumed a more serious character; not sufficiently so, however, to give occasion for alarm. She appeared herself, very early in her sickness, to have a presentiment that she should not recover, and employed herself in making arrangements in anticipation of the final change; and one evening asked to have all the children come into her chamber, that their parents might together consecrate them in prayer to God. After this, and, indeed, through her whole illness, a sweet cheerfulness and peace seemed to take possession of her soul. It was soon found that the remedies which were applied could give her no relief, and that her hour was nigh. When her danger was made known to her, a heavenly beauty spread itself over her countenance; her spirit was ready

and anxious to begin its upward flight. But it is needless to dwell upon a scene which is described by him who was thus bereft in words which will presently be given.

On the 4th of October, her gentle and pure spirit went back to God. It was on a beautiful afternoon, when the warm breath of summer scarcely moved the red leaves of autumn, that her remains were laid in the cemetery where those whom she deeply loved are now resting by her side.

Great apprehension was entertained by Dr. Peabody's friends lest the effects of this severe and unexpected blow upon a frame so delicate and a mind so sensitive as his would give them an occasion of fresh sorrow. She on whom he depended, — how much he could not know till then, — who had relieved the pressure of his cares, and to whom his heart was bound by the fondest affection that the spirit while on earth can know, was taken from his sight, and a deep darkness settled on his earthly hopes and prospects. But in this moment of fear and of sorrow his heart did not fail. Never did his religious faith shine forth with so bright and sustaining power as then. The light seemed to come to him from the eternal world. He felt that he could lean upon the Everlasting Arm ; the peace that passeth understanding visited his soul. He found the inspiration of his Saviour's words of love, and obtained the strength and consolation which he needed, by communion with his God. It is with the view of throwing light upon his own character and the varied excellence of her whom he had lost, that the words which he addressed to his society on the Sabbath following her death are here

given at length. They were uttered extemporaneously, but were subsequently written down at the desire of his friends.

There was something in the circumstances under which they were delivered which rendered them peculiarly impressive. It was on the usual day of the communion service, when it had been his habit, in the place of the usual sermon, to make a short address. He stood there, in the midst of long-trying friends, every one of whom was a sharer in his grief and was bound to him by the deepest sympathy. Worn and heart-broken as he was, he felt that he could then speak to them with a power drawn from the scenes through which he had passed; and he did speak to them from the fulness of his heart, — with an eloquence which those who heard it will remember to their latest day.

“ It seems a long time, my friends, since I spoke with you last. It seems as if winters of desolation had been crowded into a few short, stern days of misery, since I spoke with you last. With that vacant place before me, with one thought upon my heart, — O, how heavy on my heart! — I cannot avoid the subject of my sorrow. There is no reason why I should. You will not wish that I should. But, strangers as we are to our own hearts, I feel that it is not to make a display of mourning that I address you thus, nor is it to ask for greater sympathy. There cannot be greater sympathy than I have had from the kind, warm hearts around me. No. It is because there is a word which I am bound to speak, and which, therefore, I have the power to speak.

“ But we must turn a moment from all other thoughts

to the one suggested by those words of heavenly comfort which have just been read. They present the image of the Saviour sitting in awful majesty within the very shadow of death. Yet all his concern is for others ; he takes up their burden when almost sinking under his own. It is believed that those who are to die a violent death have a peculiar and sad expression ; such, I am sure, he must have had that night, and they who were near him must have seen it upon his brow. With the short and bloody path in which he is to travel to the cross, — with the black cross itself before him, he says to his disciples, ‘ Let not your hearts be troubled.’ He comforts them ; he gives peace, his own divine peace, to their souls. At length he rises, with the words, ‘ That the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.’ And he goes forth serenely to his doom. We can see that pale procession, in the chill moonlight, which falls upon the leaves by the way-side and suggests the figure of the vine ; and thus having loved his own, he loves them unto the end. Man of sorrows, well didst thou finish the work that was given thee to do !

“ But the fear of death was more easily overcome than some other feelings. After the mighty effort which he had made to suppress his own emotions for the sake of others, a horror of deep darkness came over him, which was infinitely worse than the fear of death. Do not ask what it was. Words could not describe it. It came partly from the exhaustion of the system ; still more from a rushing of confused and struggling feelings, which poured in like a trampling crowd upon his soul.

Any one who has been worn with suffering may form some idea of what it was. This horror it was which for a moment overcame and crushed him to the ground. His agony was not his misery, but the strife with his misery, — the effort which he made to bring his feelings into harmony with his Father's will. As the shuddering chill comes over him, he cries from the dust, 'O Father ! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me !' Again, the overwhelming passion bears away all resistance. Again, he implores to be spared ; and the bloody sweat — for such things have been — is wrung from his burning brow. But soon the warfare is accomplished ; the storm in his breast is over ; he lifts his head, radiant with submission, saying, ' The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ? Father ! thy will be done !'

“ And this was for us. We are all to die. Some of us are to pass through scenes of anguish, — not like his, O, not like his ! but bitter enough to shake all the firmness of the soul. Then they must struggle as he did to bear it with hearts resigned and true. Then they must pray as he did. They will need no visible angel from heaven to strengthen them, for the Lord Jesus himself will bend over them with the deepest tenderness, not wishing that they may be spared, for that would be to lose a blessing, but encouraging them to be faithful, and so to reach the full salvation of God.

“ And now, the fear of death ! How far can man rise above it ? I mean, when it comes full before him. For there are many dying men whose minds are clear, but who are such utter strangers to God and eternity, that they are not troubled, and have no bands, fearing

nothing, because they know not what it is to die. But when one realizes all that is before him, and his soul is profoundly impressed with the change which he is passing through, can he rise above it? Can he speak peace to others with an untroubled heart of his own? He can; — he can. Others since the Saviour have been able through him to do it, and if we are faithful, others will do it again.

“ And now I turn to myself, or rather to my departed friend. In the beginning of her sickness, she asked me to attend with her to some arrangements which would be necessary in case she should not recover. Some time after this, she asked me to perform some duty for her unless she should recover. Those words struck to my heart. I begged her not to speak so again, but she said we were prepared for every thing. Her anxiety was, that no obligation should be forgotten; and she went through every thing with that perfect system which she had always conscientiously observed. The fierce disease went on; every thing that skill and kindness could do was tried in vain, till early in the fatal day she observed a change in the manner of those about her. She wished to know what we feared, and when she was told, a light as of morning came over her face; it was perfectly resplendent with a smile of beautiful gladness. She clasped her hands, saying, ‘ Is it possible? Am I so early to be blessed? Shall I so soon be with my Saviour and my God?’ But her thoughts, as usual, turned at once from herself. She was anxious to redeem the time for the sake of others. She called us singly near to her, and, with many words of affectionate counsel, bade us each farewell. She earnestly desired

to see as many of her friends as possible ; for death itself could not make such a heart cold. They came, — they stood near her bed : and many who were present can describe the scene. I am confident they will remember it ; they will think of it in their own closing hours. One thing was most of all impressive : she did not express one word of anxiety for her family, nor for the one that was nearest to her heart. It never entered her mind that God would not care for them. Her whole manner, her voice, her smile, seemed to breathe of the eternal world. I cannot divest myself of the conviction, that the corruptible had already put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. And so she fell asleep. After a few words of inexpressible tenderness, she closed her dying eyes. Surely on my eyes never opened a scene of equal glory !

“ But I pass from this wonderful scene. It cannot be described to those who did not see it, and those who did see it will never forget. I would ask, or rather I would say, whence came this serenity in the dying hour. It was nothing supernatural ; it was the direct, the natural, the inevitable result of that love of God and man, which she had so faithfully cherished in her soul. Of her benevolence, I must say, — why should I not say it ? — her heart seemed pure, warm, and all-embracing as the heaven ; it was always my admiration. ‘ It is high, I cannot attain unto it,’ was ever the feeling which it inspired. Never indifferent, — never discouraged, — never weary ; always rejoicing with them that rejoiced, and weeping with them that wept. I do not believe that a spirit more entirely free from the stain of selfishness ever dwelt in this world below ; loving her friends most

fondly, and at the same time loving all. Not one shadow of coldness, jealousy, or suspicion ever darkened her clear breast. Of her devotion, I must say what others were less likely to know, that she labored, and watched, and prayed, to make it what it was. It was her daily, constant care to keep it alive. All the wants of the physical system were kept in stern subjection ; self-indulgence was a thing which she never seemed to know. Every morning it was her first joy to retire to her closet to read the Scriptures, to pour out her soul to God, to spread before herself all the duties of the day. When she sat in her chamber, the word of God was always near her, and at evening, exhausted as she always was with incessant activity, ‘ she summed the actions of the day each night before she slept.’ It was impossible, that, living near to God as she did, she should go a stranger to the land of souls. She could have no other than ‘ a golden set.’ Such a life must be crowned with an appropriate and inspiring close. I entreat you to remember the path in which she travelled to the tomb. Be open as day to sympathy ; go about doing good ; be faithful and confiding to your God, and you will die the death of the righteous, and your last end will be like theirs.

“ And now I would say, with respect to the agony through which our Saviour passed, it is one which some of his followers at some time of their life will be called to struggle through. What is it but the effort to bring the whole heart into submission. It is not easily done. There are some blessings which it is bitter as death to surrender. You lean upon them ; you depend upon them ; when they are threatened it seems

perfectly impossible for you to let them go. And when the conviction comes upon you like an earthquake, 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,' you feel as if it were no use to talk of resignation. You cannot have it so; resigned you cannot be. You clasp the Bible to your heart; you make a mighty effort to push aside the ghastly vision, and to see it upon the heavenly side. Sometimes you seem to succeed; you struggle out of the flood. Then comes the overwhelming reality upon you, and down your heart sinks again, till, just at the moment when the waters seem closing over you, the hand of mercy reaches down to the helpless hand uplifted from below, and you are saved; you say, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt'; a peace that passeth understanding spreads over your spirit. You can bear every thing, and are ready for every thing; strong in the Lord and the power of his might, you can welcome whatever comes, not with submission merely, but with a heart overflowing with love.

"If the day should ever come when you shall lose the queen of your heart, — if you must see those eyes closing which have for years been turned upon you with watchful, anxious, never weary love, — if you must see that hand pale and motionless, which in sickness was pressed affectionately upon your brow, and smoothed the pillow for your head, — if you are deprived of the heart which in all joys and sorrows answered faithfully, fervently, to your own, — see a vacant place at your fireside, and feel the dreariness of death throughout your dwelling, till it makes you sick at heart, — are constantly looking and listening for the familiar step and voice, and as often sadly reminded that you never shall hear them

again, — if this dark day should come to you, — far distant from you may it be, — but should it come, you have a right to the warmest wishes and prayers of my heart ; and the dearest wish I can express, the kindest prayer I can offer, is, that God may be as present to your heart in solitude and sorrow as he has been and is now in mine.

“ It is but natural that I should now look back upon the consolations which I have offered you in your sorrow, and I find that I have not dwelt sufficiently on that one which embraces all the rest ; I mean the blessed thought of God. I am not conscious now of deriving my support from the thought of meeting my best friend again. It is a blessing, but it is not the support ; the support is the sympathy of God and the Saviour, and their sustaining presence in the soul. I feel that they are with me. My heart desires no more. I have not a single wish to recall her who was the light of my life. My will is in perfect harmony with my Father’s. Naturally fearful and distrusting though I am, there is no darkness before me, there is no darkness around me. All is divinely bright above me. Without a single misgiving or doubt, I shall take my shoes on my feet, and my staff in my hand, and go in the way of duty, desolate though it is, I trust with more faithfulness than ever, so long as it pleases God.

“ I rejoice, therefore, to remember that I have long implored you to turn your hearts to God. I knew that the willingness to do this was a blessing, but how great a blessing I never knew till now. It can make the death-bed and house of mourning bright ; it gives peace of which I never could have dreamed to the wounded

and suffering heart. I do entreat you, then, to receive this blessing ; the time will come when you will feel your want of it, if you do not now. There is no sacrifice which I would not make, there is nothing which I would not do or suffer, if I could induce every one before me to turn without reserve to the Rock of our salvation. I do beseech you, then, to open your hearts to the heavenly influences ; let the love of your Heavenly Father awaken in your hearts some answering feeling of love.

“ So shall you be happy in life, and thrice blessed in death, like the friend who has gone before you. And now may God bless you ! May he lift up the light of his countenance upon you ! May he give you peace, such peace as she now enjoys, for evermore ! ”

We copy the following passage from a letter to a friend, dated October 11th, 1843.

“ I have been severely tried since I wrote to you, with the necessity for making some efforts which I would gladly have shunned, — such as that of speaking on the Sabbath. I felt bound to do it, though conscious that I should appear weak and foolish ; — there was something to be said which I alone could say. The circumstances were arranged with the usual kindness ; the rain was so severe as to keep away all who had not a particular interest in attending. The other services were soothing and grateful to my feelings, and however I may have exposed myself, I fully explained the life and religious history of my dearest one, so that no one could say it was through gifts of nature or peculiar blessing that she triumphed over death as she did. No, it was by prayer and labor that she fought the good fight. Her Sabbath

followed six days of labor, not of rest, and I do most earnestly pray that all may remember what made her the noble creature that she was ; — going about doing good, and living near to God.”

Those who have known sorrow will not object to the insertion here of some portions of his diary and private letters. To some it may appear as if the publication of any part of the diary upon which, when he lived, no human eye ever rested, were like revealing those sacred depths of sorrow and devotion, into which not even the fondest affection and sympathy should be allowed to penetrate. But we remember his own sentiments, as we heard them expressed with regard to similar disclosures. He felt that they should not be withheld if they could benefit any one spiritually. “What is it,” he would say, “which makes us shrink from imparting our deepest personal experiences but a feeling of *self*, which is not known to the disembodied spirit. When we have left this world, we shall only be anxious that our trials and conflicts may aid others in their preparation for heaven.” Hoping that, from this touching and inspiring picture of sorrow and of faith, some persons may feel strengthened and consoled under the pressure of similar afflictions, we give the following extracts from the diary.

“*October, 1843.* It was a heavy day when I followed my beloved Amelia to the grave. At the funeral service, in the church, they sang her favorite hymns, — ‘Jesus, lover of my soul,’ and ‘Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings.’ I was glad that her form was laid where the communion-table usually stands, that I might have that powerful and affecting remembrance connected

with the place. At the grave, where a great number were assembled, they sang, 'There is a land of pure delight.' And now she lies in those beautiful grounds. How I bless God, who disposed me to interest myself so much in the preparation of the cemetery! For all that I have ever done for it, verily I have my reward."

"And now it begins to open upon me why I needed this terrible blow. Had we been laid in the same grave, as I could have wished and prayed, had it been right, we should not have been united in death. She was too far above me. She was so heavenly-minded, so charitable, so thoroughly excellent, that, dear as I was to her generous heart, I could not have stood at her side. But now, perhaps, under the stern teaching of death, in solitary communion with my own heart, with the inspiration of her spiritual presence, with the light of her memory before me, I may do the duties assigned me, and thus form such a character, that, when I go, she may stand ready, with her sweet smile and open arms of love, to welcome me to the skies.

"But I bless God that in the earlier days of my solitude and sorrow I did not derive my support from such thoughts as this. God was present to me, — I realized that he was with me, — and what could I want beside? In a condition as helpless and hopeless as possible, I was supported by the Everlasting Arm, as if it were visibly extended from the skies. I thought not of reunion. I was perfectly resigned. I had no wish to alter in the least what was appointed me. 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' was the language of my soul. All these thoughts of consolation were present, no doubt, but they came not by

themselves; they seemed, like all other glorious, happy, and inspiring thoughts, to be assembled in the single thought of God, and to float in the great ocean of his boundless love."

"God will not leave his work half done. Whether we shall have his continued presence or not depends upon ourselves, and as often as I draw near to him, I believe he will draw near to me. If the cares of life draw us down from our elevated state, our feeling cannot be right; we must be ready to do, as well as to suffer, what pleases God. May I be faithful! May I receive all the cares which come upon me as part of the discipline which my character requires! The chief difficulty before me is the management of my children. They are young, needing patience, firmness, and discretion, but, more than all, a forbearing spirit of love. May I have that spirit! May I be saved from every impatient action, every harsh word, from every manifestation of haste and displeasure. May I act according to my conviction, — for I really believe that love is the only means of influence, — it is the only power that can be applied. Power *over* them we cannot have after a certain age. May I not have power *within* them? I have not begun right; but I shall retrace my steps. I shall feel that angel is smiling upon me when I make any effort, and I shall feel that her smile reflects upon me the blessing of her Father and my Father, of her God and my God."

From a letter to a friend we extract the following: —

"I do not find it the least of my consolations, that we have a cemetery in which my treasure can rest, where every thing is in perfect harmony with the mourn-

er's feeling. I go and sit there by night, as the moonlight falls upon her grave, with intense enjoyment ; — yes, to be sincere, I must use those words, even if I appear to you like a stock or a stone, — for God seems with me, and she seems with me ; every dear thought and memory gathers there, and I verily believe that, in all the history of my past life, I never have been able to form an imagination of heaven which would compare with those which have dawned upon me now.

“ And yet the solitude at home, — it is deep, it is awful, but it never brings my heart quite down. Heaven knows how my heart would have leaped to go before her, — for I did not think I could have borne her loss ; — but, now the order of Providence has gone forth, I have no desire except to be true to my duties as long as I am able, and then to be ready to go. Surely, the devotion of my life will be the least possible acknowledgment of his unwearied blessing in giving me such a treasure, and when he resumed it, giving me the treasure of her spiritual presence and his own spiritual presence in its stead.”

In a letter dated November 2d, 1843, he says : —

“ I am greatly obliged to you for your ever thoughtful kindness in sending me Scougal's Works, which I was very desirous to see. Such writers seem to me like sympathizing friends, whose hearts answer to my own like face to face in water, — and, what is better, answer to that of our common Master. I was very much interested in the extract from Dr. Channing.* I feel that

* “ The departed have gone to see, to love, and serve the Infinite Father, with a new fervor and elevation of spirit, and we should strive to sympathize with them, to be joined with them by participation of

it is true that we may lead a heavenly life below, and thus do what my dearest Amelia asked me if I could do. 'Shall we go on together in the heavenly way?' Whether she referred to this life or the other I did not know. My heart replies, We shall, my love, you in heaven where you deserve to be, and I alone, but not disheartened, in the world below, — you in enjoyment, as is meet, and I in discipline and sorrow, as is necessary for me. Neither am I dismayed at the rapidity and power with which her fine spirit will travel from glory to glory, — for, thank Heaven, as it gains in excellence, it will grow in sympathy, and I know that her love for me, 'unworthy as I am, will survive all change. Nothing but my utter abandonment can ever induce her to tear me from her heart.'"

After a short absence, he writes : —

"*Nov.* 20, 1843. I am happy to get back into my own pulpit, where every thing seems like home, the audience always attentive and kind in their expression, and the associations of the place, both divine and human, exactly what I should desire in the house of prayer. It was well calculated to get home on Saturday night,

their progress. We are apt to feel as if nothing we could do on earth bears a relation to what the good are doing in a higher world ; but it is not so. Heaven and earth are not so far apart. Every disinterested act, every sacrifice to duty, every exertion for the good of 'one of the least of Christ's brethren,' every new insight into God's works, every new impulse given to the love of truth and goodness, associates us with the departed, brings us nearer to them, and is as truly heavenly as if we were acting not on earth but in heaven. The spiritual tie between us and the departed is not felt as it ought to be. Our union with them daily grows stronger, if we daily make progress in what they are growing in."

though I found the most affectionate welcome. Still, one was not there. She will never welcome me on earth again ; and when Fanny sang my favorite song, —

“ The being beauteous
Who unto my life was given,
More than all things else to love me,” —

I was so entirely unmanned, as to shed the most bitter tears for her who is ‘ now a saint in heaven.’

“ My visit has been one of the deepest interest and gratification, — to find so many who could understand the value of my lost blessing, and, more than all, to find you, who so entirely sympathized with me in affection, and who follow her with the same intense interest now. How we do gaze into the future world ! And we see nothing but an image of our own thoughts and emotions, as he who looks into the water sees only his own reflection below. But we know the way, and that should be enough. It seems to be ordained, that, unless we travel in the way to it, we shall have nothing but unsubstantial fancies of that state ; but if our feet are set in that path, a living faith gives us as much and as welcome support as if the reality were present to our eyes.

“ I think I shall be faithful. In the long watches of the sleepless night I endeavour to study out my duty in every possible relation, and though I have but little confidence in my own wisdom, I try to make it sure that my aim shall be true and high. May God’s blessing be with me ! He would not take away my right hand and right eye without affording me other light to guide me. I can always think of what she would wish, and her holy life has made her so nearly one with her Master,

that I can, without any confusion of thought or irreverence, think of her when my heart rises up to God."

To the same : —

" Dec. 3, 1843. My purpose was to write you on Thanksgiving day ; but when it came, it was so unlike what it had been, that I was perfectly sick at heart. I preached on the subject of home, showing how it might be desolated by selfishness, and blessed by religious influences. I fear that I was myself an example of the former, for my dreary condition sat heavy on my soul. In my prospect of life every thing attractive and happy was connected with her. Now I look forward, and she is not there. A wretched vacancy is there. At times I could repeat the noble words of Catholic faith, *Sursum corda*, 'Lift up your hearts,'—but my heart would sink heavily again. I do not now know whether I shall be an example or a warning. But I hope in God. Many trials surround me, and the heart knoweth its own bitterness ; but he is able to deliver me out of them all. Blessed be his name ! "

To the same : —

" Dec. 17, 1843. — has sent me a few recollections of Amelia, which are interesting to me, as they would be to you. She says, — ' Amelia was very fond of flowers. When she was about three years old, I opened the front door one afternoon, and she lay asleep in the entry, her shoes filled round the instep with ladies' delights, her fine hair in long ringlets on her shoulders, and her cheeks flushed with a beautiful color, owing to the exercise she had taken. It was some time before I could prevail upon myself to wake her.' So it was with her, — beautiful in childhood, beautiful in

maturity, — O, how beautiful in heaven ! — I shall behold her, but not now. God give me faith and patience to wait his time ! ”

At the period of his wife's death, Dr. Peabody's family consisted of four sons, at the ages when they greatly needed such a mother's care, and of a daughter, the eldest of the five, whose name has been already mentioned in these pages. She had now reached the age of eighteen : full of talent and animation, earnestly devoted to reading and literature, with acquirements not generally expected at her period of life, and entering with all the ardor of a youthful heart into the pleasures of society. But the unwearied industry of her mother had saved her from domestic cares, and her tastes inclined her more to others. This was the cause of much anxiety to her father ; but it gave him far more, that, though reverent and not inattentive to her religious duty, she had not heretofore regarded that duty as the great object of her life. His hope of domestic comfort, and of the welfare of his younger children, now rested on her. Her experience in the affairs of the household had been very small, nor had she exhibited any very general sympathy with those around her. In order to impress her mind with a deep sense of the obligations which now devolved upon her, and of the spirit in which they should be fulfilled, he addressed to her this touching letter : —

“ We will look, my dear daughter, at the solemn duties which our Heavenly Father has now thrown upon us by the translation of our sainted friend. Let us every night and morning, so help us God, think them over, to know what we have to do, and how we have

discharged them. They will hereafter be required at our hands. If we are faithful, we shall both be happy, for there is but one path to happiness, in life's opening and in its decline. But faithful or happy we cannot be, without living as she did, — near to God.

“ Let us be affectionate, not only in reality, but in word and manner, to the poor children ; they will require unwearied patience and care. Let us resolve that they shall have it always, and love, cost us what it will. Their characters are yet to be formed, and if we show the right spirit and example, the effort will not be lost. God grant that our own may not be ruined by our unfaithfulness to theirs ! Let us feel it to be our duty to make home as pleasant as possible to them. If we are false to this duty, and they are driven abroad for enjoyment, it may be their ruin. Let us *never* be abroad for our own gratification, when we can give happiness at home.

“ It is yours now to take the head of the family, and to make yourself familiar with those domestic cares which heretofore your mother has taken from our hands. The arrangement of meals for each day, — the care of clothes, furniture, and rooms, — all matters of domestic charity, which were so sacredly regarded by your mother, — the whole superintendence of the household, — must necessarily come upon you. Any inattention to these obligations may be fatal to the peace and comfort of the house. Let us each be faithful to our part.

“ Let us remember how sacredly we are bound to cherish her friends. Her domestics were always her friends. She treated them with delicacy and tenderness, which resulted in strong attachment on either side.

Let us follow her example in this as in all excellence : were it only from self-interest, it is the only way to secure those kind services and attentions which we all need. Happy if they come from the heart !

“ Above all earthly things, let us keep open hearts to each other. Without mutual affection we must be miserable, and it cannot possibly be sustained without a confidence unreserved and open as day. How much I depend upon your affection in my wretched loneliness no words can tell. If you can, — and you can be a light to the life of your father, — it is worth all the effort and sacrifice it may require.

“ I write with many tears. Though God sustains me in a manner of which I could not have dreamed, the sudden and total shipwreck of my earthly happiness comes over me sometimes in such a manner that I sink broken-hearted to the dust. But I feel that affection, duty, and God, the elements of the higher life, are still worth living for. May I never be false to the steadfast purpose of my soul, which is to be faithful to my own improvement, faithful to my children, faithful to all others, and, most of all, faithful to my God !

“ Let that voice from the eternal world which we heard from the dying lips of your mother be for ever treasured in our hearts. Much sooner than we now imagine we shall be called to follow. May we die the death of the righteous, and let our closing scene be like theirs !”

Nor were his hopes disappointed. They were fulfilled in a measure greater than he had even dared to think. A light was breaking through the darkness of his desolation. In his diary he says, November 22d, — “ Fanny appears to enter upon her duties with much spirit

and discretion. I am greatly encouraged to believe that she will unfold very valuable traits of character. She has not been trained like her mother, in the school of adversity. This painful change may be the means of making her a finer character than she could have been without it. I pray most earnestly that she may be true to her Heavenly Father ; this is the most important thing. May his blessing be upon her ! ”

In a letter written at the same period, he says : — “ Fanny is now so well as to go about and attend to her duties, showing a very good disposition to be faithful to me, and I trust also to a Heavenly Father, whose right to her is greater than mine. My affections turn to her with the greatest fondness, and she returns it with an appearance of love which does much to relieve my wounded heart.”

In a letter dated December 3d, he says : — “ In my last lecture I touched upon the subject of communion, showing that it meant, if any thing, holding in common, readiness to share our blessings with others, and to let them share their cares and sorrows with us. This is the real communion, of which our coming together at the table is only a sign, sometimes, it is to be feared, a false one. . . . To-day I have preached and admitted Fanny to the church. God grant that she may be a faithful child to him ! If so, there needs no hope or wish for me.”

His hopes and prayers were answered. Her character was developed by this stern discipline with a fulness and energy which surprised even those who knew her best. Religion and duty were thenceforth her great end of life ; and she felt, what persons of her age are

not very apt to feel, that religion cannot have its perfect work without that general and active sympathy to which Jesus Christ applied the name of love. Her devotion to her father was disinterested and unwearied ; and she had the greatest joy that a true-hearted daughter can feel, in finding that she did very much to soothe his desolate heart. She established a powerful influence in the minds of her brothers by habitual gentleness and kindness. Her temper, somewhat excitable before, became uniformly patient and serene. She gave her time and thoughts to soothing the sorrows and attending to the necessities of the poor, making herself personally acquainted with their circumstances, and making them feel that she was their friend. The child seemed at once transformed into the thoughtful woman. Discretion, the latest plant of youth's spring-time, was manifested in her regard, alike reflecting and devoted, to every duty. One might have apprehended, that a spirit thus quickly ripening into excellence should be early translated to a better than an earthly home ; still her health was strong, and gave promise of many years of growing usefulness. But in January, 1844, nearly four months after the departure of her mother, she was suddenly attacked by illness. From a letter dated January 26th, we find the spirit in which her father received this new trial of his faith : —

“ I am sorry to be obliged to write to you that poor Fanny is sick again. Early in the night before last she was taken with bilious colic, as we supposed, but the physician has pronounced her disease to be scarlet fever. To-day she has appeared very sick, and wandering at times ; but this may be the usual course of the com-

plaint. In a former day I should have felt very badly to have such a disease make its appearance in the family ; but I have learned better. I cannot be without anxiety for my dear Fanny and the other children, but I have no fears. I can leave all to Him who disposes these events, with perfect confidence in his love, and without a wish to alter his appointment, whatever it may be.”

A few hours after he uttered these words of faith and submission, her father was called from his own sick-room to her dying bed, to receive her parting breath. Early on the morning of the 28th of January, her young spirit was released from the cares and sorrows of earth, and she was at rest for ever.

Her father was himself severely ill at the moment when this blow descended upon him. In what manner he endured it, his own words must tell. It was on the next Sabbath but one after her death, — the first one on which his state of health permitted him to resume his duties, — that he thus addressed himself to the younger portion of his society. Like the discourse which has been already given, it was extemporaneous and written after it was delivered. The reader will find in it the outpouring of the fulness of his heart, combined with his recollections of her from whom he was thus separated : —

“ My strength has been somewhat worn with sickness and sorrow, and I cannot tell how far it will allow me to go. I shall not, therefore, commence the usual service, which I might not be able to finish, and shall only say, in plain and familiar words, what is on my mind and in my heart. If I addressed myself to any, it would be to the young, — to those just passing from careless youth into

the responsibilities of maturer years, — to those near the age of her who lately left us for the grave. If in what I say I shall make more than one allusion to her, I am sure you will indulge me in it. The days are heavy with me ; it would seem as if the memory of loved ones would soon be all that is left me, and such comfort as I can find in such sad recollections I am sure you will let me enjoy.

“ I would fain impress upon the young the wisdom, the happiness, the absolute necessity, of turning their hearts to God, and would recommend to them to make the sign of their sincere determination to be as much as possible like their Heavenly Master. You may think that you are not ready for this ; your feelings are not ripe for it. I ask not for your feelings ; let them take their own time. What I ask is the deep and solemn determination to follow your Master in all things as fast and as far as human frailty will allow. In other words, I ask you to be children of God, in thought, in action, and in life ; to treat him as a father ; to go boldly to the throne of grace, and throw open your hearts — all your hearts — before him ; tell him your wants, tell him your temptations, tell him your joys and sorrows, assured that he careth for you. Ask his blessing, ask his help and the influences of his presence, which he is always waiting to bestow. When your hearts are once sincerely and faithfully turned in that direction, you will find a joy in life which you have never dreamed of yet ; you will awake at once to a sense of the value and blessing of existence ; all your distaste, anxiety, and restless weariness will pass away ; you will feel and confess, for the first time, that you have found peace to your troubled souls.

“ You observe that I speak as if all this was within your own power. I believe that it is ; they who will may come to the waters. Our Saviour upbraided the thoughtless men of his day, because, having power, they would not come to him that they might have life. You can take the leafless plant from your cellar and set it in the sun ; the influences of heaven in the spring-time will soon cover it with foliage and with flowers. What you can do for the plant which you value, you can also do for your heart, your barren heart, which is now its own sepulchre, which has never pursued, nor acknowledged, nor even understood, the purpose for which God made it. I know this is not often done till God’s hand has touched the heart. Is it not so with you ? What numbers have you seen in the last few years passing out from this house of God, — the aged and venerable, the manly and matronly and useful, the young and beautiful and tender, — moving in pale procession down to the bosom of the eternal world ! Has not another perished in the brightness of her rising, — at an hour which would seem untimely, if that word could apply to any act of God ? She has been called to impress on you how soon you may hear the death-angel’s calm but unrelenting voice, — how suddenly you may be summoned, with your present thoughts upon your minds, and your present feelings and passions in your hearts. As you are you must go, perhaps without a moment’s conscious warning, to render your account to God. Be not deceived by the representations of fancy. The coloring which sentiment and imagination throw around the death-bed is not true. Seen as it is, it is a stern reality. It is an awful thing to die.

“ My wish and prayer for you is, that you may have the feelings of children of God, — the affectionate reverence for him, the quick and living conscience, the warm-hearted sympathy with those around you, which a sense of your filial relation to him will inspire. Never be misled by the miserable fiction, that without prayer and without a true love for others you can be the children of God ; for, depend upon it, it is not so. We live in a world of self-delusion ; it is fearful to think how many, living in hollow and lifeless forms, are persuaded that all is well with their souls, though they have not and do not try to have the principles and affections which make the Christian.

“ The mother of the dear child whom I have lost — her views of God and humanity were always hopeful and inspiring — said of her daughter, ‘ The time will come when she will change, and when she does, the change will be true.’ The time did come ; she was changed ; her heart opened to a sense of her relation to her Heavenly Father, acknowledging the various duties which grow out of it, with the sincerest desire and effort to do them. From that hour a lovely serenity and cheerful and earnest thoughtfulness spread themselves over her manner, and shone from her placid brow. I cannot tell you what delight it was to me to see the Bible in her hand, and the deep interest with which she used to read it, — to observe how peacefully her days went by, how sacredly the Sabbath was regarded ; for I saw that the prophecy was fulfilled, and the change was true. It was not that she was cold and unworthy before, but a new revelation had evidently dawned upon her spirit. She saw how great a thing existence is, and what wonders of

glory and love there are in it to those who, instead of snatching the joys that float by them on the surface, look deeper for their happiness and find their treasures within. We are told by those who have passed the winter in the arctic circle, that almost as soon as the spring returns the snows are gone, the streams are flowing, the earth and the trees are green, the flowers pour incense from their little censers, and birds fill the woods with the wild rapture of their song. Such is the change in the heart when it passes from darkness to light, not by that mechanical process by which hearts are bent in one direction, like iron in its red-hot glow, soon to become cold and rigid as ever, but by a glad and voluntary surrender of its energies and affections to Him who gave them; for all the powers within rise up in happy, harmonious, and powerful action, as soon as the warm sunshine of God's influence is permitted to reach the heart.

“ I would also, if I had power, impress upon the young how much may be done in a little time, if the heart is in it. ‘ How much we might do if we only would ! ’ were the words of a dying man whose virtues I shall long remember. Why cannot the living feel this ? Why should it be left to start up in the hearts of the dying, when the time of action is nearly past ? It was said of him who was translated in the early age of the world, for the example of religious excellence which he gave, that, ‘ being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time. ’ And it is true, that, under certain circumstances, one man may live more in a few days than another in threescore years and ten ; that is, he may do more to fulfil the purposes of existence, more

to serve God and man, more to unfold the great spirit within him, than another who slumbers on to the late decline of age without asking what life is for, how much may be done in it, and what account must be rendered at last.

“ I feel that it was so with the child whom I have lost. The first eighteen years of her life were comparatively a blank, the last few months were the well filled, the deeply written, the richly illuminated page. Although a stranger to domestic duties till the whole weight of them came at once upon her, she seemed to work out for herself in a few days the experience of years, manifesting an energy and discretion which inspired in me the most perfect confidence, and which a lifetime is commonly required to teach. She took up the burden of those duties, which was far from being a light one, with a power and gracefulness which seemed incredible in one so young ; but in truth, ‘ Honorable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is measured by number of years ; but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.’

“ There is divine philosophy in this. We know how soon the imagination, ‘ yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast, sweeps the long tract of day,’ and the spiritual powers are equally rapid and resistless when called into efficient action ; in the greatness of their strength they travel over the field of duty, and, after a few short struggles and victories, possess and enjoy it all. The truth begins to be understood. It comes to us in the words of the modern lyrist, which always stir my heart like the sound of a silver trumpet : —

‘To all the sensual world proclaim,
One glorious hour of crowded life
Is worth an age without a name.’

Let every heart take up that word, and rejoice to send it on ; perhaps it may reach the dull, cold ear of the sensual world at last. O this sleep of life ! how much deeper, heavier, how much more hopeless it is than the sleep of death ! To that sleep there shall be a waking, — the morning is not far ; but to this sleep of life, the morning may never break, — the waking may never come.

“ While the heart that feels its relation to God will delight to come into near communion with him, there is another manifestation of the religious spirit in which there is less danger of delusion. I mean, the sympathy with all, which our religion inspires. Not the sympathy with the few, nor with the many ; but with all, without exception, who bear the form of a man. ‘ If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? Do not even the publicans the same ? ’ It must be something more self-denying, more free-hearted, than this that shall resemble the spirit of your Master.

“ O, could you but know how you wrong your own souls, what a death-wound you give to your own moral nature, when you treat any form or aspect of humanity with ridicule or disdain ! When you laugh at the weaknesses and follies of others, you are yourself the subject of profound compassion to those heavenly beings who look down with interest on our fallen race. ‘ Have we not all one Father, — hath not one God created us ? ’ For his sake, let us treat all others as brethren and sisters, having the same earnest desire to serve them, the

same pain at seeing them unkindly treated, the same joy in their prosperity, the same sorrow for their sorrow, and most of all for their sin. Cherish in yourselves, with all your care, the spirit of your Master, — I do assure you, it requires all the care that you can give, — and remember that his spirit can dwell only in a gentle, forbearing, loving, and patient heart.

“ Such, I may truly say, was the spirit of the child whom I have lost. I mean after her heart was opened, for it was colder and more reserved in former years. She felt that she had made a great mistake, that the regard of every human being was of great value, and she determined to go forth and seek the friendship of others by the only means that can secure it; for it is always an answering feeling, freely given only to those who freely give.

“ Her heart warmed towards the friends of her mother, — and who were not the friends of her mother? She longed for the season when she could go forth to become acquainted with the members of the society, to express to them her grateful sense of their unwearied kindness to me and mine. From her youth she could have no power over her brothers, but she established at once an influence within them, and they cheerfully submitted themselves to the authority of love.

“ For myself, I was like the wanderer, — who, when falling on the mountain-side, grasped a small plant for his support, and thus brought to light the rich mines of Peru. I was in constant wonder at the treasures of feeling which unfolded themselves in her love for me; it was watchful, patient, self-denying, and tender. When we parted on the night before her sickness began, I

threw my arms round her, and felt that I had something to live for yet. In her delirious visions she was constantly speaking of me. I shall never forget how fondly she pressed her burning lips to mine, and her last words to me, 'O my dear father!' breathed from depths of affection which no line had ever sounded in her young and fervent heart. It was God's blessing to me, — and till my own heart shall be cold in death I shall be grateful that I possessed, enjoyed, and know how to value this blessing of a daughter's love.

“ I think I am not misled by natural partiality when I say that she gave promise of usefulness had she lived, and in her early departure there is something of the mystery of death, — something more than can be read by the living eye. I know that early death is a blessing to those who are prepared to go ; it is a blessing to be taken early, while unworn with anxiety and sorrow, while the affections are unchilled by disappointment, and before the heart has become partially hardened, as the best hearts may, by the rough collisions of the troubling and the troubled world. It is hard to surrender those who are dear to us, but it is not hard to submit ourselves to the disposal of a God of love. It is in these afflictions that the foundations of our immortal life are laid ; the strait and narrow path is the nearest one to a heavenly home. Some of you have already become intimately acquainted with grief, — not heavier, perhaps, but yet harder to bear, than mine, — and those who have been exempt thus far cannot go through life without meeting with changes ; they are the universal doom, from which none may hope to be free. ‘ In the world,’ said Jesus Christ, ‘ ye shall have tribulation : but

be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.' Remember the strength and sympathy which he offers. Remember his promise, — ' To him that overcometh, I will give the morning star.'

' The star of the unconquered will,
 He rises in my breast,
 Serene, and resolute, and still,
 And calm, and self-possessed.
 O, faint not in a world like this,
 And thou shalt know ere long,
 Know how sublime a thing it is
 To suffer and be strong.'

“ It has been as I intimated that it would be. I have indulged my own feelings with too little regard to the claims and duties of the day. Still, I think that the service will not be lost, for if the words are uninstruc- tive, the act of God is full of meaning. ‘ The righteous dead condemneth the ungodly that are living, and youth that is soon perfected, the many years and old age of the unrighteous.’ Remember how few days since her hold on life seemed strong as yours, and now she has exchanged the happy mansions of the living for the lonely and frozen grave. Remember how soon you may follow in that path where there is no return, and, while you may, secure the preparation of the Gospel, — the only preparation that can avail you in the world to which you go. If you are but faithful to yourselves, to others, and to God, you will close your eyes in peace ; sweet and mournful will be the memory you will leave behind you, and death will conduct you to happiness such as no living lips can tell. Here is a field of high and holy ambition. Live

so that, if the next spring should not find you here, you may be rejoicing in nearer presence with God. So fulfil the duties of your life that, if you should thus pass away, you may, like her on whom the heavy gate of the tomb last closed, leave the epitaph written on a parent's bleeding heart, — ‘ Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.’ ”

From a letter to a friend, written a week after his daughter's death, and before he had left his sick chamber, we may see that, although feeble in body and sad in spirit, he still could say from the heart, “ Thy will be done.”

“ *Feb. 5, 1844.* When I wrote you last, I told you that I was prepared for whatever might come ; but I did not know. So far as to be able to receive it with grateful and undoubting confidence, with unaltered love of my Heavenly Father, and without a wish that it might be otherwise, I was prepared. But not to feel wounded, stricken, and desolate, — for this I was not prepared. I was lifted above my former sorrow, but now ‘ He hath brought me down to the dust of death.’ Perhaps, as I gain my physical strength, which is now entirely subdued, I shall feel stronger in spirit. I shall commit myself to Him, and he will do with me as he thinks best. His will be done !

“ How strange, that, when my dearest child had just begun to unfold the rich treasures of energy and affection which had been so long folded up within her, when I had just begun to lean upon her, she should be withdrawn ; her character in its new beauty, power, and loveliness just shown to me, and then withdrawn for ever ! The night of her sickness, when she bade me good night

with her usual kiss, I threw my arms round her, and held her to my heart. I felt that I had something to live for, — it seemed as if a new, bright field of life was opening upon me. Nothing could exceed her tender, disinterested affection for me. The last day of her life she was delirious, but talking all the while of me and what she must do for my comfort. When I saw her for the last time, she drew my lips down in close pressure to her own, saying, — ‘ O my dear father ! ’ Such was the lovely opening of her new promise, and now the darkness that follows it is extreme. Will it ever pass away ? ”

The shadow of physical weakness and depression passed away, and as he regained his strength, his mind recovered its tone, and we find him writing as follows.

To the same : —

“ *Feb.* 15, 1844. The few last months have obliged me to be constantly speaking of myself. So much so, that now I feel as if I were in danger of extreme selfishness, and yet, as in my former sorrow, I am determined to be perfectly natural in the expression of my feeling, — that is, not to suppress whatever I feel like saying, simply because it may seem like taxing the sympathy of friends and holding one’s self up as an object of compassion. The great endeavour should be to get back as soon as possible to the healthy state of mind, for in that only can we feel our relation to our Father and perform the duties it requires. With me, the free expression of feeling is the most direct way to it. I trust I shall reach it soon. I am sometimes astonished at the manner in which I bear these things ; they seem horrible as they are coming. My flesh and heart fail at

the sight, but when they are come, though I am in the very shadow of death, and feel its chill at my heart, I find myself sustained, — there is no heart-sinking, — I submit, without a wish that it were otherwise ; for the Divine sympathy and presence seem so near me, that I almost doubt whether it is not delusion. But when I reflect upon it, I feel surer of this than of any thing else ; there are effects produced in myself which only this is sufficient to account for. I know that it must be so, and I throw myself back on this feeling with as much confidence as if I was leaning on the Rock of Ages. — will send you what I said last Sabbath by way of address to Fanny's companions. There was much in the sudden departure to arrest their attention, and, if I am not under a complete illusion, there was much in Fanny's later character to inspire them to efforts for the unfolding of their spirits, and the attainment of a higher and better life. I do not trust much to any thing that I can say ; — the green tree has never spoken to much purpose, and it cannot be expected of the dry. But in this case God has spoken, and I trust not in vain."

To the same : —

" *Feb.* 27, 1844. Your kind letter has just reached me, while writing. I am very grateful to you for the extract which you send me from Fanny's letter to her young friend. It expresses in words what we saw in living action, or rather expresses in part, for in a letter she does not dwell, as she might have done elsewhere, on the source of those influences which were working the change in her young heart. Still, I hope her young friends will reflect that every effect must have a cause sufficient to produce it. Death, and the impression

which it makes, are not sufficient, as thousands of cases show. There was in her a quickened sense of obligation, and, of course, a clearer discernment of the love and presence of Him to whom she was thus bound, — to whom the first fruits of her heart and life were due.

“I am very much struck sometimes with the extent to which I am favored above others. They speak of their want of faith in what seems to me a clear daylight reality. They say, ‘Increase our faith,’ while it seems to me that nothing short of actual sight and presence could make any addition to mine. . . . Several have said to me that they would give any thing for stronger evidence of the unseen world, whereas faith is the evidence ; just in proportion as one believes, and lives accordingly, is he conscious of an effect produced in his heart. An effect so universal and sure cannot come from visions and imaginations ; there must be a reality somewhere. We perceive it, as Columbus found he was nearing the Western Continent by the change in the winds and waters before it rose for the first time upon his view.”

To the same : —

“*March 13, 1844.* In your letter you ask if Mr. P. may copy my address. I am sorry he should have had any hesitation about doing it at the time when he felt an interest in it. My whole desire was to have it circulated in manuscript form, because that was the least ostentatious way, and I am very glad when any one cares enough for it to be willing to make a copy. I hope it will be good for others that I have been afflicted, and it does seem to me as if the sudden unfolding of a fine spirit, just shining out and then withdrawn, might

have some effect to touch the heart. It reminds me of the only time when I saw the full moon at Niagara. I was in the tower just over the fall, receiving a strong impression, though the sky was darkened with clouds. All at once the moon broke through them, gilding the whole prospect, and lighting up the rainbow from the English to the American fall. In a few minutes it was all dark again, and so remained while I was there ; but the memory, and what is more, the effect of that moment's revelation, will go with me to my latest day."

From this time, Dr. Peabody devoted himself with increased energy to his religious duties. His own experience had taught him how to speak to the hearts of his people with more depth and power than before ; and those who heard him will bear witness that he appealed to them with a spirituality and fervor which made a deep and abiding impression. His health continued to be feeble, and a severe shock was given to his constitution by the afflictions he had undergone ; and he was himself persuaded that the shadows of night were soon to fall, and that what he was to do must be done quickly.

The words which he used in speaking to his people of a departed brother,* to whom he paid an eloquent tribute on the Sabbath succeeding his death,† touchingly describe his own condition at this period of his ministry : — " We see those, like our departed friend, who live for years in constant suffering, with forms bowed down by infirmity, and yet keep their minds in constant, efficient, useful activity, not considering themselves released by reason of helplessness from any of

* Henry Ware, Jr.

† September 23, 1843.

their obligations to God or man. On the contrary, their energy seems quickened by that which would seem most to oppress it. They devote themselves with more earnestness to their duties because the time is short and the service which they render must be rendered soon ; they will not withdraw the fainting hand till it is utterly helpless ; they are determined to give the last remnants, as well as the fulness, of their strength to the labor which they love. Such examples strengthen our confidence in the future state, if this be possible, for they show that such persons are able to look over and beyond it ; they live as those who know that they shall live for ever ; they have seized the truth of their condition ; they understand that death is the beginning, not the end ; they keep their powers in constant action here, that they may be prepared to enter at once upon the higher duties which await them in the immortal state to which they go."

It has already been seen that the relation in which he stood to his people was very intimate and near ; he felt that in the presence of such friends he could speak with the openness and freedom of familiar intercourse ; and he did speak to them with an earnestness and effect far exceeding those of his earlier years. He seemed at every moment standing on the confines of the eternal world, as one ready to be offered ; permitted just before entering its gate to point out to those he loved, with the failing accents of a dying voice, the way to reach its blessedness. He was always gentle ; but now his soul seemed to glow with Christian love. He was always humble ; but now he wore the aspect of one who never for a moment lost the consciousness that he was in the view of an all-seeing eye, and the great purpose of his being was the only one that occupied his thoughts.

It was proposed to him, by members of his society, that he should suspend his labors for a season, in order to visit Europe, and endeavour to establish his health by rest and change of scene ; and they liberally offered to provide him with the means of making such a tour ; but he felt that any prolonged absence might be unfavorable to the comfort or welfare of his children, and that he could find no happiness elsewhere such as was afforded by his home.

It is now apparent that he was at this time drawing rapidly near the grave, but debility had accompanied him so long, that his friends saw no cause for serious alarm, and believed that an effectual remedy might be found in the suspension of some of his labors, which were wearing on his exhausted frame. But his appearance and manner gave the impression to strangers, that the period of his labors was not far distant. In July, 1846, he delivered a discourse before the Alumni of the Divinity School at Cambridge. Many of those who heard him upon that occasion well remember that he seemed to them to be speaking as a dying man, and that his voice sounded like that of one who is on the border of the grave.

Here the pen fell from the hands of the only one to whom the friends of his brother were willing to confide the task of preparing this Memoir. While engaged in writing it, he said to a friend that he felt as if he were carving the letters on his own gravestone. His voice is now still. There is a touching eloquence in his silence which it seems almost sacrilege to break. Yet we must follow our suffering friend through the last faltering steps

of his journey ; we would also seek to pay our tribute of affectionate reverence to the memory of that brother who has left none behind him to do justice to his rare genius and excellence.

Resuming the narrative where we find it is abruptly broken off, we follow Dr. Peabody through six months of debility, until we reach the closing scene. Early in October, 1846, he was attacked with illness, which, though of short duration, was followed by extreme exhaustion. Writing to a friend, he says of himself : —
 “ My usual way of keeping some subject of active thought before me was out of the question in so weak a state. My mind seems like a leaden weight, or what the boys in fishing call *a sinker*.” At this period, however, he showed that his mind was still awake to the beautiful harmonies of nature. He addressed the following lines to a little girl of nine years old, whose uncommon susceptibility to natural beauty had attracted his sympathy and attention. They are interesting, as being the last lines of poetry which he ever wrote, and as showing the peculiar grace and facility with which he always directed the young to find in nature the wise and tender teachings of a Father’s love.

“ Louisa! did you never trace
 The smile on nature’s glorious face,
 That seems to breathe from every part
 The deep expression of a heart ?
 I know you have ; — in every flower
 You feel a presence and a power ;
 To you the blue and silent sky
 Has meaning, like an earnest eye ;
 And all the warm and living glow,
 Where foliage heaves and waters flow,
 Inspires in every changing tone
 Some feelings answering to your own.

“ But tell me whence that smile can be.
 The earth says, — ‘ It is not in me ’ ;
 ‘ ’T is not in me,’ the deep replies ;
 The same voice answers from the skies.
 The smile divine that nature wears
 Comes from some higher source than theirs ;
 For such expression never springs
 From lifeless and unmeaning things ;
 They have no influence to impart,
 They have no power to touch the heart,
 And all the brightness round them thrown
 Is beautiful, but not their own.

“ Then there must be a living soul
 That quickens and informs the whole ;
 There is ; in nature ever shine
 The kindlings of that soul divine.
 And thus the rich and dreamy haze,
 That sweetly veils the autumn days,
 The scarlet leaves that, glancing round,
 With rainbow fragments strew the ground,
 The clear transparency of noon,
 The bright and thoughtful harvest-moon,
 And all around us and above,
 Reflect a Father’s smile of love.

“ I know that your young heart discerns
 What man’s hard spirit coldly learns, —
 The truth which throws the brilliant ray
 Of joy upon the earthly way ;
 You have a Father, — kind and true,
 And full of sympathy for you,
 And, though with warm affection blest,
 Remember that He loves you best ;
 O, turn, then, to that Friend above,
 Resolve to answer love with love,
 And ever act the filial part,
 With faithful and confiding heart.”

October, 1846.

After an absence of two or three Sundays from his

pulpit, he returned to it while yet too feeble to stand. He was deeply impressed with the conviction, that he should not long be permitted to labor, and he wrought "while it was yet day." He did not, however, so distinctly apprehend danger to his life, as the necessity of abandoning his profession, owing to the extreme difficulty of speaking in public, occasioned by a failure of his voice. This increased upon him during the winter, and gave him great uneasiness as to the result. So far, however, from allowing his general state of debility to interrupt his course of duty and exertion, he never, perhaps, during any period of his life, accomplished so much intellectual labor. He furnished more than his usual amount of writing for the *North American Review*; was never absent from his pulpit on the Sabbath, and in addition to his accustomed labors on that day he took a class in the Sunday School, of which he writes to a friend as follows:—

"I wish I had some notes on the Scripture to furnish you with; though perhaps, if you take my course, you will find them less necessary. I have taken a class of young ladies to teach on Sunday, and consider the Scriptures simply as intended to throw light on human nature, duties, and relations. So that my first question is,— 'What can I learn from this passage which it will do me good to know?' One is surprised to find how many valuable truths are thus suggested. For instance, in the history of the Fall: I would show from it that a state of prosperity is not one of content,— which God knew, but it was necessary for man to know it; that no virtue can be of any worth, except it be formed,— that is, it must be *character*; that happiness and excel-

lence can never be gifts, but must be results ; that the earth was cursed for man's sake, that is, his benefit ; that death, too, is a blessing to all who do not make it otherwise, — a blessing to the surviving in its influences.

“ Truths of this kind will start out before you, and with your power of language and your experience of life you will produce a greater effect than in the old explaining way. In fact, it is only thus regarded that the Bible has a deep and abiding interest, and I am gratified to see that my class evidently feel the interest which I wish to inspire. Teaching them on the Sabbath is the only thing in the shape of enjoyment which I am conscious of looking forward to ; it carries me back to the days of anticipation which I passed out from long ago.”

This tone of sadness and discouragement may be directly traced, at this time, to the state of physical exhaustion in which he found himself. And yet it must be admitted, that, under circumstances the most favorable for enjoyment, he often was inclined to despondency. He reproached himself at times for not “ having a stronger relish for life ” ; but he attributed it to his physical constitution, which often seemed to act like “ a weight and a chain ” upon his mind. This natural want of elasticity of spirits made the trials which came upon him so heavily during the latter portion of his life much harder to endure than they would have been to a person of a more cheerful spirit and a lighter heart.

In the month of April he was again visited with a severe cough, which affected his appearance so much that his people became anxious and alarmed, and sought to devise some mode of relief to which he might be induced to accede. At a parish meeting held on the

11th of May, it was unanimously voted, that a committee be appointed to confer with Dr. Peabody upon the expediency of discontinuing his labors for a time, or to make some arrangements by which he may be partially relieved from the active duties of his office. It was also voted, that, if he would take a recess, the society would supply the pulpit and defray all his expenses during his absence. This expression on the part of the people was communicated to Dr. Peabody in the following letter : —

“ *Springfield, May 12, 1847.*

“ Dear Sir, — Inclosed I send you the votes of our society at their meeting of yesterday. Knowing the anxiety of all our friends upon this subject, and in the hope that a release from all your duties to us, and your domestic cares, may result in great benefit to your health, if not to its restoration, we most cordially and earnestly invite you to try the effect of a voyage to Europe, and for this purpose will make immediate arrangements, as provided in the second vote.

“ Most truly and devotedly yours,

“ JOHN HOWARD.

“ In behalf of the Committee.”

To this communication, Dr. Peabody made the following reply : —

“ *Springfield, May 15, 1847.*

“ My dear Sir, — Nothing could have been more unexpected than the very generous offer which you have so kindly and considerately communicated, and to which, without reflection, I should be wholly at a loss for a reply. I certainly do not need, and therefore

could not think of receiving, any thing like the indulgence proposed ; but since the offer is so liberally made, I may say that my life is too monotonous and unexhilarating to be good for health or efficient action of the mind ; and if I could make arrangements for occasional journeys, in the course of which I might supply my pulpit by exchange, it would be a great relief to me in the approaching season, not to speak of those whose destiny it is to hear me. I could not possibly leave my family for any long tour without a degree of anxiety which would make travelling of no advantage, and I do not see any way, except something resembling that which I suggest, in which the kind purpose of my friends can be answered.

“ I shall be very happy to see you and the other gentlemen at any time most convenient to you. I shall be at home this, and to-morrow, and Monday evening. Perhaps Sunday evening would be most convenient to you, and it is not likely that any calls on me would occur to interrupt us.

“ Your friend and servant,

“ WM. B. O. PEABODY.

“ John Howard, Esq.”

This expression of sympathy and consideration on the part of his people was exceedingly welcome as an evidence of their affection and interest. It gave an exhilaration to his spirits, and induced him to propose to himself a visit to Boston during the week of Anniversaries, which was immediately to succeed the week upon which he had entered. He made an arrangement to exchange with the Rev. Mr. Thompson of Salem, on

the Sabbath succeeding the Anniversaries, and felt that the proposal for his relief, of which he had agreed to avail himself to a certain extent, would make a most welcome change in his spirits and in his health.

On Sunday, May 16th, he preached to his people for the last time. His last sermon was from the text, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." And the hymn with which he closed his last service in the church was,

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace ;
Rise from transitory things
Towards heaven, thy dwelling-place."

Throughout the day, it was observed that he spoke with peculiar earnestness, and with less appearance of exhaustion than he had exhibited for many weeks. On Tuesday he was engaged for some hours in the morning superintending the setting out of trees in the cemetery, and in the afternoon he walked to a distant part of the town, to visit one who was in sickness and poverty. Some one not belonging to his parish, on seeing him pass, remarked, "There goes Dr. Peabody on an errand of mercy. He looks too feeble to stand, but while he lives he will be found in the steps of his Master, going about and doing good." On Wednesday, although far from well, he remained nearly all day at his desk, endeavouring to finish an article which was promised for the next number of the North American Review. He hardly left his desk through the day, and at night, complaining of chilliness and exhaustion, he went early to bed. The next morning he attempted to rise, but finding that he could not support himself, he

went back to his bed, from which he never rose again. He dictated to his son the closing pages of the review which he was so anxious to complete, but seemed unequal afterwards to any mental or physical exertion. He appeared to be entirely prostrated, and would repeatedly say, *I want rest*. On one occasion he asked to be left alone, saying, "I want to be still, — still as death."

Yet he would occasionally be roused by a visit or a message from a friend ; and to one sitting by him, who asked if the perfume of cologne water was still agreeable to him, as it had usually been, he replied with energy, "Give me the smell of an open field,— it speaks of the goodness and love of God." And again, when a flower was handed to him, he exclaimed, "Beautiful ! beautiful ! but not more so than many things which show God's love for us." It was, however, very seldom that he uttered distinctly any continued expression of thought. At times his mind was evidently wandering, and he constantly shrank from any attempt to speak which could be avoided. Those who were near him felt, however, from the expression of his countenance, and from some other indications, that he was not unaware of the change that was approaching. On the Tuesday evening before his death, just as the "western evening light" was kindling the landscape after an afternoon shower, his physician drew aside the curtain, and asked him, if he should not raise him up to look out upon the beautiful view from his window. After opening the curtain, he returned to his side, and found him completely overpowered by his emotion, and in tears. He said, "I am wrong, — it is too much for you." Dr. Peabody motioned to him that he would like to

have him wait a while, and then said, — “ I was thinking of a death upon this bed such as never was before, and never will be again, when the dying one asked that she might be raised up to look out once more upon that view.”

Throughout the week he seemed constantly sinking, and on Friday, May 28th, he lost the power of speech, and seemed almost unconscious at times of what was going on around him. At six o'clock in the evening, his friend, the Rev. Dr. Osgood, came to his bedside, as he said, “ to look upon his face once more.” He expressed, in tender and affectionate words, his sympathy and prayers for him. Dr. Peabody evidently heard him, and endeavoured to articulate his thanks. This was the last conscious recognition, on his part, of any one about him. He continued to breathe with difficulty until near midnight, when he fell asleep, gently as an infant, and,

“ Life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul was found in peace.”

The morning after his spirit departed, as those were standing near him to whom in the Sunday School he had spoken, the last time he met them there, of *the true life*, they were most touchingly reminded of his last words. “ Why should we,” said he, “ speak of the departed as *dead* ; it is a cold, hard word ; when I am gone, I hope no one will say, ‘ He is dead.’ ”

On Saturday, May 29th, a parish meeting was called to make arrangements for the funeral services. It was fully attended by the male and female members of the society, and utterance was given to the most touching and spontaneous expressions of affection and grief. At

the funeral, on the following Tuesday, the church was thronged with mourners from all the societies in town. Dr. Gannett of Boston delivered a very appropriate discourse, in which he unfolded the inspiring doctrine of the "identity of the spiritual life on earth with the future life in heaven," showing, in view of this doctrine, what is the true life, and in what sense we should regard that which is commonly called death. By a peculiarly natural and happy transition, he then passed to the memory of him in whom "was seen a most impressive example of *the true life*." The remains of the beloved and revered pastor were followed to the cemetery, where they were laid in the spot marked out by himself, a short time before his death. That beautiful hymn of Watts, "There is a land of pure delight," was sung around the open grave; after which, the throng of mourners slowly and sadly departed, leaving him in the spot he so dearly loved.

No place on earth is more associated with his presence than this. He was deeply interested in first projecting the cemetery. He gave his time and personal attention in the laying out of the grounds. He marked out the paths, named them, and, even with his own hand, printed the letters which now point them out to the visitor. His voice was heard here as he performed the service of consecration. Here he passed, at some seasons, many hours of every day, either superintending and assisting in the labor of arranging the grounds, or walking through the paths in silent preparation of his Sabbath services. Here, too, those dearest to him had already been laid. And when we turned away, it seemed not like leaving him in a strange place, but

within the familiar sound of falling waters, and among the familiar trees, whose green and protecting shadows bent as if in love and care over his grave. Many will be led to this spot by their reverence for him. In his own words, "at every season, whether in the tender green of spring, the bright radiance of summer, or the pensive and rainbow-colored autumn, it is a place where thoughtfulness can indulge in its meditation and affection give way to its tears, secure that nothing shall be there to disturb its quiet repose ; for the genius of the place has power, and few indeed there are so lost in hardness and folly, that they are not softened to at least a transient solemnity when standing on that holy ground."

And here the ministry of this faithful servant of God seems ended. We can no longer listen to his teachings of wisdom and of love, and nothing remains to us of his pure and beneficent life but the precious memory of his example and the blessed hope of reunion with him in heaven. Yet we cannot feel that his memory and example are to pass away. There was an influence that went out from his life and character which cannot be lightly estimated, and we would seek to perpetuate it, if we can do so, by dwelling upon some traits which seem to us most remarkable.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Dr. Peabody's mind was the combination of qualities which are often supposed to be inconsistent with each other ;— his sound, practical, good sense, and his exquisite taste for the beautiful ; his imaginative powers, and his faithful attention to the details both of life and knowledge ; his "poet's eye," and his calm and profound analysis of all

objects of thought and sight ; his lively fancy, and the accurate precision of his mental habits and his statements of fact. It was this which gave him his strong hold upon the confidence of clear-headed and sensible men. They saw that there must be a foundation for what he said with regard to spiritual things, because, in matters which came within the sphere of their own observation, they could always trust his judgment and his practical knowledge. Then, too, how wonderful his keen perception of all the individual peculiarities of character, and his native talent for satire, combined with such exquisite discretion, not only in speech, but in thought, and such an ever wakeful tenderness for the feelings and claims of others. He had the broadest and most all-embracing charity, and this led you at times to feel as if the defects of those around him were hidden from him, when, in reality, no one could be more sensitive to every form of evil and every breath of folly or of sin.

He always contended that sincerity and Christian courtesy need not be separated. "I have no more right," said he, "to *volunteer* an opinion of my own which I know will wound the feelings of my companion, than I have to take advantage of my neighbourhood to stick a pin into him. We may always bear our testimony to the truth, and leave those who desire to know our sentiments in no doubt as to what they are, and when our counsel or advice is sought, may give it in the fullest plainness of Christian sincerity. But 'speaking one's mind,' as it is called, is too often a selfish indulgence of personal feeling, and we cannot too carefully watch the motives which impel us to it."

Any sketch of the character of his mind would be felt to be imperfect, which left out of view that vein of delicate and irresistible humor which added a never failing charm to his conversation, and often found its way into his graver writings. This talent, which is too often a snare to its possessor, betraying him into a disregard of the feelings of others, or leading him at times to view in a ludicrous light subjects which should be always sacred, was never used by him excepting to add a zest to the intercourse of familiar friendship, or to give interest to those curious details of knowledge, which, when recommended by the charm of his inexhaustible wit, were welcomed with delight by every one. Not only did he guard with anxious tenderness all those misfortunes and follies which are too often a mark for ridicule, but never in his most playful moods did he let fall a remark which might give an association of levity to a subject in itself elevated or sacred. You could never remember any thing which seemed inharmonious with his highest moments. His genial and sportive humor seemed as much in sympathy with all things generous and kind, as the glancing sunbeam which sends a smile over nature's face, and kindles all objects with its cheerful light. Those who remember him best will need but this hint to recall the brilliancy of his wit, — the unfailing resources of his imagination, — which made him in conversation the most fascinating, as well as instructive companion.

Dr. Peabody took a very deep interest in the public affairs of the day ; but he always seemed to regard them as a part of the continued history of the world, and as such worthy of attention and interest. He

therefore did not identify his opinions with his passions and prejudices, and was not unfitted by the influence of any personal considerations to be an expounder of the highest principles. We might best describe his position in relation to public interests, by again quoting from his tribute to the memory of the sainted Henry Ware the following passage : — “ With respect to the great moral questions of the day, in all of which he was deeply interested, he was equally true to his conscience, equally independent of numbers and of party. He had that moderation which the Apostle recommends, a trait of character not estimated, because not understood ; because few men know how difficult it is to maintain, when parties are thundering in the ear their ‘ Lo here ! ’ and ‘ Lo there ! ’ When one set of men are complaining of your indifference, and another of your violence, it is only a clear mind which can trace out its moral path before it ; only a strong heart which walks straight on in it, unmoved by reproach from either side.”

The *universality*, as well as the accuracy, of his knowledge was amazing. Whether you sought information of him on any point of history or science, — whether you would ask about the stars or the flowers, the birds or the insects, — his prompt and full replies gave you an impression that this was a subject of special interest to him. He was never hurried. He rarely pleaded as an excuse for the neglect of any thing that he “ had so much to do ” ; and never, in the most engrossing preparations for any service, denied himself to one of his parish who wished to see him. He hardly seemed conscious how much labor he performed, because he never stopped to rest. His habits of early rising gave

him a great many hours in the day. He never remained in bed, during the last ten years of his life, after half past four in summer, and the hours which he gave to labor in his garden were also filled with preparations for his Sabbath services. He could return from these fatiguing exertions out of doors, and, going into his study, could *transcribe*, as he expressed it, from his mind what he had been arranging while his hands were busy. His habits with regard to the preparation of his discourses may best be described by quoting from the "Familiar Address," from which large extracts were introduced into the earlier pages of this Memoir.

"I do not believe any thing worth hearing or reading can be produced without labor, and the labor of writing wears upon the nerves and exhausts the spirit more, perhaps, than any other. Let any man sit down to prepare an address for some public occasion, and he will have an idea of this labor. Doubtless it becomes easier by habit, but the effect of routine and the perpetual recurrence of the demand once, if not twice, in every week, creates a difficulty on the other side. My own habit has been, never to sit down to consider what I shall write, as many do. I find that my mind, such as it is, acts most freely away from the study and in the presence of nature. I therefore construct in my own mind an exact image of every thing which I intend to write, and this, when completed, can either be spoken or written, as the case requires. My sermons are thus written in my mind during my walks in the fields, the cemetery, or the garden, and when matured are committed to paper in very little time. This has given the impression that I write easily and rapidly, when in truth

I have no advantage in this respect except, perhaps, that of a better system, which, after the experience of years, I would recommend to every writer, whatever his profession may be.”

Dr. Peabody once said of himself, to a person who was expressing surprise at the amount of writing which he performed in a short time, that he could *strike off* work more rapidly than many others, because the engine was kept so constantly in motion that it never got cold. He was always intensely occupied with some subject of thought. During the long winter evenings he could never use his eyes, and in the winter of 1843-4, in answer to a friend who asked him how he contrived to occupy them, he said that he was so much afraid of *reverie* in the enfeebled state of his mind and spirits, that he made it a rule to keep some subject of active thought constantly before him, and in order to make sure that he did not deceive himself in the matter, he was always *composing*. He had so trained his mind, that he could leave off in the middle of a sentence if he were interrupted by a visitor, and resume his labors without losing a word, the moment the door was shut. It was in this way that he wrote his lecture on the Anglo-Saxon Race, which he delivered in Salem in November, 1843, and the Life of Oglethorpe, written in the December following, besides the weekly sermons and lectures of that winter; and the habit which he formed at that time he continued during the remainder of his life.

What wonder that he sunk under such an unnatural amount of mental and physical exertion? In his diary, we find the following record, November 19th, 1843:—
“To-day I preached two sermons which I wrote in

Salem ; written in the heavy hours of night, and committed to paper in the morning. So the time is not wholly lost, and if it does not wear too far upon my strength I shall not much care. It gives quiet and unbroken leisure to hold communion with God, and to cherish that nearness to him which must hereafter be the dearest treasure of my soul."

One of the most touching things in connection with the effect of his sorrow was to see how carefully he guarded himself against that weak indulgence of it which would unfit him for the active and pressing duties of life. He only asked, with more searching scrutiny, "What remains for me to do?" He, therefore, not only gave himself, as we have seen, with unremitting devotion, to his intellectual and professional labors, but he immediately took hold of the details of life and domestic care, from which he had always been spared, and found relief in the faithful and thorough performance of those duties which were least congenial to his tastes and previous habits, seeming to embrace almost with eagerness every form of self-denial and painful effort. From the period of their mother's death, he devoted himself to his children. In a letter written during the last winter of his life, he says : — "I now keep school for the children every evening. Besides aiding the younger ones, I am also desirous to keep F. connected with some intellectual and improving pursuits, which would not be easy, confined as he is in the bank all day, without a strong manifestation of interest on my part. We are not liable to much interruption, and though, after writing so much in the day, it is not just the recreation that I should select, still there is always more satisfaction in doing than in neglecting one's duty."

In the course of the same winter, one of his youngest boys left him to pass a few months away from home. At parting he gave him the following directions, with the request that he would read them daily.

“ 1. Never forget that you have a Heavenly Father. Speak to him every day. It is ungrateful to neglect him, and if you do, you will repent it bitterly for ever.

“ 2. Remember your friends at home, and how anxious they are for your welfare and improvement. If you will not take the trouble to write to them, they can have no confidence in your affections.

“ 3. Be affectionate and faithful to the friends around you. Give up your own inclinations when they interfere with theirs.

“ 4. Govern your passions firmly. You can be their master ; do not be their slave.

“ 5. Always attend to duties first, and afterwards to pleasures. Finish with your studies before you allow your amusements to begin.

“ 6. Do not read much fiction. It is to the mind like drinking to the body : it intoxicates and destroys the power of the mind for any strong and useful exertion.

“ 7. Ask of every thing which you are disposed or tempted to do, *Is this right ?* If it is, do it, however much it costs you ; if it is not, let nothing induce you to do it. Every time you obey your conscience, you increase its power within you. Each time you act against it, you do something to destroy its power.

“ 8. Never forget that you are on the way to a world where you must answer for every thing that you have done. Live so that you may give in your account with joy, and not with dread.”

He was always anxious to make them realize what are the *true objects of life*, and to lead them to the highest aims in the formation of character. A series of minute directions to this effect was written down by him for the use of one of his older children, but a few weeks before his death, beginning thus : — “ *Character* is the familiar and commanding use of the power to pursue the right without submission to circumstances and inclinations. When the power does not exist, or is not used, the *living thing* can never be a *man*.”

In further illustration of the views which he held, and which he always aimed to give his children, of the purpose of existence, we copy the following extract from a letter addressed to one of his sons, dated June 27th, 1846 : —

“ I am glad to see that you begin to be interested in the great problems of existence. They have in all ages taxed the energies of active minds, and such minds have been as unable as you to see why this world should have been made as it is, and why God pronounced it good. The mystery never was explained till Christianity taught us the supreme importance and value of character, — showing that the formation of character in preparation for more advanced existence is the chief consideration, and comfort and happiness, which generally stand foremost to our minds, are only incidental things. This clears all up. We see that the world, with its difficulties and trials, is precisely what is wanted for the purpose. The same purpose evidently could not be answered without such discipline and training as we encounter here, and we see that a Heavenly Father, who consults not our wishes, but our welfare, has subjected

us to this process of education, for such it is. Children in schools are constantly asking, 'What good will these studies, and this whole machinery of education, do?' Those who are a little ahead of them can see the benefit of these things, while they cannot. And so those who make character the great aim and effort of life will discern the fitness of this world and its changes. They admire the wisdom of its arrangements and adaptations, and they gratefully pronounce it good."

We should certainly omit a most remarkable feature of his mind and habits, if we did not speak of his unwearied *study of the Bible*. He gave the strongest impression of what might be gained, not only in practical excellence, but in intellectual power, by a devoted study of its spirit and its letter. We hear those who were privileged to listen to his luminous expositions of Scripture speak of the wonderful and living way in which it all seemed to lie open before him. It is still more instructive to see how it was the bread of life to him, and how it became his intellectual as well as his spiritual food. His taste led him strongly in early life to works of imagination, and few persons had his degree of familiarity with the best works of fiction and with every branch of general literature. His wonderfully retentive and accurate memory made these stores available in the latter portion of his life, when, in writing upon general subjects, as he was called to do in the exercise of his functions as a reviewer, his endless variety of illustration, and his stores of poetic quotations, gave great animation and interest to every subject which he touched. At this period, however, he frequently spoke of his entire want of interest in all works of fiction, and in writ-

ing to a friend, he says : — “ ——— is deep in Eugene Sue’s literature, — an individual of whom I shall never ask whence he came, or whither he is going ; only too grateful that I am not condemned to read him in penance for the sins of other days.” He sometimes attempted to read those works of fiction which have delighted the reading world during the last few years, but repeatedly said, “ I have completely lost my taste for such reading.” And then would speak of the untiring freshness which he always found in the Scriptures. The word of God was always new and always suggestive ; and he was unwearied in his efforts to induce those in whom he was interested to find there all that he found.

He was often urged, by those who had listened to his extemporaneous expositions of Scripture, to prepare a commentary upon the Bible, which should fill a place not yet occupied by any. This would have been to him the most delightful of all occupations, and he always looked forward to it in the hope that at some future time he should secure the leisure to prepare it and the means to publish it. During the last year of his life, measures were taken to secure these to him, and had he lived, we should have seen the work accomplished.

“ As a theologian, Dr. Peabody cared not to place himself among the champions of any class of religious opinions. Decided in his own belief, frank in its avowal, and ‘ ready always to give an answer to every one that asked him a reason of the hope that was in him,’ he had none of the temper of the dogmatist or the sectarian. . . . The amenity of disposition and the personal humility which sealed his lips against all censorious or injurious remark disposed him to avoid

the asperities of theological warfare. Hence, during his whole residence in this town, he was a peacemaker, regarded with scarcely less esteem and treated with not less confidence beyond than within the limits of his own congregation. His exhortation was that of one who neither loved strife, nor felt any superiority over those who differed from him. ‘Cherish,’ said he, ‘with all your care the spirit of your Master, and remember that his spirit can dwell only in a gentle, forbearing, patient, and loving heart.’ Such a heart he carried in his own breast, and if we desire proof that it was understood in this community, we need only look on this concourse of mourners, and observe how entirely sectarian differences are forgotten in a common sorrow.”*

The common respect and common sorrow are well expressed in the following letter from the pastor of the First Church. It was written in reply to an invitation to be present at the installation of Dr. Peabody’s successor, and leaves us at a loss which most to admire, — the spirit that dictated the eulogy, or the character that drew it forth.

1848, “*Springfield, January 24th, 1848.*”

“To the Committee of the Third Congregational Society in Springfield.

“Gentlemen, — I received your very kind invitation to be present at the services preparatory to the installation of the man whom you have chosen to fill the place of your late *beloved* pastor. I use the expression as my own. No man had a higher sense of the moral excel-

* Dr. Gannett’s Funeral Discourse, p. 28.

lence and Christian courtesy of the Rev. Dr. Peabody than I had. Our intercourse was always pleasant and satisfactory to me, and I should have delighted to have told the congregation of mourners at his grave how much I esteemed him, and how highly I thought of his deep-toned piety as I saw it expressed in his humble resignation to the Divine will in the hours of his sorrow, under his severe bereavements. Never shall I forget the impressions which I received in those interviews. I said to myself, ‘Here is the patience and faith of the saints.’ I surely cannot desire a greater blessing on your society, than that his successor may possess a spirit as kind and gentle as his. For the regard expressed for *me*, you will accept my sincere thanks. I have never had it in my power to do you many acts of kindness, but if you had needed them as a society, I assure you I should have performed them with pleasure. I cannot wish any thing more agreeable to myself than that my intercourse with your pastor, whom you have chosen, may be of a similar character to that which I enjoyed with him ‘who is not.’ Permit me to express the hope, that the mantle of the *departed* may have fallen upon the living prophet, and that under his ministrations you and your children may ‘grow as the lily and cast forth your roots as Lebanon,’ and ‘bring forth fruit in old age.’

“Accept, Gentlemen, my regards for you personally and my wish for your individual happiness.

SAMUEL OSGOOD.

“HENRY STERNS,
JOHN HOWARD,
SAMUEL BOWLES, } *Committee.*”
J. WILLARD,
SIMON SANBORN, }

Peace was indeed, with Dr. Peabody, the language of his lips and of his life. He made the duty of love and forgiveness often the subject of his exhortations from the pulpit, and he was not content to confine his influence to his public services, but would urge the matter most affectionately and earnestly upon those in whom he was interested, whenever he found opportunity to do so. In conversation with a friend during the last year of his life, he said, — “ I will not judge others, but this I must say for myself; that if a human being lived to whom I could not cordially extend my hand in sympathy and kindness, I should feel that the gate of heaven was closed to me.” This disposition seemed to be completely understood by all those with whom he came in contact, and no unkind jealousy could express itself in his presence. By the force of sympathy, all ungenerous and resentful passions were for the time annihilated.

During every period of Dr. Peabody's life, his love of nature added greatly to his happiness. This was manifested very strongly in his earlier writings, in his poems, and in the admirable instructions which he gave the children in his Sunday school. His intimate acquaintance with its most interesting forms and aspects added a peculiar zest to his enjoyment of nature. He seemed always *at home* when he spoke of the wonderful objects by which we are surrounded, and he loved to introduce others to the sources of his pleasure. After the afflictions which threw so deep a shadow over the scenes of his former joys, his love of nature seemed only to grow more intense. We find in his diary the following record : —

“ *Dec. 17.* I was delighted this morning with the

appearance of the snow on all the branches of the trees. It is a fairy-like beauty. It was followed by a rain which is still falling; they call it gloomy, — but is any thing gloomy in the creation of God ?”

And again : —

“ *Dec. 27.* The trees covered with snow this morning. What a beautiful sight ! What a beautiful world ! And how strange that I should be more sensible of its beauty than ever, now the being whom I love best has left me ! It is not her loss, however, but her spiritual presence, which strengthens hope and resolution, and increases my power to enjoy every thing which displays the love and blessing of my Heavenly Father.”

One dark November day, when a friend remarked to him upon the dreary look of all without, he said, — “ All days are pleasant to me ; there is not an expression on the face of nature which I do not love.” At the same time, he spoke of the new feeling with which he had looked upon the earth since the form he so much loved had been laid there. He loved it as he had never done before. How much this association endears and consecrates the beautiful spot where they *repose together !*

Perhaps nothing was oftener remarked about Dr. Peabody, than that he was in all places and under all circumstances *the Christian minister*. This was never laid aside in the most unrestrained private intercourse. His reverence for sacred things was beautiful and touching. No one could feel that there was any *formality* in it, and the spirit was contagious. It seemed entirely in keeping with the habit of his thoughts, and you could not regard it as any thing but the result of a peculiar nearness to the most sacred and sanctifying influences.

“ Was it not a remark often heard, as, with his calm but not stern demeanour, and his air of spiritual thought, he walked along your streets on some errand of duty or of love, ‘ There goes a disciple of the great Master ’ ? Did he not recall to your minds the image of him whose meat it was to do his Father’s will ? You remember his Christian deportment, his purity of character, his simplicity of purpose, his gentleness of manner, the uprightness of his walk, the fidelity of his labor. He had opened his heart to his Saviour, and that Saviour had become to him ‘ wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.’ ” *

His deportment was always such as seemed in harmony with the highest purposes of life. Notwithstanding the liveliness of his fancy and the readiness of his wit, his conversation was never frivolous, and his very presence rebuked the levity of others. Nothing was more striking than the fact, that, notwithstanding the fastidiousness of his taste and the delicacy of his perceptions, he never was known to complain of the companionship of the frivolous, the tedious, or the uninteresting. His spirit of comprehensive charity and love made itself instantly recognized by those who were the objects of it. Every thing genuine and good in those around him responded to the touch of his sympathy. It was therefore true that no one was uninteresting to him, because in every one there are elements which are only waiting to be developed by the presence of sympathy, and when in communication with him, what was wisest and best would be called into action.

* Dr. Gannett’s Funeral Discourse, p. 21.

This view of human beings made his duties as a parish minister delightful to him. He always spoke of them as satisfactory, and after the bereavements which overshadowed his home, he said he found more comfort in going about among his people than in any other employment. We find in his diary the following record :— “ *December 12.* Began to-day to write the *Life of Oglethorpe*. Pleasant, if I had time, but I have commenced visiting the people with a full determination to spend at least every afternoon in that employment. God make me faithful ! How much good may be done by keeping up this familiar communication ! ” And again :— “ In my visits this afternoon, I was told by a mother that her little child had prayed for me ever since my affliction, that God would bless and comfort me. God bless the dear child ! ”

It was, however, amidst the darkest scenes of life that the power of his presence and Christian sympathy was most brightly manifested. In the chamber of poverty and sickness he made himself felt as the protecting and sustaining friend ; and more than one bereaved and desolate being was heard to exclaim, when he was taken away, “ I have lost my best earthly friend and adviser. ” At the bedside of the dying, his strong faith fitted him to speak with a power which was rarely equalled. Those who have listened to his voice at such a season have felt the power of faith to lay hold on eternal life ; and while he cheered and strengthened the departing spirit, he consoled those who were sorrowing round the dying bed, and often preached more powerfully there than he could have done from the pulpit, through years of unbroken prosperity and peace. His faithfulness as a

pastor was often remembered with gratitude by those who were leaving this world, and among the most precious rewards of his ministry were these testimonies which came to him from lips so soon to be sealed in death.

His faith was indeed like "the open vision." He expresses it most strongly, as we have seen, in the discourses and the letters written immediately after his great bereavements ; and then how beautifully he turned back to earth and discharged its humblest duties ! Like the monk, in that touching legend with which we are all familiar, who lingered not in his cell to enjoy the vision of the Saviour, when the hour arrived in which it was his duty to feed the poor at the gate of the convent. On his return he found the blessed vision still waiting for him, and uttering these words, — "Hadst thou staid, I must have fled."

We cannot cease to speak of him without observing that the predominant impression which his character, especially in his last years, left upon the mind, was that of *the supremacy of duty*. He had the martyr spirit, and could have endured to the end had the martyr's fate been his. His was the unconquerable will ; all things were possible to him through Christ strengthening him. Hence his resolute purpose to let nothing lead him aside from the great object of this life, which, as he always loved to state it, was "the formation of character in preparation for life eternal."

NOTICES

OF THE

REV. OLIVER W. B. PEABODY.

WE feel that, after closing the life of this true minister of Christ, our sacred work is not completed unless we endeavour to combine with our recollections of him a sketch of that brother with whom through life he was so intimately associated in the minds of their friends and of the public. The first pages of this Memoir might almost be regarded as an autobiography, so much did the brothers, in their early days, resemble each other, not only in taste and character, but in the outward course of their lives. They had the same humility and self-distrust, united with dignity and independence; the same uprightness of principle and firmness of purpose, blended with a gentle deference for the feelings and claims of others, which in youth seem so lovely, and which in maturer life lead to such efficient and benevolent action. They had the same exquisite humor and wit, combined with a tenderness and discretion which are rarely found in youth; — the same uncompromising devotion to duty and to the highest standard of right, united with the most gentle and generous judgments of

others. They were alike reserved in manner, and of course were fully known only to their more intimate friends ; and yet few persons probably ever gave a more true impression of themselves than they did by the simple force of a character, which, by its freedom from pretension, disarmed criticism, and by its benignity, purity, and excellence, secured the confidence and respect of all.

We copy from the *Christian Examiner** some details respecting the subject of this notice, together with an eloquent tribute to his virtues, feeling that we can offer nothing which will do equal justice to his memory.

“**OLIVER WILLIAM BOURNE PEABODY** was born at Exeter, N. H., on the 9th of July, 1799. He was twin brother of the late Rev. William Bourne Oliver Peabody, and, like him, bore the names of his father, the late Judge Peabody, and of his mother's father, Hon. William Bourne. The brothers grew up together, together were educated by Dr. Abbot in the academy of their native town, and together entered Harvard College, in 1813. From the moment of their birth to that of their separation, the last year, by the death of Dr. Peabody of Springfield, they were bound together by the closest attachment, and by a striking sympathy in tastes, which was marked by such occasional differences of temperament as strengthened and gave beauty to the union. The very strong personal resemblance between the two, which all their friends observed, was not more remarkable than this close union of sympathies and

* For September, 1848. The article is understood to have been written by the Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Worcester.

aims, which always lasted through difference of pursuits and of homes, and to which we now look back as if it were a forewarning to us that in death they would not long be parted.

“The brothers entered college at an age now considered early, but even at that period Mr. Oliver Peabody showed traits of character and fancy which have since been familiar to his friends.’ ‘He was,’ in the words of one of his early friends, ‘a most amiable, pleasant young man, full of wit and most irresistible humor, with a keen sense of the ludicrous, and the power to communicate it to others. He had a love and talent for music, and played the flute and sang very agreeably. He was also fond of drawing, and sketched with great spirit and delicacy. He was always a most delightful companion, his conversation most agreeable, enriched as it was from his wide reading, from which he always had at hand the most apt illustrations.’

“On leaving college, Mr. Peabody studied his father’s profession, under his father’s direction, at Exeter: He spent some time, also, at the Law School in Cambridge, before he was admitted to the bar in New Hampshire. He then began the practice of the law in his native town. In the eleven years which followed, he was not confined to the cares of his profession alone. He was a member of the State legislature, and at different times took the editorial charge of the Rockingham Gazette and the Exeter News-Letter. In the files of these papers are articles from his pen sparkling with vivacity and humor. These, and other essays and poems, which he published then and afterwards in various journals, are distinguished no less for brilliancy and

freshness of thought than for a certain polished accuracy of style, the result of his patient and diligent care. Always nice in expression, always accurate in style, he was never formal, dull, or commonplace. His mind never lost that eagerness for fresh combinations, and for a distinct, unabused point of view, which had given to him his early humor and love of the ludicrous. This was the reason that he wrote so little in comparison with the great army of what are called literary men. But, for the same reason, there is scarcely any thing which he has written that is not worthy of publication, and that did not fully answer its purpose, whether to rouse a laugh as coming from the carrier of a newspaper, or as an episode in political controversy, or as demanding thought and study, when published in a review or delivered before a lyceum. . . . Many of our readers will recollect the poem which he delivered at Cambridge before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, in 1822. When the citizens of Portsmouth celebrated the second centennial anniversary of that town, he delivered a poem which is still remembered with pleasure. He had early shown his poetical genius and facility of versification, — talents which he always possessed, though he used them too little. He and his brother each delivered a poem when they graduated at Cambridge, and there are several poems among the published papers to which we have alluded.

“ In 1830, Mr. Peabody removed to Boston, which was his home for most of the remainder of his life. His brother-in-law, Mr. A. H. Everett, was then the editor of the *North American Review*, and Mr. Peabody acted as a constant and valuable assistant to him in

that duty. Till near the close of his life he was an occasional contributor to that journal, and for some years there is scarcely a volume which does not contain one or more articles from him. At the same time, for several years, he was an assistant editor of the Boston Daily Advertiser, and some of his most pointed essays were published in that paper, as from time to time they were called forth by the changing aspects of political or literary affairs. There are certain duties of an editor's life for which he was peculiarly fitted. His very wide general information, frequently relating to subjects where the most careful books of reference are dumb, and all indexes useless, served him especially, when called upon, as the editor of a daily journal constantly is, to illustrate unexpected movements and explain new events on the shortest notice.

“ Mr. Peabody served for two or three years as a member of the Massachusetts legislature. In the year 1836, he was appointed Register of Probate in Suffolk county. He filled the duties of this office until 1842. It is a laborious post, requiring, under the probate arrangements of this State, the constant personal attention of the incumbent, and close labor from him, if only as a copyist. But Mr. Peabody found time for literary studies and occupations. His daily exercise was made the means of that study of nature which he always loved. And, while both faithful and popular in an employment which is certainly not the most refreshing or invigorating, he was still to his friends, and to any whom he could serve, as full of spirit and life as he had ever been when engaged in more exciting daily duties. His health, however, always delicate, was impaired by the

labors of the office, and in 1842 he resigned it, on accepting from Jefferson College, an institution endowed and supported by the State of Louisiana, an appointment as Professor of English Literature. He entered on the duties of this post in the autumn of that year. But the climate of Louisiana proved unfavorable to his constitution, and, unwilling to contend longer with the lassitude which it induced, he resigned his professorship the next year, and returned to the North.

“ It was at as recent a period as this that he entered directly upon the sphere of life which commends him especially to the interest of the readers of the *Examiner*. For many years, perhaps, he had wished to engage in the Gospel ministry. From his early days he had lived under high and pure religious influences, the result of clear and well-sustained religious convictions ; and of late years his reading had more and more taken that turn which would especially prepare him for the duties of a Christian minister. On returning from the South, he immediately carried out his intention of entering the ministry, and continued without interruption the studies which, with that view, he had thus begun. His residence at this time was sometimes in Boston, and sometimes in Springfield, with his brother. While in Boston, he acted as the Secretary of the ‘ Emigrant Society,’ as long as that valuable society was in existence. Its object was to communicate true information to emigrants, and to those who proposed to emigrate, — and to make arrangements for their reception here, that they might be free from the impositions to which their condition is peculiarly liable. In this charge Mr. Peabody was greatly interested. But the public

failed to support the society, and after about a year its action ceased.

“ In the summer of 1844, Mr. Peabody received from the Boston Association its license to preach ; and in August, 1845, he was settled as the pastor of the Unitarian church in Burlington, Vermont, where he had preached in the previous spring and summer ; and in that beautiful town he lived, in the discharge of his ministry, until his death. His health, however, became more and more delicate during the last years of his life, and, after a short, acute illness, he died, on the 5th of July last, four days before closing his fiftieth year.

“ The ministry had been the profession of his mature choice. He knew what it was, or what it might be, for he had seen for more than twenty years all the detail and beautiful completeness of his brother's ministry in Springfield. He knew what he himself should labor to do in it, for no man had a deeper sympathy for others, or a more devoted reliance upon God. With more and more interest, therefore, as his life passed on in other labors, did he contemplate this field of action. And therefore, when he entered on his duty at Burlington, it was to test hopes which he had long entertained, to try plans which were of old familiar to him. To himself it was a very happy epoch. It opened to him the whole of a field of labor in which he had already gleaned more than many professed reapers who had less fervency and zeal than he. The relief of the poor, the comfort of the sorrowing, the raising of society, were no new efforts to him ; and the duties of a Christian minister only united in a specific form hopes,

labors, and exertions, to which, in whatever occupation, he had always devoted his life. His entrance upon those duties, then, could not but be a happy event to himself. It was peculiarly a pleasure to his friends, who felt that he was now exactly where he ought to be. You could not see him without feeling that he was too refined, too delicate, too tender, to bear much of the rough intercourse of the world. You could not know him without thinking, that, in whatever calling, he was one standing between God and his children, — between Jesus and his disciples. He himself would never have disowned any activity or rigid monotony of labor. In the hard routine of official life, he had no complaint to make of his position. But his friends, for him, could, and did, rejoice that he should be transferred to another scene and sort of effort.

“ And in his ministry, their presages were all made real, and his own satisfaction was never dimmed for a moment. An affectionate people became more and more attached to him, until the moment of his death, which separated him from no formal relationship, but from connection with a company of Christian friends most near and most dear. Whoever listened to his fervent, and eloquent, and tender exhortations from the pulpit, or joined in his affectionate, devout, and appropriate prayers, thanked God that such a precious servant was ministering at his altar. And his own people, who knew him, day by day, and year by year, in the ebbs and flows of his delicate health ; who saw him, day by day, in his enthusiastic discharge of the home duties of his parish ; who followed him in the zeal and poetical ardor with which he traced out God in the beautiful scenery

which surrounded them, — in its prospects, its vegetation, its exquisite changes of summer and winter ; they who knew him as his friends knew him — and his friends only — were bound to him every day by a closer and closer tie, and every day must have come with him nearer and nearer to the God whom he loved while he worshipped. The gentle fearlessness with which he passed from the world to heaven will always linger in their memory. And, now that he has gone, they will enjoy more and more with every day that gift which death is forced to leave, as one compensation for a parting, — that nice perception of excellence, which, in the hour of grief, springs up from the clear memories of a whole life, far more definite, far more complete, than can be the ever-changing sentiment with which we regard a present, living friend.

“ To give an idea of such a man, the set facts of a biography are powerless. The dates and other details which we have been repeating do not mark eras in Mr. Peabody’s character. . . . Before his entrance on the ministry, as afterwards, he was a man of broad, generous culture, of the kindest heart, of the most active generosity, and of a living, fervent, devoted soul. Before, as well as afterwards, he trained himself by a diligent intellectual culture, which was doubtless seconded by a high, secret, spiritual effort ; so that his education was never over, — so that his life was always fresh, and he always young. And as his friends look back upon him to-day, it is to look back upon one whom they never saw without being glad that they saw him, whom they never parted from without making him promise soon to meet again ; one from whom, whenever they met, they

received some gift of fancy, of learning, or of love, which they always prized, and by which they always remembered him, and to whom, when they separated, they looked back with new admiration and love.

“ Such reasons have his friends for remembering him and mourning for his loss. But by the public he is remembered rather for his gifts of intellect, and as a literary man. In all his different occupations, he retained, as we have said, the studies and tastes with which in his earlier life he had followed literary pursuits, and by which he gained the ease and power of usefulness which, as a man of letters, he always had. He was interested in foreign literature, but was most attracted by the classical literature of England. In this he was thoroughly versed. His lectures upon it were lively and interesting, and by his study of it he illustrated his writings and his conversation. But as a literary man he deserves this as his highest praise, that, even in the goading haste of an editor’s duty, he never wrote carelessly, or without something to say, — that, while he read more than most men of letters, he wrote much less, — and that he never prostituted his reading to the purpose of mere indolent amusement, glancing here and there at the reflections of the shadows of what were once great ideas. Passing hastily over the ephemeral reviews and restatements which shallow flippancy digests from the original effort of great minds, he recurred for himself to the authors who were worth study ; coped with them, whether dull or quaint or obscure, with his own resources ; for himself found out their meaning, and with his own thought and labor arranged it for the world. He never published any thing but the miscellaneous papers to which we have

already alluded, and such reports and other papers as he drew up in the course of his public duties. At the time of his death, however, he had been occupied in preparing a memoir of his brother, and this book he left nearly ready for publication.

“What we have said of Mr. Peabody is eulogy, and is meant to be. It is eulogy coming from those who knew him too intimately to analyze his character, or even to undertake now to write his biography, without the presence of fresh regrets. It is the eulogy, however, of a spiritual man ; of one in whom the true spirit always held ascendancy over mere intellect, as over the body ; who was less and less bound to the earth, the longer he lived upon it. Such a man does not often attract around him a large circle of friends, and in Mr. Peabody there was a shrinking from observation, a delicate distrust, that perhaps separated him from the wide or general intimacy which a bolder man of his genius would have sought and gained. But those who knew him intimately and well remember him as one whom it was a privilege to know, and whom it is a privilege to remember.”

It is indeed difficult to analyze the character of this devoted Christian and minister, without using language which would sound like extravagant eulogy to those who knew him not ; for the more nearly we approached him, and looked upon the “daily beauty of his life,” the more did it seem to us that he was one “of whom the world was not worthy.” He passed through life without ever having in view the objects for which most men live. His own comfort, interest, reputation, were al-

ways secondary, and any service that he could render to another was more attractive than the pursuit of any object which could only benefit himself.

Manifesting this spirit, as he did, in every situation in life, it seemed peculiarly a blessing to himself and to others, when he entered that profession where such self-forgetting devotion can be most happily and beneficently exerted. Nor were his own hopes and those of his friends disappointed. He found in his new course of duties more happiness than he had ever dared to imagine, and in his "short, but precious, ministry," he accomplished more than even his friends had anticipated for him. He often spoke of the delight that he found in the most common duties of his life as a parish minister, and he said that he never returned from visiting among his people without feeling his heart lightened and his best hopes and purposes animated and strengthened.

His unremitting labors in his distant and isolated field of duty soon began to wear upon his strength, and in the year 1846 his health visibly declined. At the commencement of the next year, he said to a friend that he felt a deep conviction that he should not live to see its close; and when, in the course of a few months, he was summoned to the death-bed of his brother, he expressed surprise that *he* should still be left; adding, "It is but for a little while."

It was touching and inspiring to see how this conviction blended with all his thoughts and purposes; never diminishing his cheerfulness, and only adding new energy to the feeling of self-devotion with which he returned to his labors. At this time he was urged by many of his friends to accept the proposition which had been made

to him to remove to Boston, and assume the editorial charge of the *Christian Register*. In many respects he was eminently fitted for this work, and he was well aware that such a lightening of his labors would have a beneficial effect upon his health. But he could not be induced seriously to think of it. He felt that in leaving Burlington he should leave a scene of usefulness which he could not hope to find elsewhere. It was, too, the home of his choice, the spot in which he loved to labor, and where he hoped to die.

During the last few weeks of his life, he was engaged in preparing a *Memoir* of his brother, which the friends of both were most anxious to have completed by him. But while it was in progress, he was arrested by the illness which so suddenly terminated his life. During the spring, although feeble, he had appeared in nearly his usual health, and in more than his usual spirits, and had repeatedly observed that he never enjoyed so much the beauty of the opening summer. In the latter part of June he took a violent cold from exposure to the rain, but he still continued his daily visits among his people until Saturday, June 24th. On the next day, contrary to the advice of his friends, he attempted to preach, but, in consequence of complete exhaustion, he was obliged to omit the afternoon service. On Sunday evening he sent for a physician, and never again left the house. His disease, which assumed the form of dysentery, prostrated him immediately, although there appeared no symptoms which were particularly alarming. Throughout the week he was under the influence of opiates, and was disposed to converse but little. On Sunday morning, however, he requested a friend who was

sitting by him to read aloud to him the fourteenth chapter of John ; and after a little sleep, he roused himself to make some inquiries with regard to the service at church. On Tuesday he dictated a telegraphic despatch to his sister in Boston, requesting her to come to him. He then again asked to have portions of St. John's Gospel read to him, after which he expressed a desire for quiet and for sleep. After waking, his mind appeared clear, and all his symptoms more favorable. He enjoyed the flowers which were offered to him, and manifested pleasure in having his friends converse together in his room. Early in the morning of Wednesday, July 5, a great change was visible in his appearance, and a friend who was watching with him communicated to him his impression of his danger. He said that he had much to do which he had hoped to finish, and afterward expressed the conviction that his friends were unreasonably anxious about him ; often repeating, that he felt perfectly comfortable and free from pain. Towards noon he evidently drew near the end ; and his physician told him that he thought him dying. He said that he hoped it was an error ; but added, " Living or dying, I am in the hands of God." After which his lips moved as if in prayer, and his whole soul seemed absorbed in communion with Heaven. He continued to breathe but a short time, and so he peacefully " passed on."

The following letter was addressed to the editor of the New York Inquirer, by a friend and parishioner of Mr. Peabody. It is a heartfelt and beautiful tribute to the value of his life and ministry. And we feel sure that every one will read it with interest.

“ You will probably have heard, ere this reaches you, of the sudden and lamented death of the Rev. Oliver W. B. Peabody, pastor of the Unitarian Church in this town. That sad event occurred on Wednesday, the 5th instant, and plunged, not merely the society to which he ministered, but the whole community, into the profoundest sorrow. It has been apparent to most of us, since the death of his twin brother, the Rev. Dr. Peabody of Springfield, a little more than a year ago, that our beloved pastor was wounded by the blow too deeply for recovery, and that he could not long be spared to lead us in the way of life. Possessed of a self-forgetting devotion to duty, which forbade him to yield to his feelings to the injury of his usefulness, he has labored on for months against our earnest remonstrances, when he must have felt as we did, that he was truly wearing himself out in his Master’s service. The last time he preached, which was on the next Sabbath but one preceding his death, he was unable to go through with the afternoon service, and gave notice of the fact at the conclusion of the morning exercises. This was to be the end of his short, but precious, ministry. He left the pulpit with feeble and trembling step, and on the next day was seized with the malady which terminated his life on the Wednesday of the week following.

“ It is impossible to convey to the mind of one removed from the scene of this good man’s labors any adequate idea of the universal affection and veneration with which, in a short ministry of three years, he has inspired this large community. All sectarian divisions have yielded to the spontaneous homage of the heart, extorted by his unpretending but active excellence. He

has done more by his walk and conversation to shadow forth the beauty of holiness, than many sermons could have effected. His life was a most eloquent sermon, of which his weekly discourses, though filled with beauty, tenderness, and power, seemed but the least important part. Wherever the heart of humanity was bowed with the weight of sorrow, or pinched by the hard hand of penury and want, there most of all he loved to go and to be an angel of succor and consolation. Every abode of wretchedness within our limits can bear witness of his wise counsels, his tender consolations, his unstinted generosity. Amid the rigors of our bitterest winters, with a frame attenuated and enfeebled by disease, he never found an excuse for ceasing from his pursuit of the children of woe.

“ A large number of emigrants have been thrown among us since the famine in Ireland, and have been the subjects of much suffering and distress. To them he has been a friend indeed. Day after day, unshrinking amid the most malignant diseases, he moved among them to cheer and to relieve. To the poor, indeed, his loss will be irreparable. One day last winter, while out upon an errand of mercy with another clergyman of our village, he found occasion to dispense his charity freely to an object of uncommon suffering, when his associate said to him, ‘ I cannot do as you are doing ; my family has claims upon me which I cannot disregard.’ ‘ I know that very well,’ replied Mr. Peabody ; ‘ but THESE ARE MY FAMILY,’ pointing to those whom his bounty was relieving. His bounty, like his Christian charity, knew no bounds of sects or creeds, but distilled, like the blessed dews of heaven, on all alike. He had

the same indescribable smile of tenderness, which will form the sweetest and most enduring feature associated with his memory in the hearts of those who knew him, for all whom he met. Rich and poor, young and old, alike were sure to meet with sunshine in that beaming and expressive face. It was beautiful to see how the children loved him. If one of them was unfortunate, or less favored than the rest, he was sure to strive, with winning gentleness and delicate generosity, to remove the inequality. While the happy and prosperous shared his regard, it seemed as if his heart gushed out toward the children of sorrow, whatever the cause or form of their afflictions. In all these ministries of love, he was himself the unfailing bearer of his own bounty and consolation. Scarce any debility was sufficient to deter him from the most protracted and laborious walks over our widely extended village, and oftentimes, on returning from them, he had almost as much need of care as they whom he had cared for. He seemed to toil on as if he had no time to lose in order to finish the work appointed for him to do, and often remarked that it seemed better for him to *wear* out than to *rust* out. Thus he pressed ever onward in the path of duty, becoming each day more and more detached from the world, in which he lived but for others, and nearer and nearer to that realm whither most of those to whom he was bound by ties of kindred had preceded him, until he seemed at last to live rather in heaven than upon earth, and only waited the welcome summons which should call him to his rest and his reward.

“That summons has at length come. Full of bitter affliction as it was to *us*, we cannot find it in our hearts

to lament for *him*. The weariness of the strife against debility and disease has given place to the 'fulness of joy.' The gentle voice, the winning smile, the slender form and feeble step, are with us, indeed, no more ; but their memory will remain to cheer and animate us to the latest hour of life.

“ The sense of bereavement seems to be universal. It has been a common remark since his death, as indeed before, that he seemed to be the best living impersonation of Christian excellence ever known among us ; and to those who knew him, this will seem no extravagant praise.

“ His disease was not regarded as alarming until a few hours before his death, though many of us feared, when he was confined, that he would never preach again.

“ The funeral took place on Friday afternoon, at the church where he had so faithfully and acceptably ministered. The services were conducted by the Rev. John Corder, of Montreal, and the Rev. John Pierpont, of Troy. Mr. Pierpont made an impressive address, entirely extemporaneous, but full of touching allusions to the character of the deceased, and of improving reflections on the blessed uses of the death of the righteous. The large church was hung in black, and filled with a sad and silent assemblage of our citizens, who came to pay a parting tribute to a good man's memory. The address was just drawing to a conclusion, when a stage-coach stopped at the door of the church, and the sister of the dead, the widow of the Hon. Alexander H. Everett, late Commissioner to China, who had been sent for a few days before, and whose arrival was anxiously expected up to the very hour of the funeral, came to

take her last look at the face of her brother, in the midst of the people to whom he had ministered, and who were now assembled to pay the last tribute of affection and regard to his remains. The scene was such as few will ever witness again. The tears of the bereaved sister, as she gave one look at the calm face of the unconscious dead, whom she had not seen for years, and would never see again in this world, fell not alone. For several minutes the sobs throughout the house, the tears that fell from 'eyes unused to weep,' attested the intensity of that sympathy which every heart spontaneously offered to one so sorely tried.

“After the coffin was deposited in the grave, the children of the Sunday School gathered around it, and flung each a bouquet of flowers as an offering to their beloved pastor and friend. ‘Here,’ said Mr. Pierpont, ‘are the three most beautiful things in the world, — flowers, the most beautiful things in the vegetable world, brought by children, the most beautiful objects in animal nature, as an offering to the most beautiful thing in the spiritual world, the memory of a pure, and good, and holy man.’

“On Sunday, Mr. Pierpont preached a most appropriate discourse from 2 Timothy iv. 6 – 8, to a large and attentive audience.”

On Sunday, July 16th, Rev. Dr. Parkman preached an appropriate sermon in the church where Mr. Peabody had ministered. We copy the following extract, which was published in the Christian Register soon after the delivery of the discourse. The text was taken from Job xiv. 19, and from the First Epistle of Peter, i. 3:—

“Thou destroyest the hope of man.” But, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

“You need, my Christian brethren, amidst the disappointment of your cherished earthly hope, the strength and solace which can come alone from faith in God, and from the hope that is full of immortality. It has pleased Him, who ‘doeth all things well,’ the Sovereign Disposer of life and death, to appoint to you the bitterness of bereavement. You mourn with this day the departure of him on whom your hearts reposed. Those of us who have been favored by the privilege of his friendship, who observed in other and various scenes his rich endowments, his well-ordered mind, his generous affections, his fidelity to duty, and his blameless life, can well mingle our sympathies and prayers with yours in this night of your sorrow. Some of us were witnesses, in his earlier years, of the ability, faithfulness, and considerate care with which he discharged an honorable trust, before he entered upon that which your experience of his gifts has shown to have been his appropriate calling, and which, I believe, had ever been the first choice of his heart. There was much in his fulfilment of that relation that was congenial with the kindness of his spirit; and many a widow and orphan, who amidst the tenderness of recent bereavement were the objects of his official service, cherish gratefully his memory, as of a compassionate friend. You, my brethren of this flock, have witnessed here, in this fair and beautiful scene of his labors, how he ‘walked so as to please

God'; with what serenity and gentleness, with what modest dignity and meekness of wisdom, with what guileless simplicity and disinterested charity, that sought not, however justly it was meriting, the praises of men, he made proof of his ministry among you. The young of the flock he led as a good shepherd by the side of still waters, and guided with the skilfulness of his hands. Even the least of the little ones were encouraged by the tenderness of his instructions; and it was seen, as I have learned, what a place he had gained in their hearts, as with weeping eyes they strewed the flowers which he loved, and had taught them also to love as 'the smiles of God's goodness,' upon his closing grave. The sick and the desponding were soothed by his gentle consolations and availing prayers. The sinner might have been won to goodness by his example; and all you, my friends, have tasted together here of the fruit of his lips, have been admonished by his faithful counsels, and have seen how well they were illustrated in his holy life.

“Nor was it within the circle of your religious society alone that his good influence was felt, or his worth acknowledged. God has given to virtue a power that cannot fail, and our friend possessed in no common measure those qualities which command the confidence of mankind. The modesty of his spirit was not permitted to check the activity of his benevolence, but rendered it only the more attractive from the delicacy and unobtrusiveness with which his bounty was conveyed. His walks of usefulness extended far beyond the limits of his flock. In his charities, dispensed silently as the dew of heaven, he admitted no distinctions that did

not embrace the suffering of every name. And, were evidence needed of the respect which his character inspired in all classes of this community, especially of the humblest, it would be found in the earnestness with which, on the day of his funeral, they came up to this house of prayer, which was to them, as well as to you, the house of mourning, and in the touching demonstrations of their grief as they paid their tribute to his honored remains.

“ It was your earnest hope, that one so honored and beloved should be spared to bless you. The few months or years in which you were favored with his ministry only quickened your solicitude, that it might long be continued to yourselves and to your children. But it is not the pleasure of our Heavenly Father that the highest purposes of usefulness should be here accomplished. He has other spheres and brighter worlds in which to employ and make perfect the gifts which he has bestowed ; and honorable age is not that which standeth in length of days, or that which is measured by the number of its years ; but wisdom is the gray hairs of man, and an unspotted life old age. Having been perfected in a short time, he hath fulfilled a long time. What though his sun has gone down while it is yet noon-day ; what though the lips that spoke sweetly for God and virtue are silenced in death, and the hands that were lifted in prayer or stretched forth in charity are lifeless in the grave. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. It is good for him, for he has ascended to his reward ; and it shall be good for us, if we only be faithful to his memory and follow in his steps. Let it please Him with whom are the souls of the righteous, —

who can make bereavement as well as bounty, death as well as life, the ministry of his love, — to quicken us by his spirit in the work he has given us to do, so that, when the shadows of earth shall have passed, we may be gathered with the pardoned and redeemed in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

SERMONS.

SERMON I.



EARNEST DEVOTION.

THEY REST NOT DAY AND NIGHT. — Revelation iv. 8.

WOULD not any one say that this was meant as a description of mankind in the present world? Always intent on some favorite object, they are sometimes lifted to the skies with the prospect of success, then despairing in the same proportion when their hopes are overcast, and so agitated till this momentary object passes from their minds and gives place to another, to be pursued with equal devotion, and then cast off with equal disregard. Even if mankind have no such objects, the same words well describe them; for then they become equally restless for the want of some object. "They rest not day and night," because their minds, having nothing to engage them, prey upon themselves. In either case, employed or not employed, men are like the troubled ocean, always heaving, with or without a visible cause, always in motion, even when all the winds are still.

But however descriptive of the usual state of this world these words may be, such was not their purpose. They were not said in reference to this world,

nor to any thing in it. The beloved disciple in his lonely exile had his mind cheered with visions of the future prosperity of the church, and sometimes was permitted to see a glimpse of heaven through the broken clouds. It was when one of these bright but momentary revelations glanced upon his view that he saw the eternal throne surrounded by its rainbow, with the elders in white robes and crowns of gold, and the mystic cherubim, before it. He heard the cherubim saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," and the elders responding in the heavenly anthem, and casting their crowns before the throne. They rested not day and night.

While, then, these words were spoken in reference to what the Apostle saw in another world, and not in this, they suggest what seems to be an indispensable condition or law of high spiritual attainment and earnest devotion.

When man was first placed upon the earth and commanded to subdue it, how helpless he seemed to contend with the elements of nature! Without experience, without skill, without instruments, with nothing but his mind and his frame, it must have seemed impossible that the earth should ever be subdued by him. But behold what he has done. The desert is turned into a garden; the mountains have given way, and the valleys have been filled up, before him; taking the winds and fires for his ministers, he has rushed fearlessly across the depths of the sea. Not content with earthly labors, his enterprising science has wheeled in triumph through the skies, ex-

ploring the balanced clouds, measuring the distance of the sun, and pursuing the star that wanders to the utmost verge of heaven. And how has all this been accomplished? How has man been able to do these things which seemed so immeasurably above his reach? It is because he has not rested day nor night. It is because, when his mind once became possessed with one of these great ideas, he has given himself no repose till his work was accomplished, till he has known all that patient thought could discover, and done what persevering industry was able to do.

In the Apostle's vision of heaven, he is struck with the glowing devotion of the spirits before the throne. It is pure, fervent, and exalted; it is subject to no changes of rising and falling emotions; it is always as great as the perfections of the Infinite require, and as the nature of the hearts from which it proceeds permits it to be. Do you ask, "How can it be sustained at such a height, when all human devotion is so easily brought down, — how can their minds be kept fixed on the object of their adoration, when human thoughts so readily wander away?" The explanation is found in the words, "They rest not day and night"; their hearts are always engaged in the service; the night suspends it not, for there is no night there. It is because they are thus devoted, — in a word, it is because they rest not, — that their devotion maintains itself so fervent, and towers so high.

This, then, illustrates the great truth which ought to be impressed on every heart before me: religious improvement, the chief object of existence, requires

the steady devotion of all our powers to secure it. In proportion as man rests from that labor does he surrender the hope and power of ever securing that prize. In proportion as he resists that temptation does he advance in excellence and devotion, and therefore in resemblance to the seraphs and sons of light who surround the heavenly throne.

Consider the effect of inaction upon the physical nature. The frame which is regularly exercised, if not urged beyond its strength, grows in firmness and energy, and expands in full and fair proportion. All the currents of life in it are quick and glowing; the man hardly feels that he has a body, so little does it encumber the free action of the soul. But let the frame be given over to rest, let the man have no steady employment that requires interest and exertion, and it is not long before disease begins to spread through the system, sometimes manifesting itself in the whole head sick and whole heart faint, or treasuring up its hidden wrath against the day when it shall strike one desperate blow, and break the frame with hopeless infirmity, or crush it down at once into the grave.

Consider the effect of inaction upon the mind of man. There is a strong analogy between the wants of the body and the mind; exertion is indispensable to the health of each; and though one who lives without exercising either may not yet perceive the injury he is doing to himself, it is not less certain that the day of recompense and sorrow must come. Disease is as sure to follow the inactive mind as the

inactive body. Its effects are not open to the eye, or rather they are not noticed by careless observers, though they may be seen in the incapacity for serious reflection, in the depraved intellectual taste which can relish only miscellaneous novelty or intoxicating fiction, or in the distaste for common enjoyments which drives men to indulgences that stupefy the understanding and destroy the soul. Yes, there is disease to the mind, and there is death that follows it, far more sad than the disease and death which lay the body in the dust. When the body dies, its pains and sorrows are over ; not so, not so with the mind, which dieth not ; when coldness wraps the suffering clay, the mind still lives and must live for ever.

Consider the effect of inaction on the spiritual nature of man. It is common to meet with those who neither look forward to eternity nor up to God ; and the consequence is, not only that their devotion, if they ever had any, dies, but also that they lose the power of devotion. They lose all power of spiritual discernment, so that the great realities of another world have no presence nor life to the soul. Some are so thoughtless, that they are not troubled at what is going on within them ; but those whose conscience is not quite gone cannot live thus without uneasiness. They are disquieted within ; they try to account for their indifference to the things which ought to engage them by ascribing them to other influences or other men. The views of religion in which they were educated, the preachers they have been used to hear, the unworthy representatives of Chris-

tian character they have been accustomed to see, — to these, and indeed to any thing sooner than to themselves, they ascribe their indifference, when the truth is that it originates within. They will make experiment of new teachers and new fancies; one painted form of godliness will be adopted and dismissed after another; each will be in its turn enthusiastically welcomed and coldly rejected, but the disease will remain the same, because it is one of those incurable infirmities which in the order of nature inevitably comes on spiritual natures not exerted, and it ends in what inspiration calls the death of the soul.

This is the darkest and most fearful thought that can be presented to the human mind, — the death and ruin of the soul. I know there is a common persuasion, that, even if the powers of devotion have slept for years, if the man has been through all his life steadily indifferent to spiritual things, he may yet be awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger. It is true he may; but if he is awakened to a sense of guilt and danger, that consciousness is not sufficient to remove them. I know there is strength in Jesus, who is “the power of God and the wisdom of God,” more than sufficient to remove them. But can the man be sure that he shall ever have that faith in Jesus Christ, without which the blood of the everlasting covenant will not avail him? There is a time, when, as the Apostle says, “ye cannot do the things that ye would,” — when the awful sentence passes on the unprofitable soul, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever!”

The same is true of love to men, that other great duty which God has so intimately associated with devotion. This feeling can be strengthened into a principle by the common sympathy of life, — that sympathy which is never so strong and sure as when sanctified by religious feeling. But if our benevolent impulses are not followed, we lose not only the opportunity of the moment, but we lose the power of exertion ; and thus it is that men, without knowing it, sink into a selfishness so inveterate that they will do nothing and sacrifice nothing either for God or man, and, while others wonder at their hardness, never suspect that their hearts are cold. They are like the wayfarer in the polar regions ; after suffering awhile with the cold, he feels a sleep stealing over him ; it comes without pain, it gives no warning of danger ; unable to resist the persuasive influence, he sinks into slumber, from which he never wakes in this world again. It is in the same way that hearts are frozen ; they feel no danger, they suspect not that the sleep which is stealing over them is the sleep of death.

Having thus endeavoured to show what law we are under, let us take a more practical view of the subject. Love to God and love to man are the great elements of that character which we are sent into this world to form, and it is practising on these principles which gives them power and increases their power within us. It is because the seraphs rest not day and night, that their hearts become living flames in the service of their God.

We are to remember, then, that God has so arranged the present life that all things favor the growth of love to man in those who really determine to possess it, while all things seem to hinder it in those who hold it in slight regard. Whenever an opportunity of benevolence is offered, — whenever God's providence makes an appeal, as it often does, to our kind feeling, — we should feel that to resist it or reject it is wrong. Not only is there sin in the immediate act of suppressing the kind suggestion. It is not a thing that ends here; it is not a thing neglected and then over; no, the results of that neglect are to go deep and far into the life. It is so much done to injure and destroy the principles and affections which form the only treasures of heaven; they are all the wealth we can carry from this world into another, and without them we shall be poor indeed.

So, if we have the least desire to possess the spirit of devotion, we shall take advantage of every time and every service that can awaken the spirit of devotion. We shall welcome the Sabbath as often as it returns to remind us of that duty and invite us to perform it. We shall welcome its deep silence and sacred repose, in which we sometimes seem to hear the bells of heaven sounding far and faintly in the sky. We shall not say, as the manner of some is, that we need not go with the multitude to the places of social prayer; for He who knows our nature sees that unless love to men goes hand in hand with love to God, the latter may become a degenerate, even a selfish affection, losing all its life and power.

Therefore does He associate the duties, that we may grow in familiarity and attachment to our brethren, while we are advancing in the heavenly preparation of love to God ; and therefore does He expect us to improve these means of strengthening that power of devotion, which, if not exerted, sinks into withering inaction and incurable decay. To neglect these opportunities is not simply losing what can be made up at some future time ; it will not do to say that some future time is as good as the present hour. No, for if the time should come, the power may be gone ; and when the man tries in agony to kindle the faint spark within him into a flame, he may find that his heart, once suffered to grow cold, shall never be warm again.

To return, then, to the vision of heaven with which we began ; we hope at some future time to be there. Our days are fast going down to join the past eternity, and the day cannot be distant which shall call us to the land of souls. If we hope to join with the radiant spirits round the throne, we must faithfully cherish the power of devotion. After the manner of those who rest not day and night, our prayer must ascend when the morning lights up the skies, and when the evening sheds its sweet influences on the world below. We must suffer no other care, no other pleasure, to prevent our engaging in that earthly communion with God, which, more than any thing else, prepares us for his presence and service on high.

SERMON II.



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

THIS WOMAN WAS FULL OF GOOD WORKS AND ALMSDEEDS WHICH SHE DID. — Acts ix. 36.

THE incidents of Scripture are told with perfect simplicity, — with almost severe simplicity, — trusting, doubtless, that the book would be near men's hearts; for if the thought and imagination are quickened into strong, powerful action by the deep interest which it should inspire, the barren outline will fill up, the faded colors will kindle into life. These records of the past will come before us in present reality, and we shall feel their power; for they not only record what has been, but what can be again, — what will be, must be, again. They are histories of the heart, which is ever new and ever young.

It is an affecting history of the kind which is now before us. In the town of Joppa, which, under its present name of Jaffa, has been the scene of bloody tragedies in our own day, dwelt a young person who had given herself to labors of humanity, and therefore was among the foremost to become a Christian. Her name, Tabitha, was the Syrian name of the

gazelle, which throughout the East is the image of beauty and gracefulness, of

“ airy step and glorious eye,
That glance in tameless transport by ” ;

and this, as all antiquity agrees, was given her for her singular loveliness and attraction. With all the means of enjoying life, as it is called, — O, how little that enjoying of life is understood! — she chose the better part ; in the days of her youth, when life was bright before her, she lived for others and for God. In the midst of her usefulness she fell sick and died ; many hearts died within them at the loss. In their sorrow they sent for the Christian apostle, to receive from him the comfort which his religion bestows. When he came, they took him to the chamber where the lifeless body lay ; and the poor and destitute crowded round him, telling him, with many tears, of the virtues of their benefactor, and showing with warm-hearted gratitude what she had done for them all.

He perceives at once that such a life cannot yet be spared. It is wanted to give loveliness and attraction to the religion which she professed, while it is yet new and unwelcome to the world. He kneels down and prays, and the life returns to the tenantless clay. How, like a flash from heaven, it must have fired with heavenly joy those hearts which were mourning for her as lost for ever ! But was it not hard to recall her from the mansions of rest ? Was it not hard to reclaim her, to pass through the bitter-

ness of life and the agony of death again? No; for to such a spirit life could not be otherwise than happy, and the pains of death are swallowed up in a victory of the soul. And it must be remembered that a spirit like hers is in perfect harmony with its Father's will, having no desire to rest before its work is done, no desire to live or die, except as it pleases God.

I present to you this sweet passage of sacred history, in hope that it will inspire some of the young to give themselves, as she did, to the service of humanity, resisting the selfish influences and maxims of the world, — to resolve, in the outset of existence, that they will spend it as the Saviour did, going about doing good. Here you see what enthusiastic affection such a life awakened in those who saw it, and how deep was the sense of personal loss, when it seemed to have closed in death. You see, too, and let this be remembered, that such a life was important, even in the sight of God himself; so much so, that he gave power and charge to an Apostle to send his voice into the world of spirits to summon back her soul. Such a life is within your reach; any one of you may secure the same treasures of affection, the same peace of conscience, the same unfading crown.

Has the Christian world been unmoved by these inspiring and beautiful examples? or rather, has the voice of the Saviour produced no effect on young hearts when it calls them to glory and virtue, — to the service of humanity and the bearing of the cross?

In the Catholic Church there have been those who have listened to his words, — who, in the morning of existence, when the world was bright before them, with wealth, high birth, and beauty, and every thing to bind them to earthly things, have, nevertheless, chosen the better part, — content to watch by the bedside of the sick, to visit the sufferer of the cottage, to enlighten the dark soul, to give their sympathy to the destitute and forsaken, and follow as Sisters of Charity in the path of their heavenly Master. There were errors in the Catholic Church, no doubt; but not in this. It was religion, pure and undefiled before God and the Father; and well would it be for us, when we condemn a sect or party, to cherish and imitate every thing that is good about them, and suffer their frailties to rest, always remembering that goodness is goodness, in whatever heart it dwells, and that whoever in early life turns away from the broad and beaten path, and labors up the hill of truth and duty, must, as heaven is true, be like charity itself, for ever blessing and for ever blest.

We boast that our faith is purer than theirs. If so, it should produce more of the fruits of righteousness and mercy. The faith which works by love is the faith which Jesus would fain inspire; and when I ask that some would give themselves thus to the service of humanity and the cross, shall not the call, — it is the call of God, — shall it not find an answer in some young heart? I ask none to separate themselves from the world, “for the field is the world”; there it is that these constant acts of kind-

ness are to be done. I ask none to separate themselves from domestic life and happiness, but only that the same light which blesses those that are in the house should shine out to cheer and bless the darkness of the less favored sons of men. Choose this path of truth and mercy, and you will hereafter glory in your choice ; it will be a life-long blessing ; and with what a radiant happiness it will light up your closing day !

But let us look at the subject nearer. I think I hear some one saying in her heart, "I cannot make this sacrifice." I would answer, My friend, you are deceiving yourself with a word. You may be sure that you can make no sacrifice to God, whatever you do or suffer ; you may be sure, that, if your heart is right, you will receive far more than you give up to him ; if he calls you to suffer, he will give you more than he takes away. But why this constant demand for happiness ? Why do you feel as if life was lost, unless you enjoy every hour ? This is not the purpose for which you are here ; it is not to be happy that you are sent into this world. The single object of existence is to be holy, heavenly-minded ; if you can secure this treasure of holiness, it is of little importance whether life is passed in want or comfort, in sorrow or in joy. But I pray you to observe the goodness of heaven in this, that the paths of duty and happiness are inseparably one. The person who makes the most entire surrender of self-indulgence and self-will, who devotes herself most earnestly, most intensely, to the service of others,

never seeming to have a thought for her own comfort or pleasure, shall receive what she is daily measuring out to others, returned in full measure, pressed down and running over into her own breast. The deepest enjoyment of life that ever I have seen, the finest sensibility to all those blessings in which this world abounds,—yes, by far the truest and surest happiness that I have ever witnessed, — has been found in connection with this self-sacrificing spirit; by loving itself last, it gained all the joy of others in addition to its own. If I thirsted to secure the happiness of any human being, I should pray that such a being might take up the cross, giving heart, hand, and life to the labors of love which the Saviour delighted to do; for then I should be sure that His joy would be in that heart, and its joy would be full, so that, at the close of every laborious day, it would pour itself out in the words, — “O God, thou hast blessed me! I ask for no more.”

But while it is not necessary that a human being should be happy, it is necessary that every one who values his soul should be united in full sympathy with the Saviour, drawing the support of its religious life from him and through him, as a branch is nourished by the vine from which it grows. Christ thus in us, exerting influence in us, and quickening life in us, is our only hope of glory; and there cannot be an object more important to every true heart, than to secure this union of sympathy, desire, purpose, and endeavour with the Saviour, which shall make his feelings our feelings, which shall make us

look on all things as he saw them, and give us a deep and sincere interest in that which he most delighted to do. There is no way in which this union can be formed so surely and so soon, as to engage with all the heart in those labors and charities which were the daily work and pleasure of his life when he was on earth. Perform a kind action and you find a kind feeling growing in yourself, even if it was not there before. As you increase the number of objects of your kind and charitable interest, you find, that, the more you do for them, the more you love them. If such charities are guided by your taste or fancy, and limited to those in whom you happen to be interested, it will not be so. You will find that charity itself may be a self-indulgence merely, and then it will only strengthen selfish feeling. But only act upon the broad principle of love, as unfolded in the Saviour's life; serve others, not because they are your friends, not because they are interesting, not because they are grateful, — serve them when they are unfriendly, when they are distasteful, even disgusting, — serve them when they are ungrateful, — serve them because they are the children of your Father, and therefore are all your brethren, — and you will soon find that the fervent heart keeps time with the charitable hands, and warms towards the Saviour as its best and kindest friend. Surely such labor is not vain; and when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, you will rejoice that you chose that path, however hard it may have been to tread.

But this full sympathy with our Saviour in his views, principles, and feelings is not the ultimate object, the great object, of the Christian life. The only worthy object of any life is to be as nearly as possible one with the Father; so that when we act or suffer, our will shall be in perfect harmony with that of God. It is through Jesus Christ that we can ascend to this attainment. He is the way through which we can reach the knowledge and love of the Father; beginning with the imitation and love of Jesus, we travel upward to that filial reverence, trust, and love of God, which is the prize of our high calling, — which whoever has is rich, and cannot be poor, whatever else is taken away. “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” As the Father was in his heart, and he in his Father’s, that these weak human hearts might be turned to the heavenly spirits who love them with answering confidence of love. Labor as you will, dream as you will of other happiness, you will find in another world that this is the great happiness of existence, — the only one that satisfies, the only one that endures; it is fulness of joy, it is life for evermore.

But how can you reach this great attainment, — to be thus in harmony with the Father? There are worlds of delusion here. It is frightful to think how many are constantly using religious language, and expressing devotional feelings, merely from a religious taste, and because they enjoy it, when there is no consecration of temper, of passions, of heart,

or life, to God. How can you escape this most dreadful of all delusions? You see the Father in the life of his Son; *he* said that a favor to one of the least, the most despised, the most hated, of these my brethren, — observe those words, of these my brethren, — was a favor done to him. And in this shone forth the spirit of the Father, and his deep and tender concern for all the creatures he has made. Would you be, then, in harmony with the Father? After holding near communion with him, go forth to serve the least of your brethren, those whom even the Samaritan passes by; make it sure that you can treat those whom the Saviour calls his brethren as your own. Do not deceive yourself as thousands do, by gratifying your own taste and feeling, and calling this charity; but under all circumstances of disgust, contempt, and provocation, be unwearied in well-doing, and be sure that you are doing it, not for your own sake, but your Master's. The more faithfully, the more entirely, you can do this, the sooner will the love of God be shed abroad in your hearts. By doing his will, you will arrive at the understanding of Christian truth, and the full enjoyment of that peace which passes understanding, with which it is happiness to live, and glory and gain to die.

I am the more earnest in offering this example, and proposing this dedication of the life, because there is a service to Christianity which some should step forward to render. There is much genuine religious feeling in the world, but it is not seen in attractive forms. It is found in connection with nar-

rowness, gloom, and unsocial feeling, and the unengaging aspect which it wears is associated with the faith itself in the minds of beholders ; so that now the greatest service that can be done to religion is, to make it lovely by the daily beauty of the Christian life ; to show it forth again as it appeared in the life of Jesus, so that all shall be impressed with a sense of its loveliness, and all hearts shall open to its power. This work is for the young to do. Like the person of whom it is said that she was full of good works and almsdeeds, let them show what the faith is which inspires them, by their active, boundless, and never-failing charity, and words cannot tell how much they will do to remove all unbelief and indifference, and to clear the way for Christianity to travel from heart to heart, and from glory to glory. Any one who can do this, any one who has done this, shall come up in grateful remembrance before God. Do this, and on your tomb shall be written, — “ She suffered long, and was kind ; she envied not ; she was not variable ; she was not puffed up. She never behaved herself harshly ; she sought not her own ; she was not easily provoked ; she thought no evil. She rejoiced not in iniquity ; she rejoiced in the truth. She covered all things, believed all things, hoped all things, and endured all things.” Give yourself wholly to these things, and such will be the memory you will leave behind you. Such a memory shall be like the sunlight reflected from the western clouds, even more beautiful than the rays of that glorious luminary before it went down ; and

bright shall be your rising in the world beyond the grave.

I propose this example and this life to you, in the hope that it will meet an answering feeling in some heart before me. What a privilege, what a glory, to you it would be !

“ Lives of sainted ones remind you
You can make your life sublime,
And in parting leave behind you
Footsteps on the shores of time,
Footsteps, which perhaps another
Voyager o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

For whoever leads a life of charity serves God, not only by these acts, and smiles, and expressions of love, but also, and even more, by inspiring others, by the “Go thou and do likewise,” which every such life breathes out with a commanding voice. I entreat you to secure this blessing ; it is within the reach of any hand, if the full heart goes with the endeavour. It is one of the few things which hereafter you will not wish undone or otherwise done ; it will be the pearl of greatest price in your immortal crown.

SERMON III.*



READY TO BE OFFERED.

I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED, AND THE TIME OF MY DEPART-
URE IS AT HAND. — 2 Timothy iv. 6.

I KNOW not where you will find in man's history a nobler scene than this. It is a servant of God standing near the eternal world; and where the timid and the brave alike turn pale, he gazes, with clear, calm, I might say with triumphant eye, into that eternity where most men are afraid to look. In the midst of long imprisonment, deserted by his friends, entirely in the power of his foes, evidently having nothing human to support him, he feels neither dependency nor dismay. He rejoices, — that word is not too strong, — he rejoices in the hope set before him. That same hope, which to thousands in the Christian world is nothing, having less power than the poorest earthly hope to make them glad, is every thing to him, having power to make even the deep dungeon bright. He is "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; perse-

* Preached at the funeral of William Bliss, Esq., who died March 8, 1838.

cuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed."

See how he employs himself in that awful hour ; not with his own feelings, not with his own hopes and fears ; for he was dead to the world, and the world was dead to him. His hopes are for others ; his fears are for others ; he ardently desires that others may share the faith which has given such firmness to him. And therefore does he charge his friend, in the presence of the living God, — before Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, — to press home the truths of the Gospel to every heart ; to suffer no consciences to sleep, if it is possible to wake them ; to prevent them from going unprepared, unconcerned, to the place where every one shall receive according to his deeds. For himself, he says that he has fought a good fight ; he has finished his course without losing the faith ; and now he is ready to be offered, when, as he fully believes, the time for the sacrifice had come.

Here is a mystery, — that a human being, frail and helpless as human beings are, should maintain such perfect serenity at such an hour, should be so forgetful of himself and so anxious for others ! And how will you explain it ? Is it a delusion ? No ; for delusions sink and vanish before the stern reality of death. Is it enthusiasm ? No ; he is collected and firm as ever ; he understands his own feelings ; he has weighed his words. The reason that he stands firm when others tremble is, that a strength not his own supports him ; he leans on the Rock of

Ages ; he has light from on high to cheer and guide him in the dark valley of the shadow of death.

Let us endeavour to understand this state of mind. It is one that all are concerned to know. For an hour not far from any one of us is to determine how we shall go to the grave ; — whether we shall have this holy confidence, which nothing but a trust in Jesus Christ inspires ; or whether we shall approach the close of life, insensible, unsustained, having no resource but to shut our eyes to all that is before us, and to keep our hearts fixed fast on this world, till the dream is broken, and we find ourselves in that world where we can sleep no longer.

Undoubtedly, the chief reason of this holy and happy confidence was, that he was living no longer to this world ; he was living “the life of God.” He had begun a new life from the time when he saw the vision of his Master looking down upon him, in sorrow, not in anger, and asking what he had done to deserve such persecution. From that moment his views were changed ; his feelings were changed ; his whole heart was changed. No longer burning with ambition, no longer dazzled by this world’s glories, his spiritual nature was awakened ; he saw himself in a new light ; he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. He saw that in those days when his countrymen cheered him as the defender of their Law, he had been governed, not by conscience, but by self-deceiving passion, — passion which led him to trample on the rights of others, and to bring deep stains of blood upon his soul. He felt that he was

the chief of sinners. But when he came to the feet of Him "that liveth and was dead," when he found that, so far from being cast out and scorned, he was welcomed, trusted, employed in the service of that cross which he had dishonored, it seemed to him as if the entire devotion of all his life and all his soul to his Master would be too little to atone for the insults and injuries of former days. A clear, bright flame of love to God and man shot upward in his heart; he cared for himself no longer. Days of hardship, nights of watching, prisons, chains, dangers by land and sea, had no more terrors for him; and when affection urged that he was going too far, he tore himself away. "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?" For the Lord Jesus he was willing, not only to be bound, but to die.

Could such a man fear to be offered when the time of his departure was at hand? O, no! Death had no terrors that could affright the living martyr. His only desire was to take the post assigned him in life, and there to fight the battles of the cross till the Chief of his salvation permitted him to lay down his arms. In his breast the world was overcome. Seeing what others did not see, governed by influences which had nothing to do with this world, sustained by a faith in unseen realities which the world knew not of, to him it was not death to die. He could look on the fires of martyrdom, even if burning for him, almost as serenely as a returning wanderer sees the warm red light shining from the window of his home.

Again : the same change which had destroyed the power of the world over him had brought him into near communion with his God. From a child of the world, wholly bent on its pursuits, wholly enslaved by its influences, never looking above it nor beyond it, he had become a child of God ; not only believing that there is a God, but feeling it, rejoicing to feel it, always ready to go to him and pour out his soul to him in the glad confidence of love. While to many God is nothing but a name, while millions of thoughts pass over their minds every day, of which God is not one, while others have each some human beings whom they love and some whom they fear more than the Highest, in his soul God was the great central thought. All others received light from it, like the planets round the sun ; no other thought, not the whole world, could eclipse it ; to him God was all in all.

Having the profound conviction that God is a father, and one whose kindness far exceeds the best tenderness of human love, he could go to him with filial confidence, to cast his care upon him, to make known his wants and sorrows, to revive his spiritual affections in that communion where hearts almost bursting with agony have found the truth of the promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose heart is stayed on thee." To him, there was no such thing as accident or chance ; nothing ever *happened* to him ; every event was appointed and assigned, and, as the act of a Father, he not only submitted to it, but gave it welcome, knowing that,

however painful, it was meant as a blessing. *It was* a blessing ; how it was a blessing he should afterwards know.

Fully believing that, while much which men bring upon themselves is evil, every thing which God brings upon them is good, he was willing to leave the time, the place, the manner, of his departure to God. He knew that each one who leaves the world, not destroyed by his own act, not wasted by his own sensuality, goes at the very moment which is best for him. He knew that God would say whether his life should expire in prayer, or gush out in blood ; and he was ready to lie down upon the bed, to pine in the dungeon, or to shrivel in the flames, to-day, or to-morrow, or to wait God's time. To him Death was not a spectre, gloomy, unrelenting, striking men's hearts, and crowding the graves with dead ; to him the act of death was no other than the act of God, — of him who cares for us more than we care for ourselves. Therefore, though he had a desire to go, though he longed, if it might be, to be with his Master, he was ready to do his duty in life as long as it pleased his God. Being pure in heart, pure from selfish passions and desires, he was able to see his God. God, though not seen by the living eye, was present and visible to his soul. By faith he *saw* the Invisible, and his whole heart was one living, burning sacrifice to his God.

Once more : the secret of his readiness to depart was, that things unseen and eternal were realities to him. Other men will talk of them ; let their minds

play about them ; say that they ought to awaken interest, that they are entitled to profound regard. Still they awaken no interest in fact ; they are not regarded ; the merest trifle of the day engages the attention and influences the conduct more than these things, in which man's eternal interests are bound up. To him God and eternity were more than empty sounds ; they were words of meaning, words of power, words which not only fell upon the ear, but touched and stirred the heart. When he thought of going into eternity, it did not seem like going from firm ground into unsubstantial space, uncertainty, darkness ; he felt that this world, which rocks, and wastes, and changes under us, is not the immortal home of the immortal soul. "For we know," he says, — not *we believe*, but "we know," — that if our earthly dwelling, this tabernacle of flesh, be dissolved, we have yet a building of God, eternal in the heavens. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

This is the great attainment, — to see things as they are, — to give most heed and most heart to the most important things. This was what enabled him to say "our light afflictions"! Light did he call them? Heavy indeed would they have seemed to any but him. This was what enabled him to glory in sufferings where others sank helpless under them. This made heaven so near, that death had no terrors. Hence the inspiration of those words, — memorable and glorious so long as the world shall stand, — "I

am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

I have endeavoured to describe the confidence which faith in Jesus Christ inspired in one of his earliest and greatest disciples. It can inspire the same again. It has inspired it in many Christians. Sustained by this faith in the Crucified, they have maintained a similar confidence ; a similar joy has breathed itself in their dying words, and shone in the "face as it were an angel's," which told of heaven within.

Such was the confidence of him who has just left us for the grave. He died as man ought to die. I may speak of his departure, though I may not tell you of his virtues. I may not praise the dead. Nor is it needed here. That it is not needed, there is many a tear to tell,

"None knew him, but to love him,
Nor named him, but to praise."

It was the earnest wish of our friend that he might meet us here again ; that he might approach the table of his Master, and join his prayers with ours in a Sabbath sacrifice to the God of love. The prayer is answered. Behold ! he is come. Not as we wished and prayed ; but he is come. Not with his cheerful bearing ; not with his smile of kindness ; not with serene and manly brow ; but borne

by the hands of others, the shadow of death on his eyelids, the hand which would have returned a warm pressure to yours cold, icy cold, his repose so deep, that no sound can reach him but the shout of the archangel and the trump of God. Still I say, he is come, — come to give you an affectionate warning, come to bid you a last farewell. Give him welcome; for he comes to remind you of that which it may be life to remember, of that which it may be death to forget. He hath no need of words. To your hearts he says, — “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

I have now a duty to perform. When I saw him last, he felt that he was a dying man. He had watched a fading flower that stood near him, and he felt that its decline was prophetic of his own. Feeling that he was moving to the grave with a rapidity which man had no power to stay, he spoke with the sincerity of the dying. For himself, he said, he had no fears. He deplored the sins of his past life; he lamented that so much of that heart which belonged to God had been given to other things. But he had prayed most fervently to be forgiven, through “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world”; and his prayers were answered; he had found rest to his soul. To the world he had no wish to return; it had lost all its attractions. The only desire he had was to go once more to the house of God, to sit at the table of his Master, and to meet with friends with whom he might improve in spiritual things. “How much might be done,” he said, “if we only

would!” As to life and death, he had no anxiety; but it was his earnest prayer, that, if he should return to the world, it might be with a different spirit, with higher and holier influences than ever before. Remember his words, — “How much might be done if we only *would!*”

Finding that he had no anxiety for himself, I asked him if he had none for those whom he was leaving, — for the wife, for the children, who were inexpressibly dear to him. He said that he had none. He placed full confidence in God. He was willing to leave them in the hands of his Father and their Father, of his God and their God. When he bade farewell to his children, seeing that one of them was overcome with sorrow, he told her he had often left her to go on journeys, and now he must leave her once more. It was true that he could not return to her, but she might come to him. He trusted she would come to him. And thus he took leave of them; but not for ever. He doubted not that they would enjoy the protection of the Father of the fatherless, and the widow’s Friend. “I have been young, and now am old; yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

But I found that he had his anxiety, and it was all for you, — for those whom he had been used to meet in the intercourse of life. For them he was anxious that their hearts might turn to God; that religion might be to them a living spirit, and not a dead letter. For he feared, — he was oppressed to think that some had no more feeling than he once

had of the truths of the Gospel ; that they were in the way that seemeth right, though the end of it are the ways of death. He would have sent an affectionate message to you, were it not for his shrinking fear of display. But it is not needed. He himself is come. There is no speech, no language ; his voice is not heard ; and yet he speaks to you from the frozen silence of death. Let your hearts listen ; it is the last time.

He sent no message ; his life, he said, had not been such as gave him a right to speak. Did not you think that his life was virtuous ? Amiable in all his feelings, exemplary in all his conduct, did not you think that he was always prepared to die ? He thought not so. When his heart was turned to God, he saw himself differently ; and painfully did he feel, that, though man found no fault, God had reason to upbraid him ; if man's claims had been answered, God's claims were immeasurably greater, and those had not been answered. He saw the hollowness of that virtue which leaves God and eternity out of view ; he knew that, while the hands are full of earthly cares, man cannot work out his salvation. "I have lain on this bed," he said, "and had deep communion with God. But, O this body of sin ! it seems too great to be forgiven. But the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin ; on that I build my hope. In these last few weeks, heaven, the Lamb before the throne, and saints and angels have seemed very near."

When he seemed, to all but experienced eyes, to

be gaining strength, when his friends were encouraged, and he himself hoped that he might be spared a little longer, the prospect was suddenly changed, — darkened to us, but not to him. He said then, — “I see my spirit must depart, and I lay me down to die, forgiving all who have injured me as freely as I hope to be forgiven.”

When the closing scene came on, and his frame was torn with suffering, the voice that was ever dearest to him said, “O the mortal agony of this hour! but God will support you.” He said, “My burden is lifted; God and Jesus Christ do sustain me.” His last hours were spent in prayer; and thus, meekly relying on the support which never fails, he was permitted at last to depart in peace.

Again I say, he is here, — come to warn you against trusting to the present world. It can afford you nothing, for it *has* nothing which will stand under the shadow of death. Nothing but a living faith, nothing but a faith which sees God and eternity as realities, can support you in that awful hour. And now he implores you to live so that you may meet him again. Do not say to him, “Farewell for ever!” When he goes to his wintry grave, “enter thou into thy chambers, and shut the doors about thee.” Open your hearts to God.

Let me ask you now, which is the living, and which is the dead? They are not dead to whom Jesus is the resurrection and the life. They are not dead who are alive for evermore. They whose mortal hath put on immortality need not your tears.

Why weep for those who are happy in the mansions of the blest?

The dead are they who are enslaved to the present world. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead." He that liveth in worldliness is dead. They are the ones to mourn for. Bitter tears may be shed for them. But sorrow is not for the happy. Tears are not for the blest.

SERMON IV.*



GROUNDS AND LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY.

THE LOT IS CAST INTO THE LAP; BUT THE WHOLE DISPOSING
THEREOF IS OF THE LORD. — Proverbs xvi. 33.

THERE were cases occasionally in the Old Testament history, when the Hebrews were permitted to resort to the lot; as, for example, in dividing the promised land among the tribes. The lots were thrown into the bosom of one present, who hid them in the fold of his garment, from which they were afterwards drawn. In this, they considered themselves as leaving it to chance to determine; but not so the sacred writer; it was Divine Providence which determined. “The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord”; there is no such thing as chance. Since, then, there is no such power as chance, since it is a mistake to say that any thing ever *happens*, or to speak of any thing as accidental, — language which, however common, gives wrong impressions of our

* This discourse was occasioned by a “shocking accident,” as it was called in the newspapers, which occurred on the Western Railroad, December 18, 1840, by which four lives were lost.

condition in this world, — it follows that all things which take place must be owing either to God or man, are brought about by Divine or human agency.

We will begin by attempting to define the provinces of human and Divine agency. Our duty is commensurate with our power. We are responsible for the moral character of what is done, just so far as it depends on ourselves. God does not deal with mankind as with other animals. *They* have action, but no moral action ; because they have not power to foresee the consequences of what they do, nor a power to discern between right and wrong. The few cases in which they betray fear after having done wrong are to be explained by supposing that they have associated such actions with suffering, the fear of being punished, thus occasioned, leading to that manner which is sometimes thought to express penitence and shame. But with man it is not so, who not only has a moral and a spiritual nature by which he can understand his God and his duty, but also a power to do or not to do, to choose or to refuse, which is not given to other created things. Within that circle, then, where man has this power to will and to do of his own pleasure, is the field of human agency. Here man is held responsible ; he is bound to look about him and before him, to reflect seriously on the motives and consequences of his actions, to hold his thoughts, feelings, and actions in the light of conscience, that he may see how his acting or his neglecting to act will affect the beings around him, how it will appear in the sight of God,

to whom he must answer, and what bearing it will have on his own character and destiny.

All beyond this province of human responsibility is done by the power of God. Since he is everywhere present, with a never-sleeping providence, guiding the operation of all created things, we know that every thing, except what he has intrusted man with power to do, is done by him. When we speak of the strange and mysterious instinct of animals, of the sureness and certainty of its operation, — of the bird finding its path over untravelled shores and oceans, or the beast, when transported to a distance, returning straightway to his home, and thus doing what transcends the power of man, — we need not wonder; for it is all done by the agency of God. It directs and manages all things which man's intelligence and power cannot reach, and over the actions of man himself it exerts a superintending care, never interfering with the freedom of his agency, never preventing the consequences of his neglect or his action, so far as respects the agent himself, but preventing the injury which his action or neglect might occasion to others, and thus bringing good in the end out of that chaos and confusion of evil which men are constantly doing, so as to make them all blessings in the result to the human race. Meanwhile the individual agent is held fast to his responsibility, obliged to eat the fruit of his own doings, and suffered, if he will, to abuse his privilege of freedom, which otherwise would not be either a privilege or freedom, to the injury and ruin of his soul.

This thought of Divine Providence, ever superintending the great interests of mankind, ever caring for his children, is the most consoling and inspiring that ever visits the heart, though it cannot give joy to the heart where it is not welcomed. It is delightful, when you wake at deep midnight, to think of Him who watches while you are sleeping, and keeps the vast and silent spheres wheeling in their order above your guarded head. Still more, to think that the spirit of God is over this world's troubled waters, on which we are all embarked for immortality, — that his eye follows us in these unsounded seas, and that when the waves rise or fall they obey his voice of mercy, — this thought blends the glory of our moral freedom with a sense of our dependence on a Father's power and love, in such a manner as to call out the energies, to silence the fears, and to give the peace of living action, not of indifference nor of death, to the soul.

Having thus stated and attempted to define the provinces of Divine and human agency, I would next ask you to consider how our knowledge of them is constantly extending. With respect to human agency, for example, we are continually opening upon new views, which show us that many things which are called acts of God come within the sphere of our own responsibility, and are in truth our own actions, springing from our own doing or our own neglect; and the consequences of them we must expect to bear. How often have we seen the poor invalid on his bed of anguish, endeavouring to still

his troubled nerves to repose, that he may learn the lesson of submission to what he deems the will of God, when we cannot but remember his own careless exposure, his own unnatural habit of living, his own contemptuous neglect of the beginnings of disease, and we say to ourselves, if not to him, that it is his own doing which has brought him to the brink of an untimely grave! Many cases there are in which we cannot trace home the event to human agency, or rather to the men who caused it, while the connection between the two is clear to the eye of God. For example, some unprincipled builder in the hurried city, for the sake of gain, puts up a house too weak to stand. When it falls, and crushes the innocent beneath it, he may call it the act of Providence if he will; but it was his own, — and he will find it darkly recorded against him at the judgment of the great day.

But never has this province of human agency been so much extended to human apprehension, as in connection with those arts and improvements of civil life which have invested man with new powers, and given him a mastery over nature which in former days he never dreamed of possessing. He would as soon have thought of guiding the stars in their courses, as of conducting chariots that outstrip the winds, vessels which ask no aid from the outward elements to bear them on their way. This same development of power opens new fields of responsibility; for it is enough to make men thoughtful when the lives of thousands are at the mercy of

one. Where the conscience has not lost all power by disuse and inaction, the person to whom the lives of others are largely intrusted will feel the greatness of the charge, and the solemnity of his obligation. And if the manager of one of these vessels, in foolish and desperate rivalry with another, disregards the danger, and hazards the safety and happiness of thousands to gratify his own childish passion, when the explosion takes place, and the deck bleeds with mangled ruins, and one electric shock of agony is sent to hearts and habitations more than can be numbered, let him not doubt that he shall be accused before God as the author of that world of woe. Yes, and should they pass safely through the danger, no thanks to him ; his guilt is the same in the sight of God. So if the proprietors of such a vessel, in their thirst of gain, set at naught their obligations, and send out hundreds on the deck which there is reason to fear may become their funeral pile, the conflagration on the midnight sea, the wild cry of agony sent over the waters, and the bitter tears of unknown and unnumbered mourners, are so many witnesses against them. And if they say that they did not think of this result, tell them it was their crime that they did not think of it, — that they thought of nothing but their own gain, when duties and dangers should have been first regarded. When such things are, no matter how stern and general the voice of condemnation ; but do not confound with such examples that of those who have no motive of interest or passion to expose others to danger, who

have much to lose and nothing to gain by such exposure, who indeed are themselves as much endangered in life, and more in reputation, than any who suffer by them; for there may be error in judgment, without guilt, and if they acted according to their best judgment under the circumstances, their conscience is clear of blood. Where the disaster is owing to circumstances which no ordinary prudence could foresee, — in a word, where they have done their best, — the action is not their own, and the responsibility is lifted from their soul.

But some may ask, “When the province of human agency is thus extended, is not the sphere of Divine Providence lessened? Shall we not feel as if God had less to do with human affairs, and will it not lessen that feeling of dependence on him, which ought to be much greater rather than less?” On the contrary, the more we feel our own responsibility, the more shall we recognize the agency of Heaven in all things. For in your own experience you may observe the reciprocal action of these two principles: those who think most of Heaven, and see the hand of Providence in all things, are most alive to their own accountability; and they who feel most deeply the magnitude and importance of their duties are the readiest to understand how much they depend upon their God. So that all these advances in human knowledge, all this extension of the bounds of human power, carry up the thoughts to Him whose inspirations are the fountains of all knowledge, and enlarge our conceptions of his providence, which intrusts these powers to our hands.

I now come to the subject of our duty in relation to this power which God has given us in charge. Here I would observe, that, from what we know of Divine Providence, we may learn how to use and improve that human providence which brings us into our nearest resemblance to God. When it is said that man was made in God's image, and had dominion committed to him over other works of God, it must be remembered that the image is but imperfect, far off, and dim at first, and it must be our own care to make the likeness greater than it is in the beginning. For this purpose Jesus Christ has made us acquainted with the Father in and through himself, and set him before us as an example; but so neglected is the privilege, that thousands lose all traces of divine original in the defacing stain of this world's corruptions. Still, this is our work and our glory, — to be as much as possible like Him who was entirely like his Father, and, by cherishing a resemblance to our Master, to be transformed into the same image, — from effort to effort in this world, from glory to glory in another.

Now what is it we adore in the providence of God? Is it not the vast reach of vision and design with which it embraces all considerations bearing on its action, — never swayed, as man is, by those which are near and pressing, but looking to the last as well as the first, the distant as well as the nigh, — never swayed by undue partiality or aversion, but always steadfastly regarding and pressing on to that which is right? And more than all, is it not the perfect

disinterestedness of Divine Providence, the regard to the welfare of all, which sends rain and sunshine alike on the just and the unjust, the thankless as well as the good?

Here, then, we see straight and plain before us the way to improve our own moral power, — by endeavouring, as much as possible, to make it resemble the providence of God. That is, to consider all the bearings and consequences of what we do or neglect to do, — overlooking selfish inducements, resisting temporary influences and clamorous passions, and always doing that which under the circumstances, so far as we can see them, our deliberate judgment approves as the best course we can pursue. We are never to count any thing which concerns our duty beneath our attention, because it may affect others in a way which we cannot foresee; and if not, it will still concern ourselves to do the best we are able, and in the best manner we are able, since there is a day when our actions, and the character and consequences of our actions, will pass before us in stern and fearful review. And we must remember that we cannot do the best thing in the best way, unless we imitate the providence of God in acting with regard to the right rather than with regard to ourselves, — never suffering our sordid interests, our malicious feelings, or our ungoverned passions to darken the clearness of our judgment, and turn us aside from the course which duty would have us pursue. If we do this as far as possible, we shall find that it will give us a wise forecast in the con-

duct of our lives ; saving us from many an error, and saving others from the consequences of our errors ; and, whether in our daily employments or on great and trying occasions, will give us power to maintain the bearing of children of God.

I will, however, detain you no longer with this discussion, though all I have said applies to the subject which I intended to bring before you ; I mean the calamity which lately overcame us like a summer cloud, filling every heart with sorrow and spreading gloom on every brow. These things are painfully familiar in some parts of our country ; but so unusual here, that they are more terrible when they come. And is it not a subject of gratitude and of wonder that a gigantic undertaking has been completed, and gigantic powers been put in successful action, and that so few in our community can say that they have suffered in person, in circumstances, or in heart ?

Was this disaster to be ascribed to Divine or human agency ? One or the other must have occasioned it, for chance is a name for that which has no existence. To call it accidental is only saying that we cannot determine whether it comes within the circle of human responsibility, or whether it should be regarded as an act of God. We can only tell where to assign it by deciding another question ; and that is, whether ordinary foresight could have foreseen and prevented it. If so, man was responsible for it ; but otherwise it is to be regarded as an act of God. Had any one concerned in it neglected

reasonable precautions, encountering danger for the sake of gain or display, — had he tampered with powers that never had been tested, and made bold and rash experiments, doubtful beforehand whether they would succeed, — carelessness would have been a crime, because caution was a duty, and each one so offending would be answerable for that which, with common prudence, he might have prevented, as well as for that which he has done. But if the calculations of science gave them confidence in their power to descend the steep with safety, if former experience of that power strengthened them in the opinion that it could be done without danger, if all the danger apprehended was from the effect of gravitation, and they believed themselves provided with a force more than competent to resist it, still more, if the frost upon their slippery path unexpectedly counteracted the effects of their engine and left the vast weight helpless on the descending steep, — in a word, if man did what could be reasonably expected of him to anticipate and avoid all danger, the disaster came not within the sphere of human responsibility. Their conscience need not be burdened; the blood of the sufferers will not be required at their hands. This, then, is the result: if human prudence, in its ordinary action, could be expected to foresee and prevent a disaster, it is the work of man; otherwise, it must be ascribed to the providence of God.

If the question be asked in reference to the sufferers, whether it was the act of man or of God, I an-

swer at once, it was the act of God. He does not abridge our freedom ; he suffers us to do or neglect to do, and leaves us to bear the consequences ourselves ; but at the same time he takes care that, so far as respects others, the wrath or folly, the carelessness or madness, of men shall do nothing more than work out the purposes of the Most High. In any one of those dark deeds with which our public prints are blackened over, the murder was the voluntary act of man ; so far as the murderer was concerned it was human agency, to be answered for here and hereafter as a wilful and deadly sin. But that high Providence, which cares for all the living, did not suffer the welfare of the murdered to be injuriously affected by the action of another ; he was permitted to suffer, because in the book of Providence it was written that this was the best time for him to die. And so I say with reference to those who have so lately fallen ; it seems mysterious, indeed, that, when their lives were so important, they should have been taken from their desolate wives and children. How often have we heard it lamented that the weight of the ungovernable train did not fall harmlessly into the waters ! But no ; let us remember, that from the moment when it burst through all human control, and came thundering down the steep, it was God's providence that determined where the blow should fall. Had it been, as no one believes, the most wanton rashness which brought it thus headlong, — yes, had it been wilful design which sent it down to mangle and destroy, — even then it would

be true that He, without whom not a sparrow falls, permitted it to crush the innocent, — not because they deserved to suffer, not in wrath nor in vengeance, — but for the single reason, that their hour was come. The time, the place, and the manner of their departure were ordered by the God of love.

But the question of most importance is, In what light are these disasters themselves to be regarded? And in respect to human agency they should undoubtedly be used to learn that needful forecast in the employment of mighty powers, which nothing but experience — I may say sad and sorrowful experience — can give. When the evil has taken place, we can all see that there was danger. But was this danger distinctly predicted by any one before. Wise cautions were given by some who must now rejoice that they gave them; but with a force of more than two to one to resist the effect of gravitation, would any one have said beforehand that wheels would be palsied in their action, and levers lose their foothold, and the weight roll helplessly down the steeps which it found no difficulty in ascending? Here, then, the bounds of human forecast are extended by a fearful warning; and that warning may be the means of saving many a life hereafter from a danger which otherwise would not have been understood. It is well, then, that we are sometimes taught that our power is less than we suppose, and our responsibility greater; and the warning is written in blood, because all experience must be gained at startling prices, and unless the warning is solemn its effect will pass away.

Once more, these calamities should impress our hearts with an overwhelming sense of the power and providence of God. We should reverse the wheels of our enterprise for a moment, and consider our relation to the Most High ; for power without the sense of responsibility is a fatal gift to man. If we see a man of great intellectual power destitute of all moral elevation, he seems unnatural ; we cannot despise, indeed, but we cannot reverence him ; we regard him with wonder and pain. And so if a community, highly intelligent and highly favored, forget the source of power and blessing, they show themselves unworthy of their privilege ; they are in danger of losing it ; for He who sitteth in the heaven may dash them down from that elevation when they think themselves triumphantly ascending, and strew them in broken and hopeless ruin below. He has but to send his lightning, and the iron bands of their communication will shrivel like a burning thread, the improvements of life will disappear, the rose-garden will relapse into a wilderness, and the ancient woods and waters will possess their own again.

In all thy ways, then, acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths. In the confidence of human agency, never forget, that, "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." In every enterprise, in every endeavour, remember that it is the first dictate of wisdom to turn unto God.

SERMON V.



CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE.

THEN CAME PETER TO HIM AND SAID, LORD, HOW OFT SHALL MY BROTHER SIN AGAINST ME AND I FORGIVE HIM? TILL SEVEN TIMES? — Matthew xviii. 21.

THIS question, taken in connection with the reply, is the more instructive, because it was proposed by a person of great generosity of feeling; who was ardent, but always ready for reconciliation, impetuous to hurry into wrath, but equally swift to repent and forgive. Knowing his Master's feelings and principles, he evidently thinks that a great effort will be required of his followers, and he evidently thinks that it would be a great effort to forgive an injury seven times repeated. And this is true. Still it is not all that the Saviour requires, not all that he himself would do. It is plain that he had in his mind a measure of the duty of Christian love, carried as far as he then thought it could be carried. He placed his mark on the outmost bounds of what he considered the reach of human attainment. The farthest flight of human generosity and kindness which he could imagine was that of seven times for-

giving the seven times repeated wrong. How much he must have been astonished at his Master's reply, — "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven"! — that is, about five hundred times as far as he thought it possible for human kindness and generosity to go.

Now the moral of this short and striking story is this. Every one, like the Apostle, has in his own mind a measure of Christian love in what he thinks is its full extent; — not always very definite, but still there is a sort of boundary in his mind beyond which he thinks it cannot be expected to pass. It is his mark. It is the point to which he thinks it reasonable that the duty should be carried, — or, what is the same thing, to which he thinks that he should be willing to go. And thus he assumes that the mind of God is the same with his own. Instead of saying, as St. Paul did, "We have the mind of Christ," and consulting that oracle without regard to any other, he takes it for granted that his own natural feelings are always to be trusted, though they were formed and came into his heart he knows not when nor how. The Indians, when they can count to six, believe that numeration can go no farther; and thus, in morals and religion, we make our own attainment the measure of what man can do. One is not less unreasonable than the other. For as Newton and Laplace extended the power of numbers immeasurably farther than the unenlightened could follow, one Christian may have enlarged ideas of religious duty, which another, so far from attain-

ing, is not yet able to understand. The truth is, no one knows what he can do. No one is able to fix the boundaries of his own power, or, what is the same thing, of his obligations which are commensurate with his power. None, save He who knows what is in man, can be an authority here; for that man does not know what is in himself is taught us by the experience of almost every day.

But there are some considerations worth regarding, which may show us that forgiveness, forbearance, and kindness may be carried farther than we now think possible, — more than seven times farther than we carry them now. To a few of these I will ask your attention.

First. It is certain, that, if our kindness is limited and partial, there must be something in us which prevents its growing and extending. What is it? There is nothing in our nature which says to our generosity or forbearance, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther.” Therefore it must be something in our acquired feelings, — in the passions which have sprung up in our communication with the world. There are some individuals who have excited in us feelings of distaste, perhaps aversion, which we think it impossible to overcome. Certainly this is a disadvantage, and one not likely to be overcome without effort and care. It is comparatively easy to keep the garden clear from weeds if they are not permitted to grow; but when they have once struck their roots deep beneath the surface, it is not easy by direct effort to dislodge them. What

then can be done? Carefully prevent their rising; cut off every sign of their growth as fast as it appears; and if the leaves are thus suppressed, the roots will be sure to die. The same is also to be said of the wild growth of unkind feelings in the heart. Suppress their manifestations, and the feelings will perish after a time. That is, if you do it in good faith, and with a true desire to get rid of those feelings which are the outlaws of the heart. The effort which good-breeding makes to appear kind is not enough; but if, from a real principle of kindness and self-improvement, you suppress all manifestations of unkindness, the passions from which they spring will perish from the soul.

Now what I say is this: if we have in our hearts any feelings of dislike to others which have gathered strength by indulgence, we cannot judge how far the kindness of one who has destroyed those feelings in his heart by suppressing them can go. It can go farther than we can go with it; it can go farther than we can imagine now. It is said that the patient faithfulness of Chinese industry has exterminated the roots and seeds of that useless and troublesome vegetation in which our fields abound; and the result is, that their agriculture has a richness and abundance unknown and unimagined in other lands. So must it be with labor applied to the heart. This labor is applied at disadvantage while any unkind feeling, cherished and defended, usurps the place where better ones might grow. O if the heart were free! if it could once bring itself into that state of

liberty from passion wherewith Christ would make it free! If you say it cannot be, remember that nothing was ever yet accomplished by despair. The charge, "Love your enemies," contains a duty that *can* be done; — not, however, by one who intrenches himself in his unkind feelings, but by the follower of his Master who by patient labor has removed every root of bitterness from his heart.

Again: they who doubt whether obedience to the command which enjoins the love of man can be carried as far as the Saviour would have it go are not aware what facility and power are gained by the familiar practice of religious virtue. In every thing else it is evident to their eyes. They see the ease and grace with which mechanical movements and physical operations are conducted by those who have followed them for years. They wonder at the rapid grace with which the artisan accomplishes what would be impossible to unskilful hands. Nor is the admiration less when we behold the results of intellectual training, by which calculations, which are a mystery to the uninitiated, are seen through with a glance like the eagle's; by which thoughts are arranged and marshalled in the mind at the slightest summons, and the orator makes his way through the most difficult subject in a path of light, as the ship seems to throw fire from its keel in the midnight sea. The same command of resources, the same readiness, ease, and gracefulness in the use of the spiritual powers, is the reward of those, who, as the Apostle says, "exercise themselves" in these high

endeavours. Like men familiar with mountain paths, they move with careless confidence where others would think it impossible to tread.

This is what our Saviour alluded to, when he encouraged those who took up his burden with the hope that they would find it light. He knew, and they knew, that it was not light at first; but each succeeding effort lessened the difficulty; they soon welcomed that which at first they shrank from, and at last, came to love the duty which at first was a subject of dread. The conscience, if once disobeyed, — how hard it is to recover our sense of obligation! But if we obey it faithfully, the next effort is more easily made; the difficulty lessens with each succeeding endeavour. Thus it is with those who determine to forgive every injury, to clear their minds of every resentful feeling. It may be hard the first time, — but the seventh time it is comparatively easy; the seventh time, one faithfully disposed begins to acquire a taste for the duty, and long before he reaches the seventieth effort he will enjoy the new feelings so intensely, that nothing would persuade him to return to his indifference and hardness again. And so with the affections. Who, but those who have tasted it, can tell the happiness which their familiar exercise bestows? You may wake the sleeper, and tell him what joy it is to breathe the fresh air of the morning, and to see the daily resurrection of the sun from its grave. Should you persuade him to go forth, he will wish himself back in his slumbers; but after a few efforts to overcome his

first distaste, he will begin to enjoy it as you do, and wonder how he could have sacrificed to dulness and inaction the best and brightest hours of the day. And so with the happiness which springs from religious feelings, — no one can understand it till he has at least tasted and seen it ; nor can it come to him in fulness of joy till those feelings have become familiar inmates of the breast.

In fine, no one can tell what advances may be made in kindness and good-will to others by one whose object it is to divest himself of selfish feelings. All men are selfish, no doubt ; but there is this difference, made by religious principle where it exists. Some are earnest to suppress and overcome those selfish feelings, while others love to indulge them. While the latter talk about resisting them, they still indulge them, either from the feeling that they are natural and may be innocently indulged, — that good-will to others may go far enough without going far, — or from reliance on those barren words and feelings, which, like sunset-light on windows, give the appearance of warmth to the heart, when all is cold within. These two classes there are. Now our Saviour states the law of the heart ; it cannot serve two masters. If its general direction is in favor of self-indulgence, love to man has no chance there. The banner of love may be kept flying above it, but there is nothing of the reality below. On the other hand, if a Christian really makes it the effort of his life to resist his own selfishness, he will be surprised himself and he will surprise others by the

amount of service which he can render to God and man, and still more by the ease, and joy, and grace with which it is rendered.

I have made these suggestions, and many more might be added, showing that we ought never to pronounce upon the extent of a Christian obligation from what we know of our own disposition and our own power. It is a common delusion to think that duty goes only so far as we now think we can go. We may find hereafter, as doubtless the Apostle did, that we can go seventy times farther. And not only so; we may also find that we can take the seventieth step more easily than the seventh, — each succeeding effort being less than the former, and the way of duty easier to tread, though it spread out immeasurably far before us. We must remember, that it is not ours to say what duty requires, nor what man is expected, or is able, to do. For as the measures of length were preserved in the dimensions of the stones of the temple, where they could be invariably ascertained in future ages as long as that building stood, so the measures of Christian obligation are preserved, and can be seen, in the life and history of our Lord. We have nothing to do with metes and bounds; we have only to follow him. If we follow him, we cannot wander; and the only way in which we can be sure of going far enough in any duty is to follow him faithfully to the last, — to follow him till our last step sinks in the grave.

SERMON VI.



VISION OF GOD'S THRONE.

AND, BEHOLD, A THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN, AND ONE SAT ON THE THRONE. — Revelation iv. 2.

WE can see, even through the medium of a mistaken and unfortunate translation, that there is a wonderful richness and magnificence in the Apocalyptic vision, — particularly in its representation of the Most High. Every thing in it is either dazzling or shadowy; there is no clear outline, no exactly discernible form. In this place it is said that a throne was placed in heaven, and One, it is not said who, sat on the throne. It is not said who, because there is no distinct image before the writer's eye; and though he knows who it must be, his inspiration faints and fears to tell. But the imagination of the thoughtful reader is powerfully excited, and the effect is, in one who reflects, to turn away his contemplation from the visible glories before him to those moral perfections, which, in the view of the angel, are infinitely more lovely and commanding than can be represented by any forms, colors, or radiance such as delight the eye. And this undoubt-

edly was meant to be the effect of every thing grand and beautiful in the visible works of God. Our admiration of them does not answer its purpose, unless it aids us to ascend to a purer sense and clearer understanding of those divine glories of wisdom, power, and love, in comparison with which all things seen with the eye are but dust and ashes. Now this is my purpose in asking your attention to this strange and splendid vision, — that we may learn how to ascend through it, and above it, to a higher and nearer communion with Him whom no eye hath seen or can see, and who, after all the pains and the power with which he is thus presented, never becomes to us “our Father,” till he is welcomed and has his dwelling in the heart.

But let us turn to the vision, for I wish that all may observe this peculiarity which I have mentioned, — the manner in which it eludes the eye, and at the same time fills it with glory. As in the dream of Eliphaz, it stands still, but we cannot discern the form of it; while at the same time an image is before our eyes. The One who sat upon the throne — that is, the glory that surrounds him — resembles the jasper and sardine or carnelian; the former of which is of various and dazzling colors, while the latter in all its changes retains a resemblance to flesh-color, which doubtless has its meaning here, by which it is intended that there was something which gave the impression of a person and a form in all this surpassing glory. But it is not here as in the words of the modern lyrist: —

“ He passed the bounds of flaming space,
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble as they gaze.
He saw, and, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.”

For the seer of the Revelation, more in the spirit of his religion, represents the fierce brightness as softened down into the rainbow, — the sweet sign of mercy, — “ very beautiful in the brightness thereof, compassing the heaven with a glorious circle where the hands of the Most High have bended it ” ; and, with yet kinder regard for human weakness, shaded with the emerald, — the tender green, the color on which every eye can dwell undazzled, and with ever new delight. Before him spreads out the pavement, resembling a crystal sea ; by which is meant the upper surface of the firmament, of which the lower, with its delicious blue, is over our heads. And God is represented as looking down from his throne through this transparent ceiling of the universe, having all the sons of men, and all that passes in the earth beneath him, at once in full and perfect view.

Need I say that in this brilliant presentment of the heavenly glory we have before us the Christian's God ? for while the intense brightness, the uncertain form, the lightnings and thunders, and the changing rays of fiery light, all give the impression that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hand, the gentle rainbow of peace, and the emerald softness in which this radiance melts away, show us how Christianity has changed this contemplation of the Highest ; —

not by any means depriving him of his sterner glories, but only softening them to the eye, or rather to the heart, in such a manner that we can bear the sight which was impossible before. For you remember that the Hebrews at Sinai entreated that the word might never be spoken to them again, though it was a word of favor and mercy. Their great leader even quaked and trembled to feel himself in presence of his God, while the humblest follower of Jesus may come boldly into that same presence, with sweet confidence in the place of shivering dread. Surely no emblematical representation can be imagined which should set before us with more beauty and power what the Saviour has done to remove the terrors of the Almighty, and to turn the hearts of his children to their kind and gracious God.

Again : the heavenly beings who are seen in this vision, surrounding and sustaining the throne of the Most High, are presented in such a manner as to give us the strongest impression of angelical excellence and glory. And let it be observed, that it is only an impression which the seer intends to give, — not a definite and exact description. There is no clear outline ; on the contrary, it is implied throughout that they cannot be represented with precision to human view. This is intimated in the name which he gives them ; they are called *living ones*, or *beings*, — a general and purposely undefined expression, which our translators have degraded, profaned I might almost say, into the word “beasts,” a translation of the original term which is strangely, pain-

fully untrue. Nor can it be accounted for except from what the Apostle says of their expression. So far as they are bodied forth, they are graceful and radiant forms, with wings to represent the lightness and rapidity with which they move in the service of their God. But he says that one had the expression of strength and majesty, such as is seen in the lion ; another, of patient faithfulness, of which the ox is the sign ; another had the look of human intelligence, indicating his sympathy with mankind ; while yet another had that determined gaze with which the eagle fronts the sun. As an emblem of the lustre that surrounds them, it is said that they were full of eyes ; and this word, as the Hebrew scholar knows, is applied not only to the organ of sight, but to the bright sparkling point in the precious stone from which its flashes of colored light stream forth, giving an idea of the animated grace and airy freedom of motion by which this radiance, various and ever changing, starts out with each movement to the gazer's view. These "beings," as he calls them, — for he knows not what else to call them, since they are more than human, yet not quite divine, — are not described as angels, because the angels are those who are sent to accomplish the purposes and perform the orders of their God ; while these are represented as attendant spirits, always near his throne, always rejoicing in the brightness of his countenance, always rendering heartfelt adoration ; for it is said, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Undefined as this description of these heavenly beings is and must be, nothing could give us a finer impression of those higher orders of existence, for such undoubtedly there are, which have not needed to come into this lower world and to have their religious character formed as ours must be, in conflict with the sins and sorrows of the present state. The taste and imagination of some great artists have discerned what our translators of the Scripture failed to see; and they have represented these heavenly beings with many of the traits of humanity, but none of heaven, — with feminine delicacy and manly strength and freedom, — with the grace of youth in their forms, but the wisdom of age upon their thoughtful brows, — with an expression of thoughtful sadness when their mission brings them into the world to witness its wretchedness and corruption, but joyful adoration, unspeakable and full of glory, when their eye turns upward to heaven and to God. Now it is true that there may be a taste of this kind, and power to represent these things vividly, where there is no true religious feeling; but it is also true, that something is gained to true religious feeling by surrounding all sacred subjects with images of beauty and peace, by sweet and holy associations. For there is a natural alliance between that which is lovely, and that which is true and heavenly; and it is one of the evils of this strange and sorrowful world, that things unworthy are disguised in raiment of light, while religion itself is too often profaned by a sincere, but most unfit, union with violence,

narrowness, and bitter feelings, which bring it down to the very dust.

But we must look through the visible image to what it represents and implies, which is, that the most exalted characters and powers find a subject of never-ceasing interest in the contemplation of God. They are never weary of adoration. By day, and all the day, it is their delight to engage in it, and there is no night nor slumber there. But let no one take the impression, that life in heaven is spent in offering verbal praise. It is true that the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart, and if the affections are interested they will inspire the tongue; but it is rather the language of the life which is here intended. The meaning is, that the various pursuits of heaven — various and extended as they must be far beyond the pursuits of this narrow and sensual world — are of such a kind as to make man better as well as happier, to elevate and refine his devotion, to open his mind with a larger understanding of divine excellence, and to fill his heart with purer and holier love, thus showing that the worship of the soul, which is the duty of the mortal, is the joy of the immortal; and that in the same proportion as spiritual beings, whether human or heavenly, are higher exalted, the more do they delight to pour themselves out in grateful and adoring praise.

But the part of this wondrous vision which is of nearest interest to ourselves is yet to come. Around the great central throne were other thrones, humbler,

and yet highly exalted, and on these were human forms, — persons who were translated to these high places for the faithful service which they had rendered when in life below. “Elders” they are called; but the name has reference to maturity of character rather than length of days; for in the estimation of heaven, “honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is measured by number of years; but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unstained life is old age.” They who left the world in youth, and they who died infirm with years, are alike embraced in that name, and placed equally near to their common Father. They were dressed in white robes, and there were golden crowns upon their heads; some of them had harps in their hands, and others golden censers, from which fragrant clouds of incense were rolling upward. And when they saw the Son of God, to whom they were indebted for heaven, they sang the new song, — “Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us kings and priests to God.” Their adoration rises yet higher to the great Source of all blessing, for as often as those mysterious “beings” give glory, honor, and thanks to Him upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the elders cast down their crowns before him, and when the anthem is sung by all the bright armies above, — “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb,” — the elders fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever.

But, amidst all this magnificence of description, we must not forget that this is but the outward sign, the visible presentment, of a spiritual reality far greater and more inspiring to those who are able to understand it. For these elders, as I said, are human spirits, — whether in youth or age, in wealth or want, in humility or greatness, on earth, — who were eminently faithful while they lived, and therefore are welcomed in heaven when they die. Their crowns are but the emblems of that eminence which their excellence gives them in that world where — O, how unlike this present world! — all things are seen as they are, and where it is seen and confessed that they who have rendered most useful service to others, and held fast their confidence in God, are the only true sovereigns of the race of man. For while all other influence declines, and all other glory grows pale as stars at sunrise, their power over others extends, and their names become more illustrious, as ages pass away. Did not our Saviour say to his followers, that they should sit on thrones preëminent among the tribes? And so it is. What other Hebrew names are now in power? what Hebrew spirit exerts the least influence on any living heart? — while these men, humble as they were when living, are now set as stars in the firmament, brightest among the sons of light, and their influence as teachers of heavenly truth and apostles of their Master is deeply felt in every Christian land, in every dwelling, and almost every heart.

There is meaning, too, in the incense which rolls

upward from their censers, — “ phials,” as our translators have strangely and improperly called them, — and also in the golden harps which they bear. The former is a sign of acceptable devotion. It represents, we are told, the prayers of the holy ; and it assures us, that even in the sacred presence, in the midst of the cherubim and seraphim, these humble prayers of human spirits shall be heard, — the pale, faltering lips of the mourner on earth shall find audience as soon as the angel’s burning tongue. And the white raiment of the elders, — what is it but the illustration which our Saviour himself employed, when he represented the religious character as a wedding garment? that is, as the appropriate dress of the festival, signifying that he who put it on, or became holy, was for the first time to taste the true enjoyment, not only of the hope of heaven, but of the blessings which surround him in the earth below.

The harps which they bear, — they too have their meaning. They are the sign, not only of worship, but of that harmony of the soul, that perfect freedom from all discordant action, which forms so large a part of the happiness of the blest. We know how it is with the living ; we see that there is something harsh and grating in the elements within them ; and as long as it is so, there never can be peace. There is some unkind feeling to others, some cherished worldliness, some sinful self-indulgence, which is enough to destroy all the grace and harmony of their spirits within them, throwing darkness over all the

blessings of this world, and darkening the prospect of the other. Indeed, all of us know enough of this to appreciate the joy which must come from the full, free, and harmonious exercise of all the powers within us in some effort worthy to engage them; — how it silences the passions, how it spreads calmness over the troubled waters, giving us power to conceive that peace which passeth understanding, and which God reserves for the blessed in heaven.

And now the question arises, — Can we take in the meaning of this vision? Is there any thing within us by which we can understand the glory of things not seen with the eye, such as truth, holiness, and love? or do we give all our attention to the outward splendor of this description, having no heart to feel the superior beauty and greatness of spiritual things? Does generous action affect us like some fine object in nature? Do our hearts, which grow warm in the presence of fine scenery, equally kindle when we look on excellent and lovely deeds? Have we never learned to regard a high soul with the same feeling of sublimity which the mountain, the ocean, or the broad heaven awakens? When we look over the human prospect that surrounds us, with its heights of joy and depressions of sorrow, does it not awaken interest, — yes, and a deeper interest than that inspired by the rich landscape spreading out beneath our view? For this is the difference between those who are spiritual and those who are not. The spiritual mind is touched, affected, and impressed by things which are not visible to the eye.

It finds more inspiring beauty and attraction in the higher traits of conduct, character, and life, than in the greatest and loveliest of visible things; and therefore it turns with enthusiasm to the life and spirit of the Saviour, as the pencil of inspiration has painted them; and through him who was the image of his Father, it looks up with joy unspeakable, with a heart full of glory, to its awful and yet gracious God. Such is the mind which prepares for the enjoyment of heaven. For all these visible things set before us in the vision cannot endure; they are perishable and fleeting; crowns, and harps, and jewels shall soon blend with common dust. The only enduring crown of immortality is the smile and favor of the Most High; the harp of heaven is the harmony of a soul at peace with itself, with others, and with God; while the jewels which never lose their lustre are those virtues and affections which are always rich and glorious even here, and they are the heavenly treasure which death cannot take away.

SERMON VII.*



THE PEACE OF THE SOUL.

LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE. —
Luke ii. 29.

THIS beautiful expression of grateful readiness to die came from the lips and from the heart of an aged man, who had waited through a long life in the hope of the Messiah's coming. When the Son of God was come, and he held the infant Saviour in his arms, he felt that he had nothing more to live for, and whenever it pleased God to call him away he was willing, perhaps more than willing, to go. And the reason of this cheerful self-surrender was, that the wants of his soul were satisfied. Through his whole life he had felt a want, — a conscious want within him, which nothing could ever supply, till the sight of the Saviour — of him whom prophets and kings desired in vain to see — shone upon his late evening of life, and gave the peace desired to his soul.

In this we have an image of humanity wherever it

* A funeral discourse on a lady whose death-bed experiences had been peculiarly affecting and satisfactory.

is found ; — “ As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.” In every human being there is a want which nothing in this world can supply. Riches, comforts, luxuries, or, if his taste rises higher, intellectual resources and enjoyments, are tried in vain. He enjoys them, and yet, in the midst of his pleasure, there is the same conscious want, troubling him somewhat in his prosperity, but lying heavy upon his heart in dark and lonely hours. Those who are least in the habit of attending to what passes within themselves, — even they are conscious of an uneasiness, an unsatisfied yearning for something better. The instrumentality of outward blessings, on which they relied for satisfaction, has not answered the purpose. You can see in the expression of their face, if they do not say it in so many words, that something is not right ; there is still a want, and this want is a want of the soul.

What will satisfy this want? What does the soul crave? It is not pleasure ; it is not that happiness which is generally desired, and which appropriates the name ; what mankind call pleasure comes only from sources within this world. The soul wants something that is unchanging ; and this is not to be found in a perpetually changing world. The soul wants rest ; and this is not to be found in a restless world. God, who is himself a spirit, knows what the spirit needs, and has provided for it ; — *peace*, as inspiration calls it with its usual power of expression, which is not quite the same with happiness, for it is higher, nor by any means the same with

pleasure, because it is steady and lasting. It has its sources far in the highlands, like the great river of Egypt, where no human eye hath seen its fountains, and thence comes down in its rejoicing fulness to revive and bless the sons of men.

What the soul wants is peace ; — peace with ourselves, peace with others, and peace with God. Neither of these can it have in truth and reality without having the others also. No man who is not at peace with himself is ever at peace with others ; for it is not so much their affronts and injuries, but something within himself, which wakes his hatred and revenge. No one who is not entirely, heartily at peace with others can ever be at peace with God. If he believes that he is, he holds a delusion and falsehood to his heart. This peace is what we need for this life, in order to live well and happily here. Without it, we cannot be prepared to go into eternity ; for to die in peace is the blessing which every heart desires, and would desire still more fervently, if it saw through the world into its depths of solemn meaning.

But to be at peace with ourselves, — is that so unusual ? Indeed it is. Self-content, self-satisfaction, abounds ; but what I mean is, to be at peace with the conscience after the heart and life have passed often before it in stern and sincere review. The conscience seldom speaks loud ; no man in the ordinary course of life is obliged to hear it ; he has the power to shut his heart against it, if he wills. And when he does so, it will stand apart in silent sorrow,

like a friend who would fain give him warning, but feels that it is useless, and therefore looks sadly upon the self-destroying way in which he goes. To be at peace with conscience means to be at peace with an active and awakened conscience; and no man ever secures this blessing till he has courage to be alone with it, to ask and hear what it has to say, and then regards its gentle intimations as so many commands of God. Do you ever look over the relations in which you stand, to know whether you discharge their obligations or not? Do you ever examine your own sense of duty, to know whether it is living and strong within you? Do you seriously endeavour to know what your conscience thinks of the life you are leading? If not, you may be self-satisfied, — alas for you if you are! — but at peace with yourself you cannot be. You have yet, like the prodigal, to *come to yourself*, before you can be ready to depart in peace.

To be at peace with others. It may not be easy in this world; for we receive some neglects and injuries at times, and we imagine a thousand more. The passions of others come in conflict with our passions, and we resent as a personal insult *their* doing what we should do in their stead. Besides, merely to refrain from alienation is not to be at peace with them. We must be in full harmony; our hearts must be in living sympathy with theirs; and any selfishness, indifference, or pride, which prevents this union of interest and feeling, is inconsistent with the spirit of our Master. Till these are suppressed,

and supplied by better affections, there is no peace with our fellow-men.

And to be at peace with God. Do we not know that our Saviour came for this purpose, — to reconcile us to him, to his dispensations, and his law? — to make us one with himself, and therefore one with the Father, so that, when able to discern the indications of his providence, we shall say, whether they bring us joy or sorrow, "Father, thy will be done!" Not that we shall never suffer. It is necessary that we should suffer; it is good for us to suffer. No easy path can lead us upward; in the midst of suffering, under the wearing labor which duty and submission require, we find the truth of the promise, "I will give you rest." Peace we may have. We must not ask for joy; joy is the wick of candle soon burnt out, while peace is the serene and never-setting star. And this peace is for him who stands ready to leave the world in harmony with his own conscience, in friendship and full sympathy with others, and in union of purpose and spirit with his Saviour and his God.

I am now to remind you of a peaceful departure of one of our number, who has just left us for the unseen world. Though her living form cannot be present here, her living spirit may; her memory and example may; and would that I had power to bring them before your hearts with the same lifelike impression which they have made and left in my own!

Her conversion to God was sudden. The act of

self-surrender was made at once ; after it she seemed to live for God and duty alone. But do not understand me as saying that nothing went before it, that there was no preparation made or needed for that effort of self-sacrifice to God. O, no ! There were many hours of thoughtfulness ; there were prayers which the world did not hear ; there was a deep interest in the word of truth before she felt its power. Was it indifference which brought her in pain and sickness to this house, when many of the firm and strong, through fear of the frowning elements of nature, were kept away ? There is a path, — a straight and narrow path, — in which we must travel up to this great attainment. It could only have been by cherishing religious impressions, by regarding it as a matter of life and death, by exercising herself in obedience to conscience and to God, that she gained the strength to give her heart with such entire unreserve, such affectionate self-devotion, to her Saviour and her God.

I say, to her Saviour and her God. She found the truth of the saying, that he and his Father are one, and whoever looks on him is looking on the Father ; — a truth which, mechanically stated, may lead into error, but which cannot be misunderstood by the devoted and reverential heart. For as when we look into the reflecting telescope we see only the image, but say that we are looking at the sun itself, so it is only through Jesus Christ that we arrive at any understanding of the Father, — only through him that the Unseen and Unapproachable is brought

within the reach of mortal view. Nothing could be deeper than her sense of gratitude to Him who died for her ; it was through him that she hoped for the forgiveness of her sins. She found in herself, as all true Christians find, that her growing interest in the Saviour passed upward, by easy and unconscious transition, to his Father ; and as her heart opened to her Father, she delighted more and more in the bright image and divine presentment of his love.

When her heart was thus turned to her heavenly Father, in thorough sympathy with his holy will and fond reliance on his mercy, she was at peace with herself. Not that she was insensible to her unworthiness. She felt — as erring man should feel — deep self-abasement for her sins, and wonder and adoration of his forgiving love. In former days, to her, as to all the rest of us, there had been something wanting ; but after she arose and went to her Father, the dissatisfied feeling, the uneasy desire, which is found in so many, passed away for ever from her heart. Her very countenance was changed. The light and the love shone bright from within ; no one came near her without feeling that a genial and reviving influence was there ; the beauty of holiness was in the expression of her features ; — for this, when all other beauty is a faded flower, can still remain, an unwithering crown upon the brow. What a persuasive charm there is in this unbroken serenity ! Who would not pray for this warm-hearted glow which survives in the very face of

death? It is like the sunny place which we sometimes find in the dead of winter, in the bosom of the evergreen wood. The verdure is bright, and the spring is cheerfully flowing on the edge of the far-spreading snow; and the redbreast lingers there, in fearless confidence, when all its brethren are fled.

She was also at peace with others. I do not mean simply that she forgave those who had injured her, for the dying have seldom much memory for wrongs; it is not easy to be unforgiving, when we are made to feel how much we need to be forgiven. More than this. She felt and manifested an affectionate interest in all, — loving her friends better than ever, but feeling that the heart is for the many as well as the few. She earnestly desired to lead them to the fountains of living waters, where she had relieved the thirst of her soul; still, there was no forcing the subject upon them, but a delicacy and judgment, united with fervor, showing how well sympathy understands the way to the heart. When her friends came to visit her, she did not think it necessary to change the religious subject on which she was conversing, nor to suppress the voice of prayer. With that refinement which true religion inspires, she made them welcome, not only to her chamber, but to those subjects of interest in which all have equal concern, — taking for granted, that, if they were friends to her, they were not strangers to her Father and their Father, to her God and their God. Thus when she lay, to all appearance, helpless and powerless, she was in truth doing much in the service of

her Master ; and it cannot be that any whom she was so affectionately desirous to impress will coldly forget the lessons which they learned at her dying bed. If so, she died in vain for them ; nor is there hope that those who suffer themselves to forget these impressious will ever find words of power to touch their hearts again.

But, what is more than all beside, she was at peace with God, — entirely ready to accept the condition of existence which he assigned her ; and though it cast her down from envied prosperity into the gloom of a sick-chamber and the weariness of a sick-bed, from which she knew there was no release but the grave, she never for a moment doubted that his will was love. She knew that her suffering came from her best and kindest Friend. Assured of his tender sympathy, she found relief in communion with him. She feared not to be alone with her Father. It was the familiar dictate of her heart to pour out her feelings in prayer ; and in those later stages of disease, when the powers of the mind, like the weak hands, could not retain in their grasp the things they endeavoured to hold, her spirit would return from its wanderings to listen to the voice which spoke to her of heaven and of God.

I have seen genuine religious feeling in various forms and trials ; but seldom have I seen it on the death-bed so healthy and unexcited, at once so fervent and so self-possessed. Her manifestations of feeling carried with them the conviction, that they were severely true. Sometimes you listen almost

with sadness to the expressions of the dying, doubting if they know themselves, — doubting whether, if their days were prolonged, the life would make good the words. But here there was something which inspired confidence that the feeling was not only sincere for the moment, but strong and sure, — a flame which, once kindled, would no more go down. The truth must have been, that there was a strength and depth of feeling in her heart, to which she herself and others were strangers, which had not been seen in its extent, because never drawn out in full measure before. When she became a child of God, these powers, which before had slumbered, rushed forth into their appropriate field of action, rejoicing like the strong man to run a race, exulting like the wanderers, who, after long and distant wayfaring, have reached their own, their native land.

It was in the last hour of her life that I conversed with her of the things which belonged to her peace. She had some fear of the death-struggle; but the words, “Let not your heart be troubled,” seemed as if addressed to her, and she dismissed every shadow of dread. And how needless those fears would have been! — for in the closing moments there was neither a struggle nor a sigh. And then she lay with her cheek gently pillowed on her right hand, and the left as if unconsciously playing with the ribbon on her breast, — the very image of sweet and sacred repose. “He giveth his beloved sleep,” was the thought which it suggested to the heart. But that expression, — that mysterious, that almost divine expres-

sion of wonder and delight, which lingers like a glory on the face in the first hours of death, — who can explain its unsearchable depth of meaning? It is no living expression; it was not there before; and it is as far removed as possible from the cold, stern look of death. I have seen it more than once in those who died in peace; but whence it comes, and what is its meaning, no human power can tell. It is said, that, when the arm is severed, the sensation in it is felt after the separation; and so it may be, that, when the parting soul flies, and the glories of heaven are bursting on its transported view, it is the lingering sympathy of the frame with its lost associate which lights up the features, — making the face, as it were, the face of an angel, and giving the clearest revelation of heaven we can have in the world below. But conjecture is vain. We know not what it is. But it is kind, it is happy,

“ And I do ponder with most strange delight
On the calm slumbers of the dead man’s night.”

I have dwelt at unusual length on this example of conversion, because it seemed to me so genuine, thorough, and true. How unlike the repentance of many, which needs to be repented of! After they have professed their self-consecration to God, they are not at peace with themselves; they go restlessly round, to have their religious character confirmed to themselves by the authority of others, because they have not the witnessing spirit within. Nor are they at peace with others; they have simply baptized

their own passions with a sacred name, and hence are emboldened to indulge them more freely than ever, — having nothing and manifesting nothing of the Saviour's spirit of love. Nor are they reconciled to the dispensations nor the will of their heavenly Father. They are looking forward to a world which has no existence, — where they shall be able to look down and trample on those whom they consider their enemies now, and where they shall see those who have enjoyed their good things deprived of them all, that they may possess an unworthy triumph. Such is not the conversion of the Christian; such was not the effect of religion in her. Serene composure in herself, affectionate earnestness for the religious improvement of others, calm reliance upon God, were the elements of her religious life, and they were also the testimony that the change was true.

There will be those who will say, that it is comparatively easy to maintain the Christian spirit in the retirement of the sick-chamber, where the cares and passions of the world do not enter, where affectionate attention, patient and forbearing kindness, and the light step that moves unheard about the bed, are influences all favorable to peace within. And there is a measure of truth in this. But we ascribe to outward circumstances more than is in them. Are not these advantages more than balanced by other things within? Must not the exhaustion of disease, the weariness of unchanging rest, the irritability of the nerves, and the sympathy of the spirit with the

failing strength, — must not all these be unfavorable in the extreme to patient self-possession? The remedies which are necessary to give relief and rest, as every one knows who has tried them, though they may favor strong excitement of feeling, have no tendency to produce a calm and settled peace. When I see an exulting and triumphant state of mind in the consumptive, I do not wonder; it is comparatively easy to create and to sustain; but a serene and collected peace of mind is less usual. It is as seldom found as these spring-like days in the midst of the wintry chill.

Some will say that they envy her such a departure. Why should they envy that which is within their reach? God has given the same blessing to them; — indeed, they may enjoy it longer, for surely the living are better able than the dying to serve God and prepare for heaven, if they will. Yes, if they will. And if the heart and the will are wanting now, do not trust that death, when it comes, will supply them; it is more apt to destroy than to awaken the energy and strength; the warmth of the heart is often quenched by the cold death-shade which falls upon the dying. Now is the accepted time. Then let not this day's sun go down upon your impenitent heart. From this moment "prepare to meet your God," that, whether to live or to die, you may be at peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."

SERMON VIII.



CHRISTIAN SINCERITY NOT LIKELY TO GIVE OFFENCE.

THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE, AND WITHOUT OFFENCE, TILL THE DAY
OF CHRIST. — Philippians i. 10.

It is possible, then, to be sincere, and at the same time inoffensive ; or, to speak more in the spirit of our religion, it is our duty to be open-hearted in our intercourse with others, and at the same time to forbear giving them offence and provocation. There is a common impression, that these two things are inconsistent with each other. Those who undertake to be sincere know no other way to go about it than to say or do something impudent to others, and those who are desirous to keep the peace with others sometimes feel as if, in order to do it, they must suppress their own sentiments and convictions. Now in this there must be some radical mistake. Inspiration connects sincerity with inoffensiveness, not as if it were a forced and unnatural union, but as if they were sister virtues. So indeed they are ; and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder, — neither in his conduct nor in his heart.

The statutes of God have their limitations; "hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther," is written upon each duty: not that a duty can be carried too far, — but there is such a thing as excess; and when one runs into excess in any thing, he runs out of the duty. He is not, as he fondly believes, more virtuous than others; on the contrary, the moment he ran into excess, he stepped over and out of the limits of his duty. Suppose you speak freely to another or of another: keep within the bounds of exact truth, and you are performing a duty; but every word beyond the truth is a lie. Thus it is that many, in their earnest and excessive statement of the truth, run over it into falsehood; as he who runs furiously up to the river's brink is forced over it into the waters by the violence with which he moves. In this way many of the best Christian virtues, by excess, are made ridiculous and contemptible in the sight of men. Prudence becomes avaricious meanness; tenderness degenerates into pitiful weakness; charity sinks into carelessness of truth and the right; justice hardens into cold-hearted and selfish exaction. And by the same process, sincerity becomes coarse impertinence, and, like swine in flower-gardens, tramples with happy indifference upon the feelings of others. It is curious, and at the same time fearful, to see how easy it is to be offensive by way of being sincere, and to applaud ourselves for our virtues when we are far gone in the opposite sins.

This whole subject is apt to be confused in the general mind. There are some who wholly misun-

derstand it, — some who cannot conceive of being “sincere and without offence,” as their Master was and requires his followers to be. “What,” say they, “must we suppress our feelings towards others? If we think hardly, even harshly, of them, must we not let them know it? Would it not be meanness and deception to leave them under the impression that we care for them when we do not? It is true our sincerity will give offence and cause alienation; but is it not more honorable, is it not more Christian, to be true than to be inoffensive?”

Now I say there is confusion of thought on this subject. Of course these questions must be affirmatively answered. It is right, it is a duty, to be open-hearted and true. But this view does not cover the whole ground; some other considerations of great importance are left out of sight; and what I wish to do is to disentangle the subject, and to show what is the true statement of the duty, and where the self-delusion lies.

And in the beginning let me say, that, before we can understand any subject of this kind aright, there are some indispensable conditions; the foremost of which is, we must have a Christianized conscience, — not a mere hap-hazard knowledge of right from wrong, obtained or found we know not when nor how. Such is what most men call their conscience, — mere skin-deep notions, which came to them by chance, and which have never been found wanting simply because they have never been tried. As the early converts were commanded to be baptized in

the clear-flowing streams, so every man's conscience needs to be washed, purified from its errors and delusions, before it can answer the purpose of a conscience. Till that is done, it misleads, it blinds, it mistakes, and perverts; it will not serve much better for the guidance of the life and the regulation of the heart, than Julius Cæsar's almanac would answer for the present year.

And the change thus essential in the conscience is to put it in a Christian state. Very much depends on the position from which we take our views;—looking on any landscape, we see that there are points of vision where, if we were to paint the scene, nobody would know it; all things would be out of their places; the impression given would not be true. So it is in morals and religion; and we never see things aright till we put ourselves in the Christian relation of children to a Father, and regard all mankind as our brethren. Then we understand what our obligations are; we comprehend their bearings and proportions; and duty, thus viewed and defined in the light of a Christian conscience, is a different thing from duty as it is described and recognized by the natural heart, as objects just seen in the dim twilight of the morning are entirely altered when we behold them in the all-revealing light of day.

Now I say, that to put ourselves in this relation of children to God, and of brethren to those around us, and to recognize the duties which grow out of these relations, is the indispensable condition of Christian

judgment, the beginning of Christian duty. Whoever has not done this must not talk of acting from a sense of duty, any more than he who does not know the alphabet, of reading. He may act from what he calls a sense of duty, but it will generally appear to be some passion baptized with a name which it little deserves. His sincerity, like his other virtues, will not have the stamp of Christianity upon it. That is, it will not be true; for only Christian virtues are genuine virtues. Other affections may wear the form and be called by the name; but if not counterfeit, they are mistaken;—they will not pass with the Judge of quick and dead.

Having thus mentioned the outfit, without which the voyage of the Christian life cannot be safely nor successfully made, I would next proceed to say that a Christian — I mean a Christian in spirit — can be sincere, and at the same time without offence; he can keep his heart open to God and open to man; he can make known his sentiments and opinions without reserve, and he can do it without injuring any one's feelings or calling enmity down upon his head. I readily allow, that one who has not the Christian spirit cannot do this thing; and why? Not because it cannot be done, but because he does not take the right way to do it. There are many things which are perfectly practicable if properly undertaken, which become impossible when we set about them with wrong feeling and a bitter heart. Look sharply at those who complain most of the resistance and contrary-mindedness of men, observe

their ways of proceeding, and you understand at once why their sincerity is offensive and their benevolent efforts do more hurt than good. They warn the sinner of the error of his way, but they contrive to convey an insult together with their warning; they would fain save endangered souls like brands from the burning, and they would draw them out with the tongs; they scold, and threaten, and call up all manner of passions in opposition to their attempted reforms, and then complain that men dislike sincere dealing, when the truth is only that men do not like to be abused.

It is the fact, doubt it or deny it who will, that Christian sincerity — that is, kind sincerity — seldom offends; or if it does, it is but for a moment; the irritation is over at once, and always gives place to a feeling of gratitude to the friend who has manifested this interest in his brother's welfare. When you let your neighbour know your poor opinion of him, if he thinks that it gives you pleasure to say it, he will be angry, no doubt; but why? Not because of your sincerity, but because of the unkindness which attended it. Tell him the truth of your opinion and disposition toward him as a gratification of your own feeling, and he may hate you; but if you spoke with an evident interest in his welfare, such as a brother should feel, you might say ten times more without awakening a single resentful feeling; or rather, you might give him a sense of gratitude to you that would last as long as he lives. While they who speak the truth in wantonness or impudence,

or malice, make enemies by the score, you will not find many examples, in the ordinary walks of life, of those who have provoked revenge and resistance by speaking the truth in love. If you would feed the hungry, there is a great difference between setting food kindly before them and throwing it into their faces. Yet many make no distinctions; they think the duty of sincerity equally meritorious in themselves, in whatever manner they perform it, not seeing that the want of Christian feeling vitiates every duty, changing blessing into cursing, and virtues into sins.

Since it is quite possible, then, or rather, since it is our duty, to be sincere and without offence, we ought next to consider how it may be done.

First, we must put ourselves in a right state of feeling to be sincere,—that is, to discharge this duty of sincerity. Considered merely as a native trait of character, it is worth much to its possessor. In the kind and conscientious it is eminently beautiful,—it has the same sort of attraction with the easy and unstudied grace of childhood; but when connected with a less generous disposition, it becomes a snare,—leading one to the hasty utterance of feelings which he had better silence and suppress; and when found in a person of bitter, unsocial, and overbearing spirit, it has all the ugliness of sin. If order, neatness, and peace are found within the dwelling, it is well to have clean windows; but if riot, filth, and discord are there, the more the glass is darkened with dust, the better. In like manner, sincerity may

lose all the loveliness, the blessing, and even the reality of virtue, should it be found, as it sometimes is found, in a hot or a cold, a malicious or a vengeful heart. No words are too strong to impress the necessity of making the tree good in order that the fruit shall be good,—of starting with the right principle and the right spirit, remembering that a defect or perversion in these first elements of the Christian life may send a depraving influence through all the character and all time. It is the same thing which is condensed in the broad and luminous expression, that we are nothing without love. Our virtues, or rather, what might be virtues, are nothing, unless a kind spirit is in them, and sincerity without it will be unloving and unlovely, unblest of heaven, unwelcome and unprofitable to men.

In the second place, we must examine ourselves strictly in reference to this point; because we are too easily contented with general impressions that all is right within us. If a man asks himself whether his heart is right, he is easily satisfied with a careless feeling that it is. It is only by watching its manifestations, by observing how he is affected by particular circumstances or particular persons, that one can find out what spirit he is of. He says that he has no unkindness to any body; but observe if there are any whom he treats coldly,—of whom he speaks severely; then you may find that he is unacquainted with himself; and it is only by unsparing self-scrutiny that he can detect the plague of his own heart. Let him say whether he endeavours to

love those who hate him, whether he prays for those who use him contemptuously, whether he can give his hand to every man cordially, as to a brother; for all this Jesus did, — all this he said that his followers must do, or they are none of his. Do you openly say that you have not these feelings, — that you do not try to have them, that you do not wish to have them? The sincerity with which you declare it will not supply what is wanting; you can never make yourself a Christian by simply acknowledging that you are not one now.

In the third place, let us remember, that, if we would be sincere and without offence, we must prepare for true sincerity with others by being sincere with ourselves. The virtue ceases to be a virtue unless we carry it through; and yet there are those who pride themselves on their open dealing with others, while they use no sincerity with themselves, — never studying out their own dangers and deficiencies, never wishing to know them, — apparently thinking, that, if a man is without concealment where others are concerned, he may lie to himself as much and as fast as he will. If to deceive others is a sin, to practise a fraud on one's self is not without its dangers; in one respect the danger is greater than that of other transgressions. Whoever deceives others knows it; he cannot hide it from himself; he cannot hold up his head or his heart as if he was not guilty. Not so with him who deceives himself. He destroys the sensibility of conscience; he prevents the possibility of shame; he may live and die,

applauding himself for sincerity to others, when a little openness to himself would show that no Christian — that is, no conscientious — virtues have ever had place in his soul.

Let it be remembered, then, that sincerity is a Christian grace only when it is found in a Christian's heart. If it is bitter, and unkind, and offensive, it may be sincerity, but it is not the sincerity of a Christian. It is not inspired by a sense of duty; it is nothing more than self-indulgence; it has no praise of men; it is not accepted and blessed of God. Let us resolve to cherish the virtues, not as we find them in ourselves, but as they are displayed in the life and example of our Master. There are vegetables in the garden which in their wild state are little better than poisonous, but by being cultivated have become good for food; so there are virtues which in the natural heart are of no value, while in the Christian heart they are rich and glorious elements of character. Let us not mistake the imperfect for the finished, the partial for the whole; let us endeavour to secure the Christian virtues in their completeness, and to be entire, wanting nothing. Thus we "may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

SERMON IX.

THE TRINITY.

I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE. — John x. 30.

I HAVE refrained for years from treating of doctrinal discussions in this place, except as they were incidentally suggested; not because I did not think it important to form right opinions, but because I thought men were much more likely to form their opinions aright without such discussions than with them, — by resorting solely to the word of God. Such examinations may not bring men to your opinions nor mine, but they will bring them to the truth; — for whatever a man receives after conscientious examination of the subject is truth to him. Why can we not make the distinction between views of truth, and truth itself? They are different things. Thus, here stands a mountain: a man who lives on one side represents it as a pyramid, piercing the heaven as with a wedge; another in another quarter paints it as resembling a high-breaking wave; another yet in his drawing makes it like a wall with battlements and towers. So various are their views of the same object in nature; but there stands the mountain un-

changing and unchanged. And so truth remains unchanging and unchanged, while the views which men take of it vary with their position, with their natural spirit, and the influences which have power in their souls.

But the words of our text require some interpretation. "I and my Father are one." And that you may not suspect me of being influenced by party spirit, should I attempt to explain them, I will give you other authority for what I say. Dr. Campbell, an interpreter of the Scriptures who was orthodox enough and to spare, says, — "The word is not *εἷς*, *one person*, but *ἓν*, *one thing*, or the same thing. It might have been so rendered here; but the expression is too homely, in the opinion of some excellent critics, to suit the dignity of the subject." But, he adds, "what is distinguished in the original, we ought, if possible, to distinguish." In almost all translations of the Scriptures except the English, in the Latin, in the French, in the Italian, you will find this distinction; in the English it does not appear, so that this fails to give the Saviour's meaning. But let that meaning be restored, — "I and my Father are the same thing." Let us no longer follow those "excellent critics," who care more for the dignity of language than the dignity of truth.

It is not because I have any objection to the statement that the Father and Son are the same person, that I correct this mistaken reading; for such has been, and is now, the opinion of a great portion of the best Christians. They believe, and have be-

lieved for ages, that God exists, or at least manifests himself, in three persons. Now I believe that no opinion can obtain large and long acceptance, can be believed by many and for ages, without having in it, or under it, a basis and substance of truth. The truth is the life of every opinion;—unless there is truth in it, it will soon and surely die. And if this doctrine, that God manifests himself in three persons, has been for many generations accepted and kept near the hearts of true Christians, it is not to be lightly rejected; it is perhaps not to be rejected at all. We must rather search into it diligently, to see why it is that they prize it,—to see, indeed, what it is; for it is one of the effects of controversy, not only to make men ignorant of the opinions of others, but also to blind them to their own.

But you ask, “How can it be true that God manifests himself in three persons?” To answer this question, we must first ascertain what a *person* is, and what was probably meant by those who first used the word. Going back to the language from which the word “person” came, we find it was taken from representations on the stage. The *persona* was the mask which an actor wore, through which he spoke to the audience; and it was shaped in its features to be expressive of the character which the actor sustained. In process of time, the original meaning of the word *persona* was forgotten; it came to stand for a *character*. So it was often used in ancient times, and so, without doubt, it was used by those who represented God as manifesting him-

self in three "persons"; — not meaning that three different *beings* were united in one being, which is impossible, but only that God sustains three different *characters* in his intercourse with men; — meaning that in Christianity he is represented in the character of a Father, when considered as creating or preserving the universe, in the character of a Redeemer, when he saves the world through Jesus Christ, and in the character of a Comforter and Sanctifier, when he holds direct communication with the souls of men. This I believe was the original doctrine of one God in three persons; it meant three "characters," not three "beings"; and, for my part, I see nothing to object to it. If it did not give the impression that God represents himself in three characters *only*, I should readily receive it as true. It is not a simple nor happy statement of truth, and yet it is substantially true.

Now it is in this sense of the word "person," — *person* being used for *character*, — that it is said that Jesus Christ and his Father are one, — one "person," if you will. No one can believe that two beings are one being; nothing is more certain than that two beings are not one being: and yet they may be spoken of as one person, because it is understood to mean one character, and this is eminently true of the Father and the Son. It is the character of God which is manifested through the Saviour; it was to give us an idea of the Divine character that he came; when I look at his character, I see in it a living representation of the character of God. I make no

separation in my own mind between his character and that of the Almighty. When I look into a reflecting telescope, I see an image of the planet toward which the tube is turned. I say I am looking at the planet itself, and yet it is the reflection which comes to me ; still I think and speak of the planet and its image *as one*. In the same sense are the Saviour and his Father one ; and if we have reference to character when we speak of them as one, there is no contradiction ; it is no mistake. Though they are separate beings, and as beings cannot be the same with each other, still, in character, in purpose, in love for mankind, they are one. He or his Father, it is the same thing, — inspiring the same affections, breathing the same spirit of love.

This I take to be the doctrine of the Trinity as it originally found faith and favor in men's hearts. It did not maintain the impossibility that three beings are one, but only that God manifests himself in three different aspects to men, which is true ; — not only in three, but in many others ; still, in all these characters it is the same God who appears to us, for there is but one. In this form it is neither unreasonable nor untrue ; and it is in this form, I am persuaded, that the doctrine is now generally received by the thinking part of the Christian world. If it did not admit of being received in this form, I believe it would have been rejected long ago.

But I pass to another part of the same doctrine ; I mean, the union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ. Had it originally meant that two be-

ings were united in one, it would soon have perished and passed away. But taking the word "person" in its original meaning, the doctrine would be, — indeed, the doctrine was, — that Divine attributes and human virtues were united in the character of Jesus Christ. And this, so far from being mysterious, inconsistent, or impossible, is the result which our Saviour endeavours to produce in all his followers. He wishes to make them like himself, — uniting the Divine and human in character; he speaks as if man might be made in some humble measure a resemblance of himself, — a character where the Divine is blended with the human, and the human rises and towers into the Divine. Not that man can ever be invested with miraculous gifts and powers, like his own, — not that man should be commissioned to govern the elements of nature, to heal the dying, and raise the dead. It is *character* of which we are speaking, and, however inferior in nature or station to himself, he addresses men as if their character might be formed under the influences of Heaven, after the likeness and fashion of his own.

Some, however, will ask, how I can speak of the union of Divine excellence with human virtue in the Saviour, when human and Divine excellence only differ in degree. If it were so, there would not be two different characters to be united in one. But it is a mistake to suppose that Divine excellence includes human excellence within it, as the greater includes the less. On the contrary, they are different in kind; they consist of different elements; they

exist independently of each other, and it was by far the grandest disclosure that ever was made to men, when it was manifested in the Saviour that the human could be united with the Divine. If an airy bridge were formed, by which man could reach the stars, it would not open such a field for the ambition of man, nor so much exalt his glory.

If you ask what excellence there is in human character which does not belong to the Divine, I answer in one word, — religion. That sort of veneration with which we contemplate surpassing excellence and greatness, that confiding spirit with which man clings to the rock that is higher than he, is one of the most exalting traits in human character. Man must respect in order to be respectable himself; his veneration, his self-humiliation in presence of superior moral claims, so far from lowering his real standing, elevates him in the sight of God and man. But evidently the Highest of all beings cannot venerate, because there is nothing higher nor greater than himself. All those beautiful and refining emotions, which grow out of a sense of dependence on a heavenly Father, belong not to the God of heaven; so that religion, which is the crowning grace of human character, makes no part of the Divine.

So, too, it is plain that improvement, which is the life of human virtue, can make no part of the excellence of the Most High. Man sets out from small beginnings, — his powers are like the small blade springing in the early year, which gradually and slowly rises, and spreads and unfolds its treasury of

flowers. And all this process is a work of life ; the whole development is living and healthy action ; and never is man acting in so exact consistency with his nature, as when he rises in the ascending scale of improvement, where every climbing step lifts him into a purer air, enlarges his field of vision, and brings him nearer to that clear, bright summit which it is his heart's desire to reach.

Here we see that there are some of the best traits of human excellence which make no part of the Divine. Religion and religious improvement are exclusively human traits of character, and to these and other human virtues our Saviour united traits of Divine excellence in such a union as never existed before him, and such as we could not have comprehended had we not seen it manifested in living action in his history while he was in this world. Thus we see that to godliness he added humanity, which inspiration says is better, — godliness being the human virtue and humanity the Divine. Never was any thing like universal benevolence, never was any all-embracing good-will, seen, or known, or dreamed of, till it shone out in the Saviour's life of love. And then that self-sustaining energy which grows out of conscience, which more than any thing else reminds us of self-existence, and that steady and unchanging perseverance in well-doing which gives a sort of eternity to the creature of to-day, in resemblance of Jesus who was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," — these, and many other Divine traits, did he bring into connection with human

excellence, thus presenting a union of God and man such as the world never before saw.

I dwell on this union longer, perhaps, than is necessary, for I wish that my meaning and my view of the subject may be thoroughly understood. I am not fond of believing that my brother-Christians profess absurdities and contradictions. I care much more for my own feeling toward them, than I do for their feeling toward me. I would fain respect their understandings as well as their hearts. Hence I rejoice to see, that, when they first used the word "person" in this connection, they meant *character*, and the doctrine of the Trinity originally was, that God manifests himself in three different characters, — in creating and preserving, in redeeming and saving, and in comforting and sanctifying, the sons of men. Who will deny it? Who stands ready to controvert a truth which is so little at war with the Gospel? The union of God and man, — which, when first thought of as a union of person, seems impossible to believe or understand, — if we remember that *person* originally meant *character*, and that a union of character is all that is intended, ceases to be a mystery or contradiction, and becomes an inspiring truth. And thus it is that every doctrine which has ever gained large acceptance was originally founded on a basis of truth, and if we dig through the fragments which have crumbled and fallen round it, we shall come down to the living stone, — to the rock of ages on which it stands.

Here you see the reason why I have never pressed

this subject ; it is because I believe that the great proportion of Christians hold opinions in relation to it substantially the same with ours. When Professor Stuart came forward as the authorized expounder of the Trinitarian faith, he said they did not believe in three persons as we use the word ; they did not believe in three beings united in one God : all they maintained was, that the Scriptures recognized a threefold distinction in the Deity, — meaning, as it would seem, a distinction of character, such as I have admitted ; for the Scriptures speak of God the Father, they speak of the Saviour as God with us, and the term Holy Spirit is often applied to God. And thus, I have no doubt, you will find that those who really have opinions on these subjects agree very nearly with each other. The great difficulty is, that so many take up with *words*, and never are at the pains of forming an *opinion*. Looking at the words which Christians use, you would suppose them to be fearfully disunited ; but words are not much, — words are the daughters of earth, and therefore perishable, while things are the sons of heaven, and do not pass away. Words cannot keep men apart for ever, any more than air-lines can form permanent inclosures. There are some animals, which, if you draw a line round them, will feel as if it could not be passed over ; but the greater proportion of those which have wings and feet are always ready to use them. No one needs be troubled about party feelings ; they are of those things which perish with the using. Now they are like

ice upon the living waters, binding up their channels and suppressing the music of their flow ; but when the Sun of righteousness rises higher, — and rise it will, — all these chilling restraints on the free action of the mind and heart shall feel its influence, and for ever melt away.

I see the Divine mercy in this provision, that in all matters of profound importance men cannot think very unlike each other. They may talk very differently ; they may feel some alienation ; but these things are written so plainly on the front of the sacred page that he who runs may read, and read the same practical meaning. As Christians grow more spiritual, they take less note of things outward, and give more heed to those that are within. When they look under the distinctions of party, they see that one Christian is like another Christian ; his real character is not affected by the name which he happens to bear. And thus narrowness and exclusion are wearing away ; — things are leading to that consummation when there shall be one fold and one shepherd, — one faith, one baptism, — one God and Father of all.

SERMON X.



IMMORTALITY OF THE AFFECTIONS.

YOUR HEART SHALL LIVE FOR EVER. — Psalm xxii. 26.

OF the many striking things in the Old Testament, there are none which impress me more than these transient and occasional bursts of inspiration, which anticipate what Christianity was afterwards to teach, and intimate to that dark, ancient world what its rich disclosures of truth were to be. They seem like lightning-flashes illuminating the deep obscurity for a moment ; — not long enough to give any clear and connected impressions of truth to those who knew it not ; but still they are sufficient to show to those who might otherwise doubt it, that the inspiration of God is in those ancient volumes, and gleams of the same light shone through it which afterwards broke in full glory upon the world when the Saviour came from on high.

Observe, then, how much is implied in these words, — “Your heart shall live for ever.” They mean that the body shall not ; in its present elements it shall not ; it has nothing to do with the life immortal. Now we lavish our pains and care upon

it; earnest to provide for its wants, its dress, its nourishment, and shelter; — still more solicitous to provide it with those luxuries which sometimes bring heaviness and disease, and never minister to its strength and joy. Our anxiety and forecast for the body extend into the future. We are unhappy if we have not laid up means and resources to sustain it in future years, not one of which, perhaps, we are to see. So much does the worldly spirit act upon the religious spirit, that if any one suggests that the body shall not survive the grave, — that the spiritual body, according to St. Paul's fine illustration, shall be as different from it as the new plant is from the seed from which it springs, — he is rejected as a teacher of falsehood and delusion. But certain it is, — and this is the point of the truth conveyed in these words, — certain it is that the happiness of the future existence shall not come from the body, from the gratification of its passions, nor the exercise of its powers; and just so far as a man depends for his enjoyment on these earthly indulgences, he is unfit for that spiritual state to which death will soon translate us, and for which it is our wisdom now to prepare. He will find himself in that world cursed with desires for which there is no gratification; while the enjoyments of the refined, heavenly spirit are no better than tortures to his soul.

These words also imply that the mind, though it shall endure, will not be the source of happiness in another existence. We know too little of its nature to say whether death will change it; but certainly

it will change our estimation of it ; for now, in this world, talent, force of mind, genius, are set highest among the gifts of God. This is an advance, indeed, from that state of imperfect civilization in which bodily strength and symmetry are in the highest esteem ; in proportion as men make intellectual advances, the mind and its interests rise above the body and its powers. But our religion would fain carry on this course of improvement till men shall understand that the affections, — or, as they are called in Scripture, the heart, — the heart is as much above the understanding as the mind is above the body whose home is the dust. It is in the affections that the elements of heavenly happiness are to be found ; the improvement of the affections, rather than of the mind, is the preparation for the heavenly state. And though we look with pleasure on physical strength and beauty, which strike the eye, — though we admire intellectual ability as it deserves, and even more than it deserves, — still, in the sight of angels and of God, he is the best, and happiest, and greatest of mankind who has the largest and best heart. “Your heart shall live for ever.”

These words teach us what should be our constant object, and lead us also to consider how abundantly God has provided for it on every side.

Consider, in the first place, how all the arrangements of this life favor the growth of those affections which are the elements of life immortal. Our present existence is not much by itself ; but it grows into immense importance when we consider it as

part of another. Its joys and sorrows, however deep, are comparatively transient, its opportunities are fleeting, its best attainments few ; but when we regard them as pointing forward to other things beyond themselves, — far greater and more enduring than themselves, — they become solemn and momentous. And we may see, if we look for the traces of God's design, how all the arrangements of life are framed with the view of calling out the affections in preparation for life immortal. The home, where it *is* a home, is evidently ordained for this purpose, requiring of each within it to suppress those selfish passions which darken over every thing which they touch, and making it manifest that all the sunshine and comfort of the dwelling depend, not on its magnificence, not on the luxuries within it, but simply and entirely on the spirit of love within. And the circle of friendship carries out those same affections into wider range. If we can only keep down those jealousies and passions in which this cold world abounds, entering into the feelings of others with hearty sympathy and good-will, we find that the good we can do to them, important as that may be, is less than the blessing which comes home to ourselves. And that all these are Divine arrangements may be seen from the moral and spiritual laws which run through them, — which ordain that these affections shall move in paths of duty, or as soon as they wander from them shall lose their health and joy, and bring returns of nothing but pain. Any thing which approaches to guilty passion, any attach-

ment which God and conscience forbid, any even of those capricious and wandering regards which pass over those to whom nature devotes them and fasten on strangers or companions who have no right to such a place in the heart, any even the least desertion of those paths in which duty requires the affections to go, has a withering power upon them. Like the palm-tree, they can only exist where God hath planted them ; transplant them to another place, and they die. In this moral condition of their existence, we may evidently see the hand and the providence of God.

But these arrangements of life for a certain purpose are not meant to effect that purpose of themselves ; it rests with us to trace out, to follow, and improve them. The first business of the Christian life is to deny ourselves ; which means, not to deny ourselves a blessing here or there, but to resist the strong, selfish tendency of our nature, to train our affections in the right way, to regard them as the beginnings and indications of our future destiny, and to keep our heart with all diligence, since out of it are the fountains of immortal life. Once attach this thought of immortality to the affections, and how mighty and solemn all those interests become ! Those with whom we are associated are no longer like wayfarers met in a journey, parted from, and seen no more. They are associated with us for life, and life is for ever ; and it is a matter of profound concern to cherish every right attachment, to open the heart wide, and to embrace as many as possible

in the circle of its love. And this is easy to any one who takes counsel of his Master. If he follows the guidance of his own deceitful heart, cold, limited, and exclusive the range of his affections will be, and equally narrow will be the bounds of his future heaven ; but if he endeavours to possess the universal kindness, the all-embracing love, of Jesus Christ, he will see what others do not see, — that the exercise of those unselfish and generous affections is the only true happiness of this life, the only heaven of the other ; and he will bless the order of Providence, and those arrangements of social existence which call out and favor the upspringing of love in the heart.

Again : the arrangements of death, all of which have a purpose and a meaning, are even more fitted to form for immortality the heart which is to live for ever. The world is changed by the presence of death ; wherever it comes, we feel that a new influence is there ; a power is there which was not there before. Each one who feels at all feels that something is meant by it, that it is a communication addressed to him. All the base passions are hushed into unusual silence ; you may approach your worst enemy then, he cannot lift his hand against you ; even the grasping hand of worldliness is unclenched for a little while. The friendship which in former days you prized as one of the blessings of existence now appears as it is, — an indispensable treasure ; you cannot do without its sympathy ; the cold-flowing waters in a thirsty land are not so welcome as its

words of feeling to you. Man feels that power, gold, luxury, and the possessions most desired, have no substantial value ; they cannot supply the wants of his heart in those dark hours ; nothing will answer his purpose of comfort but an influence coming back to his own heart from other hearts which are to live for ever.

But to see the wisdom of these arrangements is of little avail, unless we feel them ; and surely never do the affections come forth in purer or more disinterested action than in the presence of death. The low whispers of the dying voice, the unutterable expression of the dying eye, the faint pressure of the hand that shall never be pressed again, the silence of the death-chamber, and all the scene before us, when a loved one passes away, have a power, not so much to oppress the heart, as to wake it into intensest action, and to make manifest all the warm affections which have their dwelling within. And it is for this reason, undoubtedly, that we are compelled to pass through these fearful separations. We shudder to think of them, we entreat that they may never come to us again, and yet we know, that, if we have not been insensible or unfaithful, they have done for us a service which nothing else could do. They have left our hearts better, and more *like* hearts, than they found them ; they have brought us into dearer communion than ever before, even with those whom we were losing. The love which began on earth rose into a heavenly affection, and at the very moment when all faith and firmness

seemed breaking down within us, we were coming nearer than ever to our friends, to our Saviour, and our God.

These changes come not often; and when they do, it is of great concern that we prepare to receive them aright, and take from them the blessing which they bear. It is God who is speaking to us at such times, and it is not well to turn away from his communications. We must listen with undivided attention; we must look steadily at what he has done, to make sure that we understand it; we must not hasten back to the ordinary cares of life, when the very office of the death-angel is to summon us away from those ordinary concerns to think of higher and better things. Rare and precious, as well as fearful, are these moments; great and irreparable is our loss if we lose them; but if we receive them as a Father's arrangements for our welfare, we shall be surprised to find a feeling of gratitude springing out of the ruins of our earthly happiness; and still more so, to discover that a new depth and tenderness of feeling come from the blow which seemed stunning to the heart.

Once more. The arrangements of the future existence are also of a kind to favor the growth of the affections. I do not mean in those who have entered upon their immortal existence; for we know not what they are now, nor where is their home, and it is only rash and presumptuous conjecture which undertakes to speak of their condition and circumstances, and the influences which act upon their souls. But the foresight of the future state, the vision of it

which lies before us in the light of the Gospel, must necessarily have a great effect on the efforts which we make to reach it ; and if we see that the power of the mind is little more than the vigor of the frame in giving us our preparation, we shall turn our attention as we ought to the full unfolding of the energies and affections of the heart. Suppressed and borne down as they are by the selfishness within, nothing but the most determined endeavour and patient care can cause them to spring and grow in this world, in readiness to open like flowers in another existence, where the Sun of righteousness shines upon them with a nearer and brighter ray.

If you ask what we can foreknow of the arrangements of another world, I reply, we see who are passing into that world, and what they bear with them. When I see who are entering the gates of a city, I can form some judgment of what is passing within its walls. I see the child going in early and unconscious life, before, as it would seem to us, any purpose of its coming here can be answered. But I see, that, early and unconscious as its departure is, it has had time and power to awaken strong interest and attachment in a parent's heart. So, then, it had its mission ; its work is done ; it carries high hopes and beautiful affections with it, and it gives us the assurance, that in what relates to the heart the future life is not so unlike our own. There are young children in the house of their Father ; their light steps and glad voices are heard in the many mansions ; it is not in deep, deathlike silence that the

spirits of the blest spend their day ; there is the same, or rather a far greater, variety of interest and employment than this world affords. The holiest of earthly loves, that of parents for their children, cannot be wanting there where all holy things assemble, and He who on earth suffered little children to come to him, without a doubt, is equally ready in heaven to smile upon them and to bid them welcome to his arms.

On the same day and almost at the same hour that the infant ascends, another is called, whose life was in the strongest contrast to that of the unconscious child ; — the one who had not entered upon life, and the one who had passed through it, go together into the eternal world. The mother of a large family, wise, disinterested, true-hearted, of few words but strong affections, feeling that her many cares within the domestic circle did not allow her to wander often nor far beyond it, and yet always earnest to do what she was able in the cause of humanity, — always to be relied on as a fast and faithful friend, — how different the space which such a departure opens ! How wide, — how dreary, — how impossible to fill ! And the feelings wounded in this departure, how unlike they are to the disappointment and sorrow in the other ! There is no room for imaginative sadness. There is a cold, stern reality in the affliction, when the mother of a family is suddenly called from a place and a trust which require such thoughtful concern and perfect disinterestedness as are only to be found in a parent's heart. And where do we find

the explanation of such inroads of death, of which we have witnessed more than one? Not surely in the loss, — the separation, — nor in the grave. We see the reason in the arrangements of the future life, so far as Jesus Christ reveals them; for though the present relations of life shall not exist, being no longer needed there, the love, which is the life of those relations, shall endure, — not destroyed, not suspended, but only strengthened and made purer by separation; and it is evidently the mission of these dispensations, which seem so fatal to our happiness, to prepare us to renew that love with truer and holier affection than ever entered the heart before. Thus the arrangements of a future existence, though they sometimes are bitter and hard to bear in this world, are really full of immortal blessing; for as man himself is not quickened except he die, so man's affections can never come out in their best, most powerful, and heavenly action, till they have been saddened and darkened over by the awful presence of death.

I would ask, then, if there is not deep meaning in those ancient words, — "Your heart shall live for ever." Awake, then, to a sense of the importance of the heart. See how all your welfare for this world and the other depends on the right unfolding and care of its affections. Remember, also, that there is deep responsibility connected with them, and that self-indulgence of the feelings, like all other self-indulgence, brings a heavy-laden harvest of sorrow and shame to the soul. The time is

short. The death-angel's trumpet often rings in the midst of us; as we listen to its shuddering blast, we should feel that the next summons may be ours. "Your heart shall live for ever." Is your heart right with God?

SERMON XI.*



THE HOUSE OF GOD.

AND NOW, I PRAY YOU, CONSIDER FROM THIS DAY AND UPWARD,
FROM BEFORE A STONE WAS LAID UPON A STONE IN THE TEMPLE
OF THE LORD. — Haggai ii. 15.

THERE are many things, which, without any suggestion on my part, will present themselves to your minds, to give interest to this occasion. We return, after a long and unpleasant suspension of our services, to this our spiritual home, where enough of the old remains to make it still seem familiar, and where enough is changed to make us feel the important advantages of the change. It is also the anniversary of the day when I made my first address as the minister of this people. The society itself had been recently formed. I came among you a young man, without experience, without any adequate preparation, with a heart bowed down at the thought of standing apart from all professional sympathy, and within the dreary influences of a controversial war.

* Preached, October 16, 1842, on reëntering the church after it had been repaired and materially altered.

I had nearly sunk under the oppression of those early, trying years. But I was sustained by generous confidence and kindness; there was full sympathy with my professional solitude, and it is owing to this, and the help of God, that now, at the end of twenty-two years, I still address you, and am able to congratulate you on the possession of as much prosperity as such associations can expect to enjoy. I speak not of outward circumstances; such prosperity is nothing compared to that of internal harmony, of mutual kindness and forbearance, and a faithful regard for religious services, in all which this society—it is but just to say it—never has been, and, I trust, never will be, wanting.

It is with a solemn feeling that I look back on the founders of this church. Venerable forms come up before me,—men faithful almost to sternness in their regard for these sacred duties, having no faith in the devotion which loves not worship, and laboring to impress the same veneration on the minds of their children. I remember, too, others of my own age, with whom I hoped to go down the vale of declining years,—men, generous and true-hearted,—women, affectionate and kind, the life and pride of social circles, and ever faithful in their attendance here. All left in this house a dear, and yet painful remembrance, when they went to take their places with the dead.

But recollections of this kind,—what can they avail us now? They can do this for us. Let us reflect that the persons of whom we speak are

now in the eternal world. Their present state — what it is we are not permitted to know — was in every respect determined by their religious faithfulness while they were with us on earth, — a religious faithfulness depending in no small measure on the estimation in which they held the service of this house of God. The subject, then, to which we naturally turn is the service of the house of God.

And, first, these places are strongholds of the religious principle of the community. I say not of the religious sentiment, because that expression is misunderstood; it is applied to a mere love of nature, a barren emotion of taste, which has no more connection with religious faithfulness than the admiration of a discovery of science or a work of art. A great proportion of what passes for religious sentiment only admits the fact of God's existence, and that so faintly that it amounts in practice almost to a denial; for the language of the life is, — "There is a God, and there is a certain sublimity in the thought of such a majestic Power and Presence; but what am I to him? and, except as a subject of contemplation, what is he to me?" Now, beyond the satisfaction of feeling that we are not the sport of chance or destiny, what good can such a recognition of God's existence do? What good did it ever do? You have found it in the licentious and profane; you have heard it breathed in beautiful tones from the lips of men of genius, whose lives were as base and contemptible as the talents which God gave them were great and high;

you have seen enough to know that you may as soon expect fire to kindle from wintry moonbeams as with such religious sentiment to warm a human heart.

The only thing in the form of religious sentiment which can do any good to the soul is that which recognizes God, not as a mere existence, not, to use the term of the day, as an abstraction, but which confesses him as the Author of life and blessing to all that live. Its language, I mean its practical language, is, — “I stand in some relation to him; it cannot be one of indifference; I must have something to do with him and he must have some claim on me. Hence arises the feeling of obligation. If he has done so much for me, I ought — that is, I *owe it* — to do something to express my gratitude. It is not a matter of choice; it is a *debt* that must and shall be paid.” Thus seen and thus followed, the religious *sentiment* becomes a religious *principle*. It ceases to be a lifeless fancy; it lives, and moves, and has a being, and acts with power on the heart in which it dwells. Now I say, — and I ask you to hear and remember, — it is because the house of God destroys the hollow, poetical fancy of religious sentiment, and insists on religious principle — homely, hard-working, unpretending religious principle — as the essential thing, that it is so often rejected and held in light esteem.

For the same reason it is that the Sabbath is sometimes misunderstood; — not by the sober common-sense of New England; that I would not say. The practical religious man knows that he has a

work to do, and he wants a day to do it in. He wants a time for thoughtfulness, and it is a time which he knows how to enjoy. Go to such a man, and offer him the Sabbath of other lands; invite him to fool away the consecrated hours in singing and dancing, or such poor amusements as the vacant mind can enjoy: he will quietly leave all that happiness to children, and find *his* happiness in that thoughtfulness which the day of rest inspires, and which has given to that day its firm hold on the affections of enlightened men, — so firm a hold, that those who lately made an assault on the Sabbath found themselves like men scratching with their fingers at the base of a rocky mountain in hopes to overthrow it from its bed. The Sabbath still exists; — ay, and long will it exist, the only day of the seven, indeed, which shall endure when time shall be no more.

The religious sentiment, then, embracing the idea of obligation, — in other words, religious principle, — is that which the service of this house is meant to inspire and cherish; and I would next ask what sort of an obligation it must be. If there is a God, he is a living person, standing in a certain relation to us, having certain claims which must be answered. Does any one say it is an obligation to lead respectable and decent lives? No doubt there is such an obligation; but is that high enough to reach up to God? One who leads a respectable and decent life does well for himself and mankind unquestionably, as he who leads a base life degrades himself and in-

juries others ; but can any one say that this is full discharge of our obligations to God, or that it goes near to discharge them ? No ; there must be something more than this. To say that the religious sentiment is embraced and implied in this would be saying what no one feels. The religious sentiment cannot be rightly felt except in the Christian way, — by looking up to God as our Father with childlike confidence united with awful veneration. Nothing else will lift up the heart from the depths of worldliness ; nothing else will have power to touch the springs of immortal life. When a man feels bound to God to form himself for holiness and heaven, then and not before is there any reason to hope that the effort will be made and the work be done ; and as the domestic affections can be best formed under the roof of the family mansion, the religious spirit is intimately, I had almost said inseparably, connected with the sweet influences of the house of God.

Some may think that I have carried this idea too far. To those who reflect but little on these subjects, and measure them by common standards, it may seem like enthusiasm to say that every man must have the feeling of a child of God. But to all such objections I reply, that common, worldly habits of thought, however just in their way, are no fit guides on these subjects ; worldly sagacity does not see through these things ; you might as well depend on a foot-rule for measuring distances in heaven. There is no force, there is no sense, in that

presentment of the subject which leaves God out of view. If any one points out to me an unexceptionable man, setting aside religious affections, and asks, Is he not good enough? I answer, he may be good enough for this world; he may be good to me; but whether he is good enough for God is the great question, and to find the answer to this question I urge him to compare his heart and life with the Gospel, and see if nothing is wanting. Let him look earnestly to Jesus Christ and his early followers, and mark the elements of which their character was made up, and then ask himself whether the same mind and spirit are in him.

The very object, then, of the service of this house is, to keep before the eyes of men a standard of character higher than they meet with in common business and care. The very circumstance, that the views presented in the church *seem* excessive, shows to the candid mind, — not that those views are overwrought, — it shows rather how much the man of business and pleasure needs them. And if those views were bent down into conformity with the wisdom of this world, the very men who now complain of them as carried too far would be the first to trample them into the dust. Let this house, then, be kept sacred to religious feeling. There are good feelings which are not religious; let this house be sacred to the filial feeling which dwells in a child of God. May we come here to learn of Jesus what that feeling is, — to learn also his independence of this world and his familiarity with the other.

And now I would go on to say, as the result of my experience and observation, that every one who cares to cherish the religious sentiment in himself loves the service of the house of God. I do not say, that men may not be found who desert these places of worship, and yet are laboring to feel and act like children of God ; — I only say, that I have never seen them. If there are such, they are probably those who are cultivating a barren religious sentiment, in place of that practical and living principle which endeavours to bring itself into near union with God and man, and to draw near to one while drawing near the other. The man who is busy in the work of religious preparation is sure to find something in these places that aids him in that endeavour. If he loses his interest in the services of God's house, it is not because the wants of his mind are not met, but because these wants are not felt as they ought to be. He knows that it is utterly impossible for the mind to be always excited ; original views are the rarest of all human things ; eloquent discourses like those of the great French preachers, or the great divine who lately passed away, suppose long seasons of leisure. But one really desirous of improvement can find something to interest where novelty or brilliancy is not the attraction. Is there nothing interesting in this fine season ? It is the same bright sun, there are the same colors on the leaves, — the same elements which gave beauty to the first autumn after the world began. But who is weary of the monotony of nature ? Who

would wish to exchange it for any thing *new*? Such is divine truth to the lovers of truth, — beautiful in its unchangeable sameness, beautiful in the variety of its applications, always many, and yet always one.

I would take this opportunity to make one or two remarks on the manner of conducting the services of this place, for my experience has shown me that some things here might be altered to advantage.

The principal error consists in requiring two sermons every Sabbath from a single preacher. A sermon should be a full discussion of some important moral or religious subject, on which the writer should put forth all his strength. Now no man living can keep two such subjects upon his mind, during the same week, with so much advantage to his hearers as if he gave his whole attention to one. Accordingly it would be a better way, as it seems to me, to have the sermon in the morning, and in the afternoon a service of a less elaborate and more popular character, — perhaps an extemporaneous address, or an exposition of Scripture, — which would be quite as useful to the audience generally as a regular discourse.

There is another subject which concerns the order and propriety of our service in the house of God, on which I again refer to experience for the course which seems to me to be the most appropriate. It has become common in some churches to remain seated during the prayer. In this service the posture most favorable to strict attention is, in my opinion,

the best. Standing is a constrained position ; kneeling is still more so, and therefore likely to make one think of the body when the soul should be intently engaged with itself. For this reason, the new practice would seem to be an improvement when we consider the uses of prayer to the suppliant. It may *appear* to others less reverential ; but we do not pray to keep up appearances ; neither is it supposed that any one is looking round in prayer to consider appearances. Let every one be busy with his own heart, as every one should be, and all will appear well in the sight of Him with whom we have to do. Still, in so long a service something is gained by change of position ; in fact this is necessary, to prevent a heavy and languid feeling. Therefore I cannot help thinking that to stand when God's praise is sung, and to remain seated when prayer is offered, is the course which will finally prevail.

But I am taking too much of your time with remarks of this kind. Let us return to the occasion. We take possession of a house which, though not new, is renewed in almost every part, having this advantage over a new one, that some associations have become connected with it which the changes will not sweep away. Let them remain, and may other and holier associations come to deepen the impression with which this place should be regarded ! Consider not the fitness of its proportions, or the exactness of its arrangements, or any of the circumstances which impress the eye ; for these are things of minor importance. Our great care should be, that

it answers the purpose for which it is set apart, — that of awakening and confirming religious principle in those who worship within its walls. Without this, the building will cumber the ground ; with it, it will become in very deed the house of God and the gate of heaven.

SERMON XII.



THE DISORDERED MIND.

FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.—Psalm cxxxix. 14.

It may have happened to you, in younger days, to go into some building where complicated and extensive machinery was in busy motion. There were bands and wheels rolling in intense activity all around you, but you could not trace the object of their action, nor see how they moved in harmony with each other. It was with a perplexed and bewildered feeling that you looked into the dark depths of the enginery, for you felt that the principle of its construction, and the manner in which it wrought out its results, were far beyond your reach. And while this mystery filled you with wonder, at times a heavy crash within the mass of rolling circles, or a clang as if axles and chains were breaking, or a dash of waters as if barriers were giving way, filled you for a moment with startling dread.

It was with somewhat such a feeling that the writer of this Psalm thought of the complicated structure of man. He was a thoughtful observer. Careless spectators are seldom surprised; they take

too little notice of what is before them to distinguish the unusual from the familiar, the strange from the common. But when one fixes an eye of intelligent discernment upon the things which God has made, the feeling of wonder begins to be excited. And when he considers his own organization, — how wisely it is formed for activity and strength, how marvellous are its powers and adaptations for accomplishing the purposes of its existence, with what beautiful harmony its movements go on when disease and irregularity have not enfeebled their power, — there is something graceful, fine, and inspiring in the contemplation which fills his heart with admiring praise. But when he sees how easily this machine is disordered, its energy destroyed, its happy activity broken up, and its power subdued into helplessness and woe, — how soon, without even suspecting his danger, man can be a total wreck and a helpless ruin, — he feels that we are fearfully, as well as wonderfully, made, and that no man can look thoughtfully into his own frame without strong emotions of astonishment and dread.

Whoever reflects must be powerfully impressed with the mechanical construction of the eye for purposes of vision, — of the ear for catching the most delicate sounds, — of the limbs for that activity and strength which self-preservation and subsistence require. He must also be struck with that gracefulness which attends all the movements of the system, which is always to be seen in childhood, and would be found in later years, if nature were not

distorted and resisted. One of the most eminent members of the medical profession, in ancient times, declared that his tendency to atheism was corrected by observing the structure of the human hand. The infinite variety of its motions — for example, in music or in writing, the delicacy and precision of its touch, the firmness with which it holds, the force with which it applies, in any direction, just the power which is wanted — is the result of a mechanical construction which man can hardly understand, which he cannot by any means imitate, with his most perfect ingenuity; and it convinced this great man that an intelligent Being must have designed it, for to the thoughtful it will always be a miracle of power and love.

We all know how it is with us when all the parts of that mysterious organism, our body, are exercised in harmony and order. The world seems bright; there is sunshine in the breast; there is a freedom and airy lightness of feeling, which we call the sensation of health, and which is certainly the most delightful that man ever knows. While, on the contrary, if there is any want of action, any loss of proportion, any jarring discord among the elements of our material nature, it brings pain, depression, and wretchedness with it. The head is sick; the heart is faint; the strong man bows himself; the shivering chill makes the frame bend and tremble, or the fever flows like melted lead through the veins, and the sufferer feels within himself that it will take but little of those powerful influences to reduce him to

the dust. And one of the most fearful things connected with disease is the thought of our own instrumentality in bringing it on. We cannot always tell what to ascribe to our own agency, and what is the act of God ; but we know that we have neglected the laws of life, that we have recklessly indulged our appetites and passions, that we have lived in luxurious repose, or overtaxed our energies in selfish and worldly pursuits, and we are therefore haunted with the thought, for which there may be good reason, that we have been ourselves the inexcusable and unpitied authors of our own suffering.

I place the physical system foremost, because it is more open to the eye ; but I hasten to observe, in the second place, that the mind is still more fearfully and wonderfully made. While there is something quite as striking in its energies, there is something yet darker in its sorrows and retributions. It requires thought to comprehend the greatness and glory of the power of thought. Consider, for example, the act of extemporaneous speaking, which is the most exciting and animated way in which the mind can be exerted. What flexibility, strength, and quickness there must be, to enable the mind to hold the subject in all its various bearings and relations in full view, while at the same time it is employed in working out single thoughts into fulness and finish, and not only making them perfect by themselves, but arranging their place and adjusting their proportion in reference to the whole ! At the moment that the speaker is uttering a sentence, he

has the outline of the subject and the memory of what he has said before him ; and while he puts the present thought into words, he must anticipate and prepare what is to follow immediately after, — keeping the various powers of attention and judgment, of memory and imagination, in vigorous action, and all in perfect order, combining to produce conviction in the hearer's understanding or to make an impression on his heart.

But inspiring as it is to witness the triumph of intellectual action, there is here also a dark side of the picture which we cannot contemplate without concern and dread. How little it takes to destroy these powers, to deaden these sensibilities ! Even where there is no conscious transgression of the laws of life on the part of the sufferer, should there be but a slight derangement of the physical system, a darkness like that of the thundercloud may spread over the mind, so that it can see nothing as it is. The springs of happiness become bitter waters ; the best affections are changed into jealous passions ; the lightest touch seems to scrape over the naked nerves of the soul ; what was formerly the best enjoyment becomes the severest torture, and life is a burden which the poor wayfarer of life cannot bear. He is no longer himself ; the power of choice and judgment passes from him. He is in that state which the ancients contemplated with fear and reverence, because, having ceased to order his way for himself, he is not responsible for what he does. His acts are not his own, but in some awful and mysterious man-

ner, which human wisdom cannot look into, he is working out the purposes of God. And who can look on man in that distressing state without a tender solemnity of feeling, — without the deepest sympathy for that dreadful suffering, in which that life for which a man will give all that he hath becomes so weary a load that he turns with fond longing to the grave? The clods of the valley are sweet unto him where he trusts to lay it down.

But the most fearful thing about this disordered state of the mind is the light which it throws, and which perhaps it was meant to throw, upon our future existence. The irregular action of the mind is its strongest action; as the body at such times is capable of mighty convulsive efforts, so the mind puts forth fierce and stormy energies, which are unknown in its calmer hours. And among these we find the memory quickened into wondrous life. Events which took place years ago, and seemed to leave no trace at all upon the mind, — words which were spoken in former days, and which seemed to die away in the breath that gave them being, — thoughts even, and emotions, which left no more traces than the last year's clouds have left in the sky, — are remembered at such times, with perfect distinctness and reality in all their parts, and come up, too, with a strength and vividness of impression like things of the present day; or rather, they come like ghosts from bloody graves, surrounded with terrors which the living did not possess. This shows that the book of remembrance is in each one's memory;

it is not now opened, but every thing is deeply recorded there. The history of every sin is written where neither time nor tears can ever efface it. Forgetfulness is only for a time; the day shall come when every thing which we would fain forget shall stand out in livid light, — seen as it is, with no self-delusion to blind us to its guilt. Conscience, no longer blinded by earthly influences and fully awake to its duty, shall read the full record of our former lives, and if these have been unfaithful to Him who made us, go on to pronounce and execute our doom. Thus we can imagine how the memory, quickened into intenser life, shall make the mind itself a hell, more terrible than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or than ever entered the dismayed and shuddering heart.

So, too, the manner in which the mind in its irregular action clings to one painful thought — though in this world it is the portion of the innocent who are thus tried, for what reason we do not know — may be a foreshadowing of the manner in which remorse in a future world shall distress the guilty soul. One single dark and dismal thought before the mind, from which it cannot turn away, — always confronting it as if with a living eye of stern and gloomy upbraiding, — how it bends and breaks down the spirit into more than midnight gloom! No other thoughts can call the attention from that one. It binds up all within into one concentrated agony. In the day it cries, — “Would to God it were night!” in the darkness, “Would to God it were morning!”

but the day cometh, and also the night, bringing no change nor relief. That single thought seems anchored like a heavy cloud over the soul; no winds have power to sweep it from the sky. Though we know not what we shall be, we do at times have glimpses of the fearful powers which lie folded and sleeping in the soul, and which may hereafter come out, with a power which not even this form of mental suffering, dire as it is, will enable us to imagine now.

In the third place, we are wonderfully and fearfully made in what respects our spiritual nature. Wonderful it is what peace and satisfaction come, even in the most disastrous circumstances of life, to those whose consciences are living, whose affections are kept in action, and who turn with cheerful confidence to their heavenly Father. It is not pleasure, it is not what men call joy, I know; but it is something higher, surer, and better. It is a peace which passeth the understanding of those who have never known it; no words can represent to them this beauty of holiness in such a manner as it deserves. On the other hand, fearful it is to see into what utter and hopeless insensibility and self-delusion the soul may fall. As the poor, superannuated ruin of a man believes himself more able and eloquent than in any former day, so may the person whose spirit is dead within him talk much of God and eternity, and wonder at the thoughtlessness of others, when his own religion is nothing but a dream, which the eternal morning will dispel. In all this wide world,

abounding as it does with things that sadden the heart, there is really nothing so fearful as the self-delusion of those who think themselves something when they are nothing ; for there is no suggestion nor warning that can reach them. They fold round their hearts the Sabbath garments of their mistaken and untrue devotion, and keep themselves in a slumber which nothing will break but the trump of the archangel at the judgment day.

The question now arises, Why are we thus fearfully made? In a general view of the subject it is enough to reply, that a fine and delicate organization, such as God has given to man, must be easily disordered. An organization of this kind is an advantage which necessarily brings evils along with it, and if we enjoy the one, we must also have the other. But why these evils should fall where they do, why such a weight of misery should fall on one more than another, why one should go through life comparatively exempt from this sorrow, while another is bowed down with it to the grave, is what we know not. It is not revealed, because it does not concern ourselves and our duty. It is enough for us to know that the sight of these sufferings in others, and the patient and forbearing kindness which they require, give us the opportunity of forming virtues of the highest order. When sympathy answers to sympathy, and love replies to love, it is comparatively easy to be tender and true. But in those dark hours of unaccountable gloom, of impatient displeasure, of zealous and causeless suspi-

cion, which sometimes cloud the soul, it is hard for affection to sustain itself unbroken to the last. And this is the great triumph of our religion, that it kindles those never-setting stars of encouragement and guidance in life's most disastrous hours. It employs the instrumentality of suffering, as the artisan uses the furnace-fire, to form in us those affections which brighten the dreary path of life, and, lengthen the pillar of fire resting on the mercy-seat. When the long march was over, shall be our light and glory in that heaven to which the faithful go.

We see, then, that all in this world, however painful it may be, and all within ourselves, though our nature so often suffers, may help forward the great work of preparation. For this purpose all is wonderfully made. As our minds dwell upon it, we dismiss the fear; but the wonder grows. So it will ever be; our knowledge of ourselves and our experience of life will perpetually increase our admiration of the works and ways of God. We may submit ourselves to him, then, as a faithful Creator, whether he tries us with suffering of the frame, with anguish of mind, or heavy desolation of soul. He orders all things well; the end is not yet. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

SERMON XIII.



PREPARATION FOR HEAVEN.

PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD. — Amos iv. 12.

EVERY one knows that this life is but the childhood of existence. If the young will not look forward and prepare for the manly duties of life, it is altogether absurd to expect that they shall be respectable, useful, and happy; it is next to certainty that they will be just the reverse of all this. And if we who are here to be educated for another existence, — we who are so severe upon the carelessness of the young, — if we should have it pressed home on ourselves in return, — “ You say this is a preparatory state; where is your preparation? ” — we might find it somewhat hard to reply.

The truth is, that a great many, and not such as pass for bad men either, are making no sort of preparation for another life. In all that respects this world's gain, the eye of the lightning is not sharper than theirs. Perhaps in respect to intellectual improvement they tax heavily the present moment to secure knowledge in time to come, and nothing can exceed the thoughtfulness and attention they bestow

in preparing the comfort of their declining years. But take one of these deliberate and sagacious men, ask him what duty he is doing because Christianity requires it; ask what he can truly say he is doing or has ever done from a sacred sense of duty; ask him if he is in the habit of cross-examining his conscience when it tells a flattering tale; ask him if he makes a point of doing, not what pleases himself, but what will please God. If he answers as he would reply to his own heart, if he tells the truth, he will confess to you that he thinks of no such things. He is contented if he preserves a good moral character; if he does not materially injure others, — or, in homely phrase, if he minds his own business and lets others alone, — he is quite easy as to his last account with God.

All this is very well. Even though he is not tempted to do otherwise, though character, interest, and all inducements whatever lead him to observe, and never break, this line of conduct, we allow that, as far as it goes, it is duty, though it implies a notion of the importance and extent of duty which is extremely weak and low. But after giving all the praise due to this conduct, and perhaps a little more, the great question returns, What is there in all this that you call preparation for another existence? All this begins and ends in the present world. In all this there is nothing serious, nothing devoted, nothing high, nothing which could not be done as well without Jesus Christ as with him. In fact, it all is done without him, and if this is preparation, such

persons expect to be saved without having the least regard for a Saviour, — they expect religion to save them without their paying any respect to its laws. And this is as wise as to expect to be restored to health by a medicine which they never have taken, or enlightened by a book which they have never read.

There is no kind of doubt that many, and those not by any means foolish men, are in error here. They are moving on in the voyage of life as if they were sure of *drifting* to the right harbour. They feel no uneasiness because they see no land, and take no observations; — the very thing that ought to alarm them flatters them into confidence, and they are not startled till they dash upon the rock, or founder in the heart of the sea.

What is the preparation required? One would suppose that there could be no mistake here; but there are great and various errors, and they all result from that passion in man to make the terms of acceptance with God as easy to himself as he can. Devotion and benevolence constitute this preparation; — in better words, the preparation is to love God with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Devotion, my friends, does not consist in solemnity. There is a solemnity which passes for devotion, which men approve in themselves as devotion. Just as they take it for granted, that all who wear black are mourners, do they believe, that all whose manner is gloomy are profoundly religious at heart.

I dread this solemnity. It is too often artificial, unconsciously made up; in its very best estate it is nothing more than a feeling, and a feeling which leads to no usefulness or improvement, and therefore to no good. I dread this solemnity; it makes those who have it feel so saint-like, while there is nothing of the Christian character under its broad sable folds. The solemnity Christianity wants is that of a heart deeply engaged, interested, busy, in its duty. This deep interest in the work to be done will give an air of solemnity to the brow. Still, there is something beside the solemnity, — something more and better than the solemnity; and as habit makes the labor of duty lighter, the eye regains its cheerfulness, and the shadow clears from the brow. Away with all solemnity except that produced by an awful sense of duty, — by the weight of the obligations of which the heart and hands are full.

I call that man devout who feels and tries to feel the presence of God; who is not afraid nor unwilling to have the eye of God upon him, — who rather rejoices in it, knowing that it makes him more faithful; who endeavours to conciliate God, not with flattery in long and unmeaning prayers, not by running down himself and human nature, but by doing his will. Such a man prays, to make his requests unto God; such a man praises, because praise is the feeling of his heart; but his greatest endeavour is to bring his thoughts and deeds into subjection to the Christian law; and for this purpose he asks himself

often whether he is doing right, — whether his course of life is what it should be, — whether, if the angel of death came this hour, he is prepared to meet his God.

Devotion means devotedness, readiness to do and suffer every thing that pleases God. Devotion means something more than prayer. There is many a prayer fervent in its utterance which has no devotion in it, because there is in the breast of him who makes it no devotedness to his heavenly Father's will. This devotion is of our own forming, — it is not inspired ; the man who is really devout becomes so by long meditation on the works and character of God. True, there is devotion which attracts the gaze of men far more than this ; there is devotion which makes a show in the path of life, like the glass fragment you see by the way-side sparkling in the sun. You would take it for a diamond if you had not been deceived by it before. This is not the devotion which I wish for you ; I would have devout lips, but not without devout lives. I would judge of the devotion by the life, and not of the life by the devotion.

Again, the benevolence that makes part of this preparation, — it is an active desire to do good to men. Mark those words "active desire" ; for the mere desire is nothing. Every one wishes well enough for the happiness of others ; every one would help the happiness of others if he could do it without inconvenience to himself. Even those who injure others, were it not for the temptation to injure

them, would be ready enough to wish, and perhaps to do, them good. Far am I from believing that good-will to others is an uncommon thing. No; if wishing would make men what they should be, the whole world would be Christians. The mere desire is nothing; you can place no dependence upon it; the *active* desire is a very different thing,—as different from the mere wish as the spirit of the selfish epicurean from that of the self-denying martyr.

But very often there is a selfishness in the midst of benevolence. There are those who are willing to do good, but will do it in their own way,—thereby showing that they are thinking quite as much of themselves as of others. Thus, in relieving the distressed,—for there are persons distressed, and that with no fault of their own,—each one is apt to give what he values least. Here we must be on our guard. Let him who gives his money give what he values more, his attentions or his time; let him who gives his services, if he values other things more, give them, in order to be sure that his very kindness is not selfish, or at least, that it has in it no other selfishness than the manly and honorable desire of securing one's interest in the future world.

Even the benevolent must be on their guard; they are far too apt to take as much with one hand as they give with the other. You will sometimes find that those who are liberal of wealth to others wound them with their neglect and scorn. You will find

those who, with a manner all kindness, encourage hopes of friendship which they never intend to redeem. You will find those who will sit night after night by the bedside of the sick, and at the same time stab them with what the Scripture calls the edge of the tongue. Therefore inspiration tells us to "be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"; then we may know whether we are innocent merely because we are not tempted, whether we are kind from principle, or only from feeling. Mere feeling will not face the wind and tide; mere feeling will do good as long as it is pleasant, and no longer; — principle is something worth having; it is patient, not easily discouraged, and enduring.

One thing we must guard against with all our might, — not to let revengeful feelings have place in the heart. They come in disguise. How often you hear those who complain with no little bitterness that others have injured them say, that, for all that, they would do them a kindness if they had the power! Still they cannot do them the kindness to wait for explanations; they cannot do them the kindness to put a favorable construction on their words and deeds; that is, they flatter themselves with thinking that they would do the greater kindness, though they deny the less. And suppose that they would do a kindness to their enemy; — half the world would do the same, and be glad that they had the power. Christian benevolence means a great deal more than this!

I have thus attempted to suggest, in general terms,

what is included in the injunction, "Prepare to meet thy God." You may now, perhaps, expect me to describe the meeting itself. And possibly I might paint the end of all things in such a way as to strike the imagination. I might represent the archangel's trumpet sending its far and stormy voice over land and sea. I might paint the dead outbursting from their tombs, — crowding by millions round the judgment-seat, with a paleness deeper than that of death on every brow. I might represent the Son of Man, with raiment shining like the sun, speaking in low and deep tones the sentence that makes every heart cold with dismay. But if I could do it, if I could make you hear the thunder crash with which the pillars of the universe fall, or show you the fire flashing out from the earth and every star till the universe is in flame, what purpose would be answered? I would rather, if I must dwell upon that tremendous vision, show you the sinner who stands solitary and apart, unconscious of the gaze of millions, seeing not the fire, hearing not the earthquake as it murmurs by, his whole soul frozen into a fearful expectation of the judgment to come. But all these are terrors which may impress the imagination without mending the heart. I would have the goodness of God lead you to repentance; I would have you fear him now as much as you would fear him in the judgment day.

I say, then, Prepare to meet thy God now; prepare to meet him in the intercourse of prayer; make

your hearts such as you are willing to throw open to him. He never can be nearer than he is now ; this preparation, if ever it will be wanted, is wanted now. I say again, then, In every hour of life “pre-
pare to meet thy God.”

SERMON XIV.



RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

BEWARE LEST ANY MAN SPOIL YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND VAIN DECEIT. — Colossians ii. 8.

MORE properly, “Beware lest any man spoil you through a vain, deceitful philosophy,” and this was the character of most of the wisdom of that day. Philosophy means the investigation of subjects with a desire to know all that can be known about them. But the wise men of that day, instead of studying Christianity to learn the reasonableness, the nature, and the application of its truths, employed themselves in the endeavour to make Christianity harmonize with their own favorite systems; and the result was, that the religion, as it came mended from their hands, retained very few of its original features.

But are we to understand that philosophical investigation should not be applied to the religion of Jesus Christ? Most certainly not. This would be the same as to say that we must not reflect upon it, we must not study it, we must content ourselves with an unthinking submission to all its commands. So far from this, Christianity seems rather to invite

man to consider it, to weigh its truths, to submit them to the most searching investigation, trusting that such investigation will result in a warmer adoration of the love in which the religion began, and a stronger desire to apply it to the great purpose for which God sent it down.

It may be said, however, that philosophical investigation of the subject of religion has sometimes led to infidelity. I do not believe it. There are cases enough in which infidelity has led to a certain sort of investigation, and there the result commonly is, as might be expected, that the previous distaste for Christian doctrine and duty is confirmed. But the investigation, as it is called, amounts to nothing more than a mere glance at the outside; the infidel reasons, not about Christianity, but about what he takes to be Christianity, and these are two widely different things. Without going to the Scriptures to see what the subject is, he assumes that he is well acquainted with it; and then, knowing nothing about its doctrines, knowing nothing about its peculiar feelings, he pretends to reason concerning that which he takes no pains to understand, and his investigation "cometh in vanity and departeth in darkness"; it ends in prejudice, as in prejudice it began. If you think I do infidels injustice, I would ask you to show me one who ever seems to have comprehended that the elements of the religion are love to God and love to man. These are the foundation, these the leading principles, these run through all Christianity, and yet not one unbeliever ever

seems to have suspected it. Like the South Sea Islanders when they first saw white men, unbelievers mistake the dress for part of the body and the living form. Because they disapprove the fashion of the drapery, which human hands have idly and needlessly thrown round it, they condemn its proportions, and say that it is not of God.

But while philosophical investigation may and should be applied to the truths revealed by Christianity, there is a spirit in which such researches should be conducted, — in fact must be conducted, — in order to lead to truth. Nor is this peculiar to Christianity. There is a right spirit in which the search for knowledge on any subject must be conducted, or it will lead to darkness rather than light. And that is the spirit of humility. Humility is the low-browed arch under which one must stoop in passing, but under which he must pass before he can reach any improvement, whether in science, morals, or religion. When this humility is wanting, philosophy — that is, the true-hearted love of improvement, united with the power of gaining it — is wanting. Still, self-confidence and presumption often usurp and are permitted to bear its name. They formed the “vain, deceitful philosophy” which prevailed in the Apostle’s time, and which probably will prevail, under one name or another, to the last ages of the world.

Again : while it is allowed, then, that Christianity is a proper subject for philosophical investigation, — that is, a subject concerning which men may think,

and study, and inquire, — there is also another essential condition belonging to all such investigations, namely, the acknowledgment of the supreme authority of the word of God. Jesus Christ has brought us a revelation of truths which man could never have known without him. I say, could never have known ; for surely four thousand years were enough to make the experiment. Through all that long tract of ages, there were powerful and active minds, — prophets and sages earnestly desiring to look into those subjects, and constantly finding, to their sorrow, that man could never scale the heavens by strides of human wisdom. And now that the word of God has come, it requires but little humility to acknowledge its authority to be final on subjects like this. In fact, there is but one alternative ; it must be either paramount, commanding authority on these subjects, or no authority at all. Accordingly you find that men who submit all their investigations to that infallible test go on in swift and sure religious improvement, while those who begin without a proper reverence for that divine authority unsettle every thing in their own minds, remove the old landmarks without setting up any other, and end at last in deep hostility to the Saviour, who, as long experience proves, must either be all or nothing in the minds and hearts of men.

Since humility and reverence are things essential to all who would study these subjects with profit and success, let us consider how little reason there is for self-reliance, and how much we need that authority which the religion of Jesus Christ supplies.

It is said that there was some light on these subjects before Christianity, and that there might be now, without Christianity. Yes, there is light at midnight before the moon has risen, and when the stars are clouded ; there was light in the beginning of creation before the sun appeared in the sky ; but it was faint and dim, it answered no purpose of cheering nor guidance. And so it is with the spiritual light which is found where Christianity has not come. No doubt, the inspiration of God has communicated something to every human mind ; no doubt, that, when the spiritual powers are brought into action, the ideas of God and eternity begin to present themselves, and a shadowy line between right and wrong begins to be drawn ; but the whole history of man in former ages shows that "man by wisdom knew not God," — knew not any of those things which it most concerns him to know. He was able to discern that there was a God, but not to discern, in any thing like its completeness and perfection, the character of God ; — that was left for Christianity to reveal. He was able to look forward to a future life, but he did not know that it was a state of just and perfect retribution. Evidently, however, to know this and no more, — to know that there is a God without knowing the relation in which we stand to him, and that eternity is before us without knowing what qualifications we need to make us happy for ever, — would only be that sad light which makes darkness visible, — a knowledge which would only make us more keenly alive to our

need of more knowledge. After the human mind had reached forward, with intense longing and desperate energy, to look into these subjects, and all in vain, God condescended to reveal them; and now shall man show his gratitude by saying or feeling that he could have learned all this of himself? Before Christianity, there was no upward tendency in human nature; all was downward, — downward into deeper corruption, — deepest at the moment when the star of salvation rose. Surely whoever considers what man was, and always, without Christianity, will see that philosophy might as well pretend to kindle a sun at midnight, as undertake to enlighten the darkness, relieve the spiritual wants, and console the sorrows of a lost world.

But, in the second place, much is said of *the light within us*, and some appear to feel as if it superseded the necessity of any illumination from on high. But what is it? Nothing but a power of vision like that which resides in the bodily eye. It is compared to the eye to explain to us what it is. Now does any one suppose that light originates in the eye, or that the power of sight would help us unless there were light by which we may see. It is the same to the body that a window is to a house, — the avenue through which the light passes in. And this light within is nothing but a power of moral sight, by which we may discern the moral and religious truths presented, and therefore, so far from rendering light unnecessary, would itself be useless to us if there were not light by which it is enabled

to see. Jesus Christ is the light of the moral world. He is the source and fountain of that light by which our spiritual sight is able to discern the truths which it is so much concerned to know. Without him, the spiritual sight would be as helpless as the eyes in utter darkness; so that the light within us, of which so much is said, only increases our dependence on him.

This being the case, it is evident, that, except we possess and enjoy the light without, we can have no benefit from the light within, and nothing can be vainer than to speak of being guided by this inner light, to the exclusion of the other. Guided by the eyesight without any light from the sun? While he shines, we may feel as if we could do without him, but not so when the horror of deep darkness falls. Those who have depended on the inner light, without regard to the other, have gone fearfully astray. It would not be easy to number the crimes, the unnatural and revolting crimes, committed by some who thought they were obeying the dictation of God within them, and at the same time refused to consult his revealed and written law. And now, when we hear men speak as if this inner light alone were sufficient for our guidance, it is as if they should say, — “Break down the lighthouse which for ages has shone through the storms, conducting thousands of voyagers safe into the harbour; there is no need of it, for each vessel can carry a rush-light at its own masthead, and thus find her way through the entrance channel, winding, and rough,

and rockbound though it is." She would probably find her way to the bottom, and he who trusts to the inner light alone for guidance will also be in danger of shipwreck of the soul.

But the question arises, What is the province of philosophical investigation in respect to Christianity? Certainly it is to look into the nature of the truths which it reveals, that we may learn their adaptation to our nature. As soon as they were first revealed, they were known; but the wonderful manner in which they were suited to our wants and feelings, — to every man's wants and feelings, — the manner in which they were suited to the benefit and improvement of the human race, — could not be at once understood. This was a thing to be studied. Experience threw light upon it; observation threw light upon it; philosophical investigation may throw yet more light upon it, because mankind are constantly passing into new circumstances and conditions, and the beauty and power of holiness are displayed with new glory. Many a direction there is which is constantly unfolding itself more and more to human eyes. "Overcome evil with good," for example, — who could have foreseen, even a century ago, what wonders it would work in prisons, — how it would reform the whole process of education, — how widely and successfully it would be applied? This is what is meant by the light which is continually breaking from the word of God. Its truths do not unfold themselves to unobservant eyes; the more they are studied and pondered, the more do they dis-

close for the improvement and blessing of man. Here is the province for philosophy, — not to sit in judgment on the doings of the Most High, but its field is the spiritual world ; all its researches there will result in some new discoveries of Divine power and love. Exhausted it never can be. Science has not yet travelled over a thousandth part of the wonders of the visible world, and the moral and spiritual world — so much higher and more extended — cannot be entirely explored so long as eternity endures.

Why is it, then, that philosophy has so often become vain and deceitful when applied to subjects like this? It is because a heathen philosophy is applied to Christian truth, which is like using a foot-rule to measure distances in the sky. It is because men undertake to investigate without Christ what they never could have known any thing of without him. Under these circumstances, it can go but little way ; it stops at the outside. It can see nothing more than a personification of the laws of nature in Him who is above all, and through all, and in all. It can see nothing more than an ordinary man in Him who spake as never man spake, and who was what never man was. It can see nothing more than a continued mortal life in the existence beyond the grave. And how is it possible to understand, or hope to understand, the truths which our Saviour has revealed, if we try to search out, with our inch of candle, what it takes all the blaze of the Sun of righteousness to make clear to human eyes?

The truth is, that Christ is the Master and the

end of all true philosophy ; the highest and happiest object it can propose to itself is to lead men to him for instruction, to confirm his authority, and to establish his empire in the hearts of men. If in the unhappy confusion of controversy he has lost any thing of our reverence, — if he whose right it is to reign, and whose kingdom is within, has been dethroned from his true place in our veneration and love, — we are not the persons by whom the light of God's word is to be drawn forth and set before the eyes of men. Whoever sincerely desires to know the truth will look for it as it is in Jesus Christ, will hang on his lips, will treasure his every word. His authority in the balance will weigh all other down. As for human authority, let it be regarded according to its claims to reverence ; as for human claims, man may sift them as he will, for these are in his reach ; among these he may hope to discern the false from the true. But if he treats Him whom God has sanctified and sent into the world merely as a human being, and deals with his disclosures as freely as if they were human things, he does not see things as they are, — he is not in the way to understand them ; the very principle with which he begins, the first steps in his inquiry, show that they will be for ever hidden from his eyes.

We often hear the present spoken of as the age of philosophy. It is an age of restlessness, an age of change, an age of action ; but to call it an age of philosophy — that is, of calm, deliberate inquiry

after truth — is doing it an honor which it does not yet deserve. An age when innovation is regarded as the same with reform, — an age when zeal often becomes mad passion, and indifference often passes for liberality, — an age when philanthropy is so apt to grow savage, and benevolence proves its love for some of the human race by the intenseness of its hatred to others, — an age in which the things of God are no more respected than the things of Cæsar, — is not an age of philosophy, of calm, sound, and healthy investigation, whatever else it may be. No doubt, its result will be good. The waters may give out their virtues when they are troubled, but it is not the time to analyze them to discover the sources of their healing virtue. It is an age which signifies “the removing of those things that are shaken”; the time is come for perishable things to perish, and the world must let them go. But “those things that cannot be shaken” will remain, and of all things the firmest and most unshaken is the Rock of Ages. The floods may come and the storms beat against it, but the Rock and all that is built thereon shall endure.

SERMON XV.



THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

WHO KNOWETH WHAT IS GOOD FOR MAN IN THIS LIFE?—
Ecclesiastes vi. 12.

Few persons ever had so much reason to ask this question as the writer to whom this book is ascribed. A sovereign, powerful and magnificent, richly gifted with all outward advantages that Heaven could bestow, — eminent above all others for his wisdom, but in the application of that wisdom to his life irregular and unfaithful, and therefore a restless and unhappy man, — he had made some great mistake in life, and he felt that it was too late to repair it. He could only lament that life was not to him what God meant it should be, and what it might easily have been.

But this error, and the consequences of it, are shared by numberless others. Any observer must be struck, painfully struck, with the sight of mankind, — each having an existence which God regards as a blessing and a treasure, but not many really rejoicing in it, not many finding true happiness in it, — all conscious that something is wrong and some-

thing wanting, but not knowing where the difficulty lies, — and therefore pressing on, in the vain hope that new accessions of those things which have brought no satisfaction with them, that some fortunate accident, or perhaps that the lapse of time, will bring them that enjoyment of existence, that full and deep enjoyment of existence, which as yet they have never found. There is not one in ten thousand who understands the value and blessing of life, a great proportion of mankind considering it only as something better than the grave or the dark future. Having thus no comprehension of its use and worth, they suffer it to run to waste ; they wait through the days of their appointed time ; when death comes, they shut their eyes, take the leap in the dark, and die at last without wisdom, as they have lived, — clinging to life only from their dread of that which lies beyond it.

You will observe, too, that it is not those who are most severely tried in life who are most apt to regard it thus. The heaviest laden are not those who move most heavily ; the disparaging tone in which life is spoken of is seldom heard from their lips. They often seem to have some revelation of the value and blessing of existence which is not made to others. They place a higher estimate upon it ; darkened and desolated as life is to them, they feel more profoundly than ever before how great a gift it is. Their misfortunes are like the earthquake, which rent the veil of the temple and disclosed the golden sanctuary, never opened to common eyes be-

fore ; they have learned "the power of an endless life," — and all is changed to their view.

If it is thus true of thousands, that they do not understand the worth of existence, if they know not what can be made of it, or what it was meant to be, there can hardly be an inquiry of more general interest than the one proposed in the text, — "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life ?"

And, first, in the domestic relations, who knoweth what is good for man ? This condition of existence, assembling in small circles those who are most nearly connected with each other, undoubtedly was intended to afford a retreat, a resting-place, to which man, when worn and weary with the conflicts of troubled life abroad, might "flee away and be at rest." The very name of *home* sounds like a benediction ; not a word ever passes from human lips that goes so directly to every heart. And yet in how many dwellings some element of unhappiness finds its way, and changes all its light and blessing into cold and dreary gloom ! How many a cottage looks sweetly under the green arch of foliage that hangs over it, inspiring the thought in the wayfarer that there he should rejoice to spend his days ! How many a stately mansion in the city awakens the feeling in those who pass by, that the inmates must surely be happy ! And yet a nearer acquaintance with such places shows us pale anxiety, sullen alienation, fiery discord, or perhaps sins more deadly, if any such there are, dwelling in the humble and the splendid mansion, and changing that which we im-

aged almost a heaven into so near a resemblance of hell, that any one who had ever tasted its bitterness would be relieved to escape from it into a dungeon or a grave.

Yes, many examples there are of those who have pledged their affections to each other, yet still have separate interests, unsympathizing feelings, so that the relation, which might have been a source of the purest happiness, becomes a flowing fountain of woe. Many examples there are of parents suffering more from the selfish coldness of living children, than others who mourn for the dead. What is worse, there are parents who have repelled the young affections of their children by their sternness or severity, and thus have done them an injury which they never can repair. Many examples there are of brothers or sisters indulging bitter passions, either selfishly indifferent to each other, or selfishly exacting, till they spread a winter of discontent and sorrow in the places where they dwell. And who will show what is good for those in whom life is thus depraved and perverted?

The common resort is one which does not reach the disorder to which it is applied. It is, in the young, successive plans of transient pleasure, which, however, they cannot truly enjoy, because they must carry themselves, that is, their discordant passions, along with them wherever they go. Persons farther advanced in life think to find relief by extending their accommodations, — by making improvements in the grounds about the mansion, or

more tasteful arrangements within ; as if whitening the outside of a sepulchre would remove its dreariness and gloom. The sorrow remains heavy and cold as ever, and nothing can be done to relieve it till the heart awakes to the profound significance of the word which inspiration most delights to speak, — till *love*, that word of power, is learned by heart ; and then no miracle ascribed of old to charm or spell ever approached, in the greatness and suddenness of its changes, to the wonders love can do. He finds that, in the only true sense of the expression, his love must begin at home. Every kind and amiable feeling cherished in his own heart is felt in the hearts of others ; he is not obliged to *exert* an influence upon them ; it is not he, but the love which inspires him, which subdues their passions, softens their unkindness, and brings their feelings into sympathy with his own. Having the spirit of love within, he may trust to it to make them feel its power ; as the keeper of the light-house has only to kindle the lamp, and it will cause itself to shine, guiding the course and rejoicing the hearts of travellers on the dark sea.

If we turn next to active life, whether busy or social, we see there also the same evidence that some great mistake has been made. The world, that is, the community of men whom we call the world, has a prevailing expression, like a single human face ; and that expression is restless, careworn, discontented. The lines of peace and repose are never to be traced there, any more than on the sur-

face of the ocean. There is something which tells, as plainly as words could say it, that mankind have not found what they are seeking for; and there is no encouragement, even to themselves, that they ever will find it in the wayward paths which they tread. They are sensible of the difficulty; they are deeply conscious of the want; but the remedy for this prevailing uneasiness they do not see. Some make experiment of recreations, in which they carry about the burden of their cares, not knowing how to lay them down; others try change of circumstances, as if outward arrangements could of themselves effect a change within; while by far the greater number, seeing no other resort, plunge more deeply into worldly cares, thus increasing the pain which was heavy enough before.

Will no one stand still and hear Christianity when it says, — "This is the way; walk ye in it"? Is the strain, sweet as angels use, in which it speaks of love, always to be unheard and unregarded? Sometimes there are those who half awake to the comprehension of the truth, that they can serve themselves best by serving others. Startled with the discovery, they tremble at their former selfishness; they dash hastily into any plan of benevolence that stands nearest. Their zeal arises from fear and self-upbraiding, not from love in the heart; and it is manifested, not by their devotion to humanity, but their fierce reproaches against those who do not go with them. Hence proceed the savage philanthropists, the unregenerate reformers, the unsanctified

Christians, who say so much and accomplish so little; — accomplish little because they carry their worldly passions with them into their new course of life, and are awakened only to the sin and danger of selfish indifference to prevailing evils, without having learned the spirit of their Master, — without entering into sympathy with love, the only power by which evil in ourselves or others is ever to be done away.

There is nothing in which our want of faith in Jesus Christ appears more plainly and sadly than in this unbelief in the power of love. He tells us that it is the only secret of happiness, the only element of power; it is the mystery of heaven, which, though revealed and open, is left a mystery still. He assures us that the only way to satisfy the wants of our immortal nature, and to remove the uneasiness and distaste of life, — the only possible way to reach that contented peace and serene repose which are God's divinest blessings, — is to cherish the spirit of love; not as it is abridged and misinterpreted by our own selfish passions, but as it was set forth in the words, and shone unclouded in the life, of our heavenly Master. But how few there are who believe him! While thousands are sadly and earnestly asking, — "What is good for man in this life?" there is not one in a thousand who receives, or understands, or acts upon his reply. And this world never will be radiant, as it was meant to be, with happiness and praise, till his favorite word, "love,"

in its fulness, and depth, and power of meaning, gains a welcome in the hearts of men.

Again : the religious life, — how widely its true character is often misunderstood ! The great proportion of those who live in Christian lands take shelter from the remonstrances of their conscience behind certain sacred forms. To these observances they point as the signs that they are faithful, when these may be only easy substitutes for faithfulness and devotion, fatally misleading the soul. What is it to attend the service of devotion, if only the form is present, while the mind and heart — while *the man* — is away ? Even those who come to the Lord's table, and openly profess to be his followers, often find comfort in the thought of making this profession, when, all the while, it is not a true expression of their feeling, — it is a sign of that which is not within ; they make no effort to become what they declare it is the desire of their hearts to be. These outward manifestations, these solemn forms, may be the means of cherishing religious principle ; but when they are made the substitutes for it, the whole becomes a delusion ; it is believing a lie.

There are those, too, who, in asking what is good in the religious life, turn to the past, not concerning themselves with their present character, but rejoicing to think of some former transitions of feeling which they have passed through. But in most cases, these changes, like the passage of the Red Sea, only bring men to the edge of their field of duty and trial ; they have still to struggle painfully

through the wilderness, in order to reach the promised land. Besides, whence this reliance on past states of character? The question is, What are we *now*? Our former emotions no more describe us as we are now in the sight of God, than the weather-signs of the last year's almanac apply to the present spring. I have known those, who, after going through a sudden change, suddenly changed back again without knowing it. Nay, it is not an uncommon thing for a sudden relapse to follow a sudden restoration. Appearances are kept up, the forms are regarded, the words are solemn, but the heart is where it was before. No, not where it was before; for it will never be so easy to be impressed again.

In truth, nothing is to be depended upon as a sign of the religious life but love; without it, you are nothing. Indulge any jealousy, any suspicion, any unkind feeling to any being whatsoever, and you have not the Saviour's spirit. You must also have a strong, filial feeling of love to your heavenly Father; for unless you can receive gratefully what he sends you, and rejoice in him under all circumstances and changes, you have not that trust and confidence which are the beauty of holiness, — the joy and glory of a faithful son. Alas that the great change which turns the heart towards its Father should have been presented in a manner so mechanical, so formal, so much more full of profession than of feeling, that the voice which calls us to repentance finds no answering emotions, no right under-

standing of its summons, no glad and grateful uprising of all within to do reverence to its God !

O, when shall we understand the deep and serious meaning of life ? When will it dawn upon us what life may be made, and what God intended it should be ? When we see the spring coming forth in glory and love, when we feel its breathing incense, and hear the rich music of its voice in the morning sky, are we not impressed with the difference — the fearful difference — between the rich loveliness of awakening nature, and the barren, heavy chillness which prevails in so many hearts ? This is not life ; many, many there are who have not begun to live. They move and have a being ; but the treasures of feeling, the glorious endeavours, the warm-hearted affections, which form the true charm of existence, they do not in the least understand. How many will die without ever having lived ! How many will see with surprise and sorrow, when they reach another existence, how much they might have done, how much they might have enjoyed, how much they have lost, in those days of mortal existence which can return no more !

Here we must feel how much depends on ourselves. If we turn to God with filial confidence, we shall find happiness flowing into our hearts like sunbeams, waking all within into glorious joy, dissolving the ice of our selfishness, and calling new and beautiful affections into life within, like the verdure and flowers of spring. And if we can only turn affectionately to the beings that surround us,

we shall be struck with astonishment how the world of humanity, that now looks desert-like and dreary, opens its treasures of glory and love to our souls. Do not treat it as a fancy. The words are true, for they are God's. Whoever will make the experiment, in good faith and with the heart, will confess that he finds happiness beyond his youthful dreams. If any would know what is good for him in life, it is this, — to love God as his Father, and the beings around him as his brethren. Let him do what is here required, and he soon will wonder at his long insensibility; he will ask where all these treasures of feeling have been hidden; he will be lost in shame for his hewing out so many cisterns, when the waters of life were all the while flowing untasted at his feet.

SERMON XVI.



OFFENCES OF THE TONGUE.

IF ANY MAN OFFEND NOT IN WORD, THE SAME IS A PERFECT MAN,
AND ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE THE WHOLE BODY.—James iii. 2.

ANY one who reads the Scriptures for his own personal improvement is often struck with this, that the sacred writers attach the most serious importance to duties of which men make but little account. So here; one who knows how lightly Christians regard the duty of not offending in word is impressed with the solemnity with which the Apostle treats the obligation,—looking upon the whole character as concerned in it; for he says, whoever is faithful in this respect is a thorough man, strong in self-mastery, — equal to all the duties of life.

He considers faithfulness or unfaithfulness in this respect as a sure indication of the presence or want of Christian principle; — yes, the surest, for it is only in unguarded hours that his character appears precisely as it is. In most actions there is some deliberation; — not much, but far more than in our words. The latter flow carelessly and unthought of from the tongue; they come, as is said, from the

overflowing of the heart. If we could see the thought, we should see the character in its exact form, color, and bearing; but this is for the eye of God alone. We are compelled to look at the outward appearance, and there is nothing in the outward appearance which gives us a truer revelation of what is within than the words.

This Apostle also calls our attention to the effect which the management of the tongue has upon the life. It is, he says, as the bit to the horse or the rudder to the vessel; it determines which way we shall go. Thus he thinks that a man's course is not only indicated, but also shaped, by his conduct in this respect. And really, when we consider how men talk themselves into any thing, — how, by saying a thing often, they come to believe it, however false it may be, — how easily they become insensible to the shame and danger of any thing which they constantly defend, — and how many intrench themselves behind a cloud of words, when hard pressed by their conscience or the charges of other men, — we can see how it should be so; we can see a man's words may be a determining power, not only showing what he is, but making him what he is to be for this world and the other.

There is another view which he takes of the subject, which is new and strange to many. He says that harsh and bitter language cannot come from a good heart. Men sometimes appear to think otherwise; — they think the heart may be good and kind when the words are harsh and severe. But not so

the Apostle ; he says, the same fountain does not send forth salt and fresh water ; however full and flowing the fresh fountain may be, if a brackish spring flows into it, it takes but little to spoil the whole for the use of man. The wayfarer perishing with thirst comes to it with hope and pleasure, but turns away with a heavy heart.

But let us look a little more nearly at some of those offences of the tongue which the Apostle considers so dangerous to the souls of men.

First, there are those sharp and angry words of which we hear so many in the world. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the Christian command, which all profess to obey ; — but what a commentary on it may be found in the intercourse of Christians with each other ? How often do we see the flashing eye and the cheek flushed with passion, and hear the most savage and bitter retorts and replies from lips which are also opened in prayer to God, — how sincerely, how acceptably, we must leave it for eternity to tell ! Men think very little of these things ; the passion subsides, and they feel as if all was the same as before. But no. It is not the same as before. There is mischief done more than meets the eye. As each one of these autumnal storms affects the foliage and hurries on the wintry desolation, does each and every storm of passion leave much unseen injury, though perhaps few visible traces in the heart. How easily men delude themselves on this subject ! After one of these explosions they become reconciled, and think that

those whom they have injured forgive and forget. But no ; to forgive is one thing, to forget is another ; perhaps they do forgive, but they do not forget. Other injuries may be forgotten, new acts of friendship efface the memory of former wrongs, but the wound given by the sharp edge of the tongue does not heal over. If you have ever spoken contemptuously of any one, and think that he has forgotten it, you will find, that, although he may treat you kindly, he remembers such things longer than you.

It is impossible to overestimate the injury which is done by these hasty excesses. Human beings are connected with each other by many fine and delicate ties ; and this flame of hasty anger burns them like tow. At every flash, some of them snap asunder, and there is no power that can replace them. Thus it is with parents and children, with husbands and wives, with brothers and sisters, with friends and neighbours ; — the bands of love which should unite them are gone, — burned away by these quick fires of passion. What matters it if the fire is out ? what has been consumed cannot be restored from its ashes.

Again : there is a sort of violent language where there is not much anger, but rather malice and bitterness strongly felt and strongly expressed, and, strange as it may seem considering what an open and presumptuous offence it is, indulged in without the least consciousness of sin. There is a tendency to extravagance and excess of every kind at the present day. You see it in men's movements ; you

hear it in their words ; every epithet which they use, in the most trifling matters, is always in the superlative degree. If they have not met a friend for some time, they call it an age ; if they praise another, they exalt him to the skies ; if they would censure, they degrade him in the same proportion. And when they come to discussions on subjects in which they are interested, they not only have the same excess in the statement of their opinions ; their partialities and aversions are also expressed in the same high-colored language, which always oversteps the strict line of truth, and does outrageous injustice to those who oppose them, representing them as lost to every virtue and deep in every sin. How little moral sensibility there is in relation to this subject appears from the manner of some who think it a crime to "smite with the fist of wickedness," but indemnify themselves for this forbearance by using the hardest terms of reproach which the language affords ; — as if the bands of love bound nothing but the hands ; as if, not striking with the sword, they might strike the harder with the edge of the tongue. And while they indulge to the utmost in this way their resentment and revenge, they conceive that they are following Him, who, when he was reviled, answered not again.

The most painful exhibition we ever see of this kind of violent language is witnessed in the exciting times of party. To this the Apostle's strong terms, "earthly, sensual, devilish," would most fitly apply. If the things which come out of the mouth

defile a man, surely our land is defiled beyond the power of the elements to cleanse it by this flood of slander and abuse which pours out from the thousand and ten thousand mouths of party. There is something appalling in this cannibal spirit, perfectly unscrupulous, perfectly hateful, in which so many indulge with perfect unconsciousness of their guilt and danger, though to a superior being who listened to their voice it would seem as if the world had broken entirely loose from the moral government of God.

In the intercourse of social life there are many things which show how difficult, and yet how necessary, it is to apply religious principle to the words; — difficult, because we do not think what we are doing. But we ought to think, it is our duty to think, what we are doing, and the neglect of this duty is the last thing that we can plead in excuse for injurious language, or any other sin. Stern language that of our Saviour, — “For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment.” Whatever we may now think of it, we shall find that his warning is true. Any observer of social life must know that “idle” words are almost always *injurious* words; such conversation is very apt to turn upon the follies, infirmities, and sins of others. There are many who enjoy ridicule cast upon others, and many also who are ready to cast it, showing off their penetrating discernment and power of sarcasm, without reflecting that they are guilty of inhumanity, — that

every indulgence of the kind is a sin against God and his law of love ; without reflecting, too, that every indulgence of the kind is exerting a petrifying power upon their own hearts. The Apostle maintains that such indulgence is evidence and cause of a bad heart. Is he not right? You may make yourself acceptable to your associates by entertaining them in such a manner ; you may be pleasant when you are pleased, — pleasant to those with whom you are pleased ; for even the publicans can go as far as this. But the heart from which such things proceed is a bad heart to carry into eternity, — a bad one to throw open at the judgment-seat of Christ.

There are many ways in which the law of love is broken in the social intercourse of life, broken by that thoughtless malice which is so common, but which, however thoughtless, is malice still. Strange that men should consider it an excuse, to say they did not think what harm they were doing! Intoxication is no excuse for transgression. It rather adds the guilt of drunkenness to that of the other sin. So thoughtlessness itself is an offence, where the rights and claims of others are concerned, and there is no principle of morals which can possibly make it a palliation for any other sin. Whoever retails the floating reproach, whoever puts a bad construction on the conduct of another, whoever deals bitterly and harshly with the character of others, may do it thoughtlessly, but still he is responsible, perhaps the more so ; for if he was conscientious, he would re-

flect, and never, except in cases of necessity, say that which may injure another's feelings, reputation, or peace. It is true that unmerited slander dies away ; but no thanks to him who originates, nor to him who repeats it. Inspiration compares him to one who scatters firebrands in sport. The rain of heaven may extinguish the fire which the incendiary kindles, but he is as guilty as if the building were burned down. He who spreads or fans the flame is as guilty as he who kindles it ; he who assists to circulate the injurious word must bear, as well as its author, the penalty of the sin.

There is one way in which unmeasured evil is brought into social life. It is by repeating to a friend the evil that has been said of him by another. Any one who has had much experience of life knows that such reports are never to be trusted. It is very seldom you hear what was said ; you never hear it as it was said. The person who is unprincipled enough to bring you the report which can occasion nothing but ill-feeling is unprincipled enough to be a liar ; — not deliberate, perhaps, but we must remember that whoever is careless of the truth is already a liar. I have known those who felt deeply wronged in consequence of reports of what a neighbour had said against them ; when, all the while, instead of being wronged themselves, they were wronging him who had said no such thing. Tell another the good that is said of him, if you will ; for this is one of those things which make for peace. But never, except in cases of necessity, tell your

friend the evil that has been said of him ; for no good feeling would ever lead you to do it. If you produce any alienation or unkindness, you do it at your peril ; and however you may say you did not think of it, the day will come when you will be obliged to think of it with a heavy heart.

We may see in the conversation of social life many other things which show the wisdom and necessity of the charge to be swift to hear, but slow to speak. How many there are who talk themselves into what they call their opinions ! When any subject is presented, they speak without reflection, according to their impressions, or party associations, or perhaps guided by chance alone, and what they have once happened to say becomes their opinion. They maintain it not seriously and earnestly, as they would if they had really formed it ; but when they hear it questioned, they become angry and ferocious with those who differ from them, because they have thought upon the subject and deliberately made up their minds. When we consider how much our judgment of moral questions, our views of what is passing round us, our feelings toward others, — indeed, how much all the interests of the mind and heart are involved in this thoughtless way of speaking, we see how important it becomes to set a guard at the door of our lips, suffering nothing to pass till we at least know what it is, — till we consider whether it will go forth for good or for evil, whether it will be a blessing or a curse to mankind.

I have presented this subject because the view

which the Apostle gives of it is very impressive to my mind. He considers a man's words as expressive of his character, — not of a part of it, but of the whole, — and he does not admit the possibility of our being amiable, kind-hearted, or faithful, if our words are passionate, censorious, or unkind. This is not the common impression ; but you can judge whether the world or inspiration, whether God or man, is most likely to err. What he says, too, of the effect of our way of speaking upon our own character and our future condition, is equally solemn ; it answers to what our Saviour had said before, — “ By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

SERMON XVII.



DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR GOD SPEAKETH ONCE, YEA, TWICE, YET MAN PERCEIVETH IT NOT.—Job xxxiii. 14.

THE sacred writers often complain that the Divine communications are disregarded when they are known to be Divine communications; while fully acknowledging the authority with which they come, men pay them no regard. But here it is said that God sometimes addresses men without their perceiving it,—not certainly from any want of clearness in the communication, but because they are wanting in reverence. They do not take heed to these things. It is only in the silence of the soul that man can listen to the Divine communications, and in the whole history of some men there is no such time of silence; there is no cool evening at the close of life's busy day.

“God speaketh once, yea, twice, but man perceiveth it not.” There are three ways in which we may believe the Deity to hold communication with his children. One is through the visible world around us; another, by direct communion with the

human spirit ; and yet another, by commissioned interpreters of his mind and will.

In the first place, let us consider the manifestation of God which is made to us in the works of nature, in which more information is conveyed to us than is commonly supposed. It is said that the visible world reminds us of its Maker. So it does. But it does more than recall to us what we knew before ; it conveys instruction which has not yet been searched out, and which gradually opens to an interested and attentive mind.

When we inquire into the history of language, used in its broadest sense as the medium of communication with other men, we very soon ascertain that there can be no direct intercourse of mind with mind. The only way that I can intimate to another what is passing in my mind is by pointing to some visible object, which shall represent to him the unseen thought. The image suggests to him the idea which I wish to convey ; and in this way, doubtless, language was originally formed. Thus, when we would describe a man of justice united with firmness, we call him "upright," — referring to the outward appearance, which naturally affords a figurative expression of those traits of character. The word "holy" is formed in the same way ; the meaning of it is *healthy*, — and the word *health* is naturally descriptive of that full, happy, and harmonious action of all within us, which religious holiness implies. In all cases of communication of thought and feeling between two human beings, there is a necessary

reference to something which is manifest to the outward sense ; and it would be found on investigation that language consists of images either naturally suggestive of certain thoughts and emotions, or appropriated to that purpose, which are brought up before us by letters or sounds differing according to the dialect of the country. To those who have not the power of speech or hearing, these images are presented through the eye ; to those who have the additional infirmity of blindness, these images are suggested by the sense of feeling and varieties of touch. Language does not require voice nor sound ; when the Lord turned and looked on Peter, the Apostle could read clearly in that calm, sad, searching eye all that words could have told him of what was passing in the Saviour's breast.

Since this is the language of nature, we might suppose that God would communicate with his children in this way ; and most certainly he does, to a far greater extent than is generally understood. We are cold and careless observers. We take notice of natural beauty and grandeur, indeed, but it is as one admires the beauty of a manuscript which he is not able to read, and does not care to read. If we would substitute religious feeling in place of mere taste and sentiment, that feeling

“ Which lifts to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And, smiling, says, — ‘ My Father made them all, ’ ”

we should enter at once into the rich and glorious fulness of the expression, — “ The heavens declare the glory of God ; the firmament showeth forth the

work of his hands. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, and their voice is not heard ; yet their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

There must be very few, who, in looking on the natural world, have not been conscious of strong impressions made upon them at times. We call them accidental, because they are made at one time and not at another. But not so ; there is no such thing as chance ; every thing must have a cause, and mere lifeless matter has no power of itself to inspire or awaken. Whence, then, do these influences come ? Whence can they come, but from the great Source of inspiration, who is at once over all, through all, and in all that he has made. When the breath of spring comes over the heart, as we see it steal over a bed of flowers lifting their golden censers and bearing their incense upward, we feel as if an influence came to us from the world of nature, when in truth it must have come from Him who made it. When we look on a red sunset cloud, floating like an island in the golden west, we are conscious of a feeling of religious repose ; we forget the cares of the world ; our hearts are softened into a tender solemnity which is not always there. So, too, in the deep night, when we look far into the dark, still heavens, and seem to come nearer to the mysteries of God and eternity through the unearthly silence of the hour, it is the Infinite Spirit who thus brings on that state of mind, in which preparation for heaven

may be made. If we could only be sensible of these truths, if, instead of merely looking at the grand and beautiful of nature, we could look through them, they would be letters on the illuminated page of the universe ; they would have a sweet voice for us when the world does not hear them ; they would teach us much that we cannot otherwise learn of that great Being whom we most need, and should most desire, to know.

We ought, then, to regard the natural world as a medium of communication, through which the Author of nature communicates those thoughts and feelings which are most essential to our improvement, and best suited to refine and exalt the soul. Whenever our spirits are in harmony with nature, whenever they welcome the impression made by the stern mountain, the boundless ocean, the calm heavens, or any of those great or lovely objects that meet the eye, then we may know that they are in the right state for moral effort, for religious devotion, for any of the higher purposes of existence ; for as surely as guilt darkens over the face of nature, and makes it impossible to enjoy it, do innocence and holiness still more awaken the heart to its influences of peace and love. And why does guilt darken it over, and why does holiness enable us to enjoy it best ? For all these things there is a reason. It is because the visible world has language which speaks to the guilty of God and eternity, which they dread, though they confess it not even to themselves ; while to the faithful it says, that He who cares for

the lily and the sparrow takes a deeper interest in them and theirs, and is constantly exerting an influence upon them to lead them to all that is good.

A second method of Divine communication is by direct action upon the spirit of man. That there should be such a communication is easy to conceive, though the manner may be difficult to understand. It cannot be proved to the satisfaction of any one who doubts it, for the same reason that we cannot demonstrate any of our sentiments and emotions. Still, this unseen communication of the spirit of God with our spirits is believed by every religious mind, with a faith as undoubting as that which any religious truth inspires. It is true, the measure of such communications cannot be ascertained, neither can they, as a general rule, be distinguished from the operations of our own minds; still, we can tell that such have been made,—as the widow of Sarepta knew that her meal and oil had been miraculously increased, though she could not distinguish that which was added from that which was there before. In fact, no religious person denies it; but we often forget the reality, or at least the importance, of truths which no one thinks of denying, so that they are to us as though we believed them not.

So far from denying this fact of communication between the Infinite Spirit and our own, we should rather extend our faith, and believe it to be common and in the usual order of Providence, and not a mysterious and unusual thing. There can be no

doubt that God is constantly exerting an influence upon his children, as the sun affects our atmosphere even when hidden behind clouds. As the sun is gently and silently exerting a mighty and resistless influence wherever his rays fall, is the Father of our spirits acting unseen, and often unfelt, on the world of men, to save them from guilt and danger, and to lead them to all that is good. The conscience speaks not of itself; it is He who speaks through it to the soul. When he who is rushing down the steep of sin is suddenly alarmed into thoughtfulness by no external warning, by no agency that he can trace, but by some internal impulse, not likely to have sprung up of itself in his depraved and passion-worn breast, he naturally believes that it was God who breathed the warning to his guilty soul. And is he not right? Nothing exists without a cause; and why should not He, who regards even the fall of the sparrow in the world without, equally interest himself in ordaining whatever passes in the world within? Should we not trace home our better sentiments and purposes to that high Source, as the fountain whence they are most likely to flow? I have not a doubt, that, when we know ourselves better, and are able to search out with deeper insight the hidden movements of our souls, we shall be aware that every friendly warning, every impulse of generous feeling, every glow of repentance, every thing which sends our thoughts upward, every aspiration to that which is pure and high, every thing which brings us into nearer communication with our

heavenly Father, is owing to his direct and constant communication with us, — to the perpetual and impartial influence which he is ever exerting to save us from this world's temptations, to make them instruments of blessing, and to make us in every respect what he desires that his children should be. It is not limited nor exclusive ; it is not given to a few ; but, like the rain and sunshine, it comes to all, — to the just and the unjust, to the guilty as well as the good.

To those who can have this faith, and see God in all things where his agency is present, the moral world becomes more deeply interesting, more sublime and beautiful, than the visible, and inspires the heart with even more eloquent praise. We can look through human nature up to the God of nature, and in all the aspects of humanity, so far as his will and not our own choice ordains them, we can see the light of his goodness and feel the inspiration of his love. Do I rejoice in the coming of spring, when it returns in beauty and strength over valley and hill ? Much more does the spring of religious life in the thoughtless and hardened speak to me of God ; for it is he who unbinds Orion so that the winter departs, and releases the sweet influences of Pleiades in the soul, so that tears of repentance flow. Do I see his power in the crimson sunset, when the day sinks gently down into eternity, and the last light seems to flow from the inner depths of heaven ? Much more do I discern him in one of those death-scenes which it is sometimes our privilege to see, — where

the departing are sustained and calmed till fear and sorrow are lost in gratitude and love. In the warm, living sympathy of every kind and generous heart, in every work of kindness which man is blessed with the power to do, in every weary trial meekly and patiently borne, in every great effort of conscientious energy, — still more, in those movements which spread from heart to heart till all burn alike with the enthusiasm which fires every great endeavour, do I see, and, with heart bowed down, acknowledge and adore, a very present God, who is nearest to the human soul when it is most obedient to his suggestions and most profoundly conscious of his intimate presence and direct communication with every humble and faithful heart.

The third way in which the Deity communicates with men is through the Scriptures, written by commissioned interpreters of his mind and will, — particularly those who have recorded the life and character of Jesus Christ. In him the Divine was blended with the human, — the infinite with the finite, — so as to present at once the perfection of Divine and human character, giving us a living image of that union which we could not otherwise understand. For there are many things which cannot be conveyed by any language of description. Try, for example, to paint in words the features and expression of a stranger, to one who has never seen him. You can set no definite image before his mind, while the rudest portrait will convey at once what the happiest forms of language would be utterly un-

able to tell. Thus it is that the living image of perfection set before us in the Gospel at once conveys to men what God is, and what man must endeavour to be.

But it may be asked, — “ Why, if God is always speaking to men through his works and the influences of his spirit, was it necessary to address them yet again? Is not the voice of nature clear enough, when it tells the glory of its God? ” The defect is not there. St. Paul says distinctly, that from the things that are made, — that is, from the wonders and glories of nature, — men might have known the power and divinity of God, might have known them if they had kept their minds open and their hearts undefiled by those passions which darken the clear vision of the soul. Doubtless it is also true, as our Saviour says, that the pure in heart can see God as he is not seen by the common eye. It was not the defect of God’s previous communications, but the faithlessness of men to their destiny, their worldliness and corruption, which darkened their spiritual vision, and made it necessary to give new light from on high. That such light was really needed, who can doubt, if he considers what the world was when the Saviour came, and what men without him are now? It is true there were good men in the world before he came; but what then? Does a light shining here and there from a solitary window remove the darkness of the night? Praise the attainments of the world before the Saviour came as much as you will, — and high attainments in arts, in phi-

losophy, and even in freedom, they certainly did reach, — the single fact, that there was no steady impulse of improvement, that, however men might be lifted up for a moment, they soon sank heavily down, proves their need of the support of a higher principle. The fact, that there was no force acting upon men or within them to produce moral reforms, to save them from prevailing sins, to make them better and bring them nearer heaven, — this single fact of the utter absence of any steady impulse of improvement in all the ancient world shows incontestably that the world could never have accomplished the purpose for which God made it, if the dayspring of Christianity had not come.

It was, as the Bible itself teaches, in concession to human sin, not on account of the want of other original means of light, that the Christian revelation was made. How well it supplies the hunger and thirst of the soul may be seen in the value which is attached to it by the spiritually disposed. Observe, it is of real wants, and not of tastes and fancies, that I speak. Those dreamy and imaginative minds, which have had little as yet to trouble and distress them, may find something more exciting elsewhere. To them it is as a lamp, unvalued in the thoughts of him that is at ease, though so welcome to the benighted stranger. To the sorrowful, to the heavy-laden, to those who are fighting a life-long battle with human woe, to those who are stripped of other blessings and whose earthly crown is fallen from their head, to those whose minds are made intensely

earnest by fear, anguish, and the presence of death, the Bible is a priceless treasure. They would not for worlds surrender it, for it speaks to them in tones of deep sympathy of that God who is the only dependence they have, and brings the glories of heaven in living brightness before their eyes. Thus the Bible, so often rejected by the vain and happy, is sure of a warm welcome wherever a suffering heart is found. When sorrow comes to the lordly mansion or the straw-built shed, when death is raging on the bleeding deck or the trampled field, when the light of life is sinking low in the chamber of the dying or the prisoner's dreary cell, — wherever man is called to deal with the stern realities of life, — he clasps the Bible with both hands to his heart till its beating is still for ever.

But it is not every one who understands how God communicates with us through the Scriptures. It is not by the letter alone. To this must be added the suggestions which they give, the trains of thought which they awaken, the active energy which they inspire, in the thoughtful mind. Reflect on some of our Saviour's words, and you are struck with their depth of wisdom ; but you see not all at once. As you ponder, their meaning seems to spread itself out before you ; it continually unfolds itself in new aspects and relations, showing how truly it was likened to a small seed containing all the parts and proportions of the tree which is to lift itself to the skies and give shade to many generations. It is by appealing to that which is within, by quickening the

spiritual powers into life and action, by drawing out all the resources of the soul, and making it earnestly attentive to the teaching of nature and God's spirit, that the Bible fulfils its highest function in the upright and trusting heart. The direct information which the words convey to us, vast as it is, seems of little worth compared to this quickening and life-giving power. This is their highest virtue and praise, — which our Saviour himself alluded to when he said, — “The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”

SERMON XVIII.



THE APOSTLES.

YE WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED ME, IN THE REGENERATION, WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL SIT IN THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY, YE ALSO SHALL SIT UPON TWELVE THRONES, JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. — Matthew xix. 28.

By “the regeneration” is undoubtedly meant the time when the religion of Jesus shall have produced its effect in the world, making all things new, and in many respects reversing the moral judgments and feelings of men. When a single heart is regenerated, it sees all things, and particularly character, the most important of all things, differently from what it ever saw them before. And so the world, when it becomes Christian, shall despise much that it now admires, and venerate some things which it now holds in light esteem.

The word “judging” is used in a peculiar Hebrew sense. It was applied by the Hebrews, not only to the administration of justice, but to all who held high civil station. Sometimes it was also used to describe that sort of preëminence which powerful character gives. Thus we find a time in their an-

cient history when a woman "judged" Israel,—nothing more being meant by it, we may presume, than that her talent and energy inspired such confidence that all looked up to her for direction. Such I take to be the meaning here; when the world becomes Christian, as we know from the prophets that it will, the names of the Apostles shall stand highest among the sons of light, and be spoken with deeper reverence than any other names inspire.

It is quite too common among Christians of all sects, particularly in their comments on Scripture, to speak of the Apostles in a tone very different from this,—to speak of them in an apologizing way, as if they were originally narrow-minded men, rather inferior men, who were nothing without their inspiration; as if they were chosen on account of their unfitness, that the power of God might be exalted through the weakness of the instruments it employed. But this is not the correct view of the subject. They were undoubtedly chosen because they were eminently suited to their great office; not by reason of graces and accomplishments, but because they possessed such minds and hearts as are always called to the front when there is any great work to be done. Jesus Christ knew what was in man, and it was because he saw that there was much in them, because he saw in them the solid rock of character, on which, so far as the world was concerned, his religion might be built, that he made them the associates of his pilgrimage, and, when he himself ascended, intrusted the Gospel to their hands.

The Apostles were, it is true, uninstructed men ; not because knowledge is not a good thing, but because the learning of that day was not of a sort that enlightened and enlarged the mind. Take its researches in physical science : its astronomy placed the earth in the centre of the solar system. What practical benefit in the way of navigation, what correctness in measures of time, could there be, when there was such a foundation of error on which to build ? Or look into the opinions of learned men on the subject of morals : when one set of sages recommended stoical insensibility, and another epicurean selfishness, as the basis of character, what good could it have done to a Christian apostle to have had those doctrines at his tongue's end ? To state the question more strongly, how was it possible for a man *to be* a Christian apostle without first divesting his mind of such prejudices. If the Apostles were ignorant of such learning, it was because ignorance was an advantage and a blessing. Such ignorance implied, not that they were narrow-minded, but only that their minds were exempt from the delusions by which many others were bound.

All that has been said of the prejudice and narrow-mindedness of the Apostles has been founded on their supposed expectation that their Master would establish a temporal kingdom. Perhaps they had this impression ; it was very natural that they should have it. They had been used to think of power over men, and it would have been strange if, never having seen or heard any thing of the kind,

they should have understood at once how the word "kingdom" could be applied to power within the hearts of men. It is very possible that they did not fully comprehend all that he meant to teach on this subject, and it is very doubtful if Christians fully comprehend it now.

Is it certain, however, that they did expect a temporal kingdom, in the sense that is commonly supposed? Their language implied an expectation that their Master would live and reign in the world. But do we not too much restrict the meaning of these words? The thief who was dying upon the cross said, — "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Now if he had said this while living, you would take it for granted that it referred to a temporal kingdom, such as that of ordinary kings. But as he said it when *dying*, — when just about to breathe his last, — what could he hope for from ordinary kings? Suppose that an ordinary kingdom should be established after he was dead, what good would it do to him? You see at once that he could have no such meaning. He evidently thought of something spiritual; he was journeying to the land of souls, and he thought and spoke of a sovereign who could serve and bless the soul. And so I believe that the Apostles, when they used such language, though they may not have comprehended all the times and circumstances of our Saviour's kingdom, did comprehend, nevertheless, what was of infinitely greater importance, — its nature and spirit.

Having touched on some of the chief reasons for

misapprehending the Apostles, I will now set before you their claims upon our reverence.

In the first place, I would ask you to consider the manner in which they followed Jesus Christ, and see if it was not evidence of great energy and decision of mind, as well as great generosity of feeling. The world has long admired the promptness of a celebrated traveller. When called upon for the first time to undertake a distant and dangerous adventure, and asked when he would set out, he replied, — “To-morrow morning.” But the disciples of Jesus did not even wait for the rising of another sun. They had heard of him as the Messiah; he utters those memorable words, “Follow me,” upon which the historian records no doubt, no hesitation; he simply says, — “And they left all, rose up, and followed him.” Now when we consider that the homes of these men, however humble, were homes to them, that their labor in the fishing-boats was their only resource for subsistence, that their inexperience of the world must have made it a formidable thing to expose themselves to its frowns and terrors, and that there was nothing in our Saviour’s appearance or circumstances from which they could possibly have hoped earthly gain, — if we keep these things before us, we shall see that no ordinary men could have done as they did. If Abraham has been called the “father of the faithful” because he went forth into the wilderness at the call of God, not knowing whither he went, a greater honor belongs to them. I can explain their conduct in no other way than by ascrib-

ing it to a sense of duty. It was not till long after that one of them said to Jesus, — “Lo! we have left all and followed thee. What, therefore, shall we have?” Had they been led out by considerations of this kind, they would have asked the question before; but it must be remembered that they left all and followed him without asking this or any other question. They were evidently determined by moral principle; or, at any rate, by faith, — faith in the unseen and future, leading them to forget and forsake the visible and present, which has always been accounted one of the most infallible marks of a large and generous mind.

The second proof of greatness and far-discernment which the Apostles gave was in their comprehension of the spirit of their Master, — the very thing which some men will not allow that they understood. In its full extent and in all its excellences they possibly did not understand it; — possibly men never will embrace its full glory in their dim conceptions, till they reach a more advanced state of existence. But that they comprehended it well, and better than other men, it seems to me impossible to deny. The image of Jesus, as presented to us in the Scriptures, — it is lifelike, animated, more divine than human, so that even infidels acknowledge its power and loveliness, and say that it touches their hearts. Now by whose hands was it drawn? By the hands of these very men. But is it possible that, without entering into the spirit of the original, they could thus have caught its expression, since its like was nowhere to be found on earth?

But the manner in which they have presented the character of Jesus Christ is not the only, nor the best, proof that they understood it. If I wish for evidence to show whether a man understands our Saviour's life or not, I look at *his own*. I do not pay much regard to his words, because there is a more expressive language, — I look at his life, and if I find it unlike that model which he professes to admire, I do not believe he understands the principles and elements, I am sure he does not understand the value, of that great image of goodness and of God. I look to the Apostles, and I find them in full sympathy with their Master; I find them walking in the same path which he trod with such a glorious march; I find them resembling him in their self-denial, their hopeful exertion, their labor of love for man. They have caught his spirit of benevolence; they have kindled from the same fire their own bright flames of devotion; they sound the trumpet of glad tidings with a power which wakes the dead in sin. Seeing all this, I ask, Where are those who ever understood the Saviour so well as the men who followed directly in his steps, and were changed into the same image by the daily effort and sacrifice of their lives?

This leads me, in the third place, to speak of the personal character of the Apostles. And here let me say, that it is not every one who is able to estimate character. There are those, who, when a great character stands out before them, are much more struck with its peculiarities and blemishes than with

the strength and majesty of the whole. Our Pilgrim Fathers, for example, were men of the very first order; but if any of them were to come back to life and dwell among us, small minds would be struck with the small things about them. The young would laugh at their unfashionable dress; men of the world would ridicule their antique and peculiar manners; cultivated persons would despise their bigotry and superstition; it would be only one in a hundred, — only those few who had sympathy with noble thoughts, energies, and feelings, — who would understand their lofty cast of sentiment, their sublime and generous daring, and that inflexible regard for conscience which amply entitled them to the name of great and good. And so in the Apostles there were some things, which, because little things are great to little men, prevent many from giving them the reverence which is their due. Thus in Peter and John, the two foremost of their number, there were small veins of infirmity running through their characters, like wood-work in a fire-proof building; after these were burnt out by the fiery trials through which they passed, they became firm and strong as the living rock. But these infirmities, though no essential parts of the character of either, so attract the attention of shallow observers, as to make them insensible to the grand and solemn display of energy, courage, and intense devotion, which was seen in all their history, shining brighter and brighter to the last.

The day for the right estimate of these, or any

other exalted characters, is not yet fully come. It is true, our Saviour revealed that usefulness is the measure of greatness, and when his religion prevails, the world's reverence will be paid to the useful, benevolent, and conscientious alone, and denied to many to whom it is rendered now. The time for exclusive admiration of military glory—that delusion which possessed the world for ages—is passing by. A like enthusiasm is now inspired by the orator, poet, or statesman, by those who stand foremost in intellectual power. Hereafter it will be understood that the understanding can never be truly enlightened for the practical and most important ends of existence, without cultivating at the same time the moral, social, and religious affections, each in its place and order, keeping each in appropriate and efficient action, and blending all into a beautiful and consistent whole. And when this day arrives, when the kingdom of Christianity has come, when character is seen to be the one thing needful to the greatness, elevation, and happiness of man, then shall the first heralds of Christianity sit on thrones and judge the world.

Again, therefore, would I object to that tone in sacred criticism common to all sects, which gives the impression, that, because the Apostles were uninstructed, they were unenlightened and narrow-minded. Scholars, wholly taken up with their want of human learning, though an advantage in the service to which they were called, are almost blind to their frequent manifestation of real and native greatness

of soul. They forget that a man may be entirely ignorant of letters, and yet have his mind enlarged and liberalized by familiarity with noble thoughts and actions. No; the men whom Jesus loved, who lived and acted with him while he was upon earth, and to whom he intrusted that faith which was the world's last hope, were not ordinary men. They had their infirmities, no doubt, and none so ready to acknowledge them as they; but till we can find those who in the face of danger are as ready to arise and follow their Master, till we can find those who enter with sympathy as deep as theirs into his divine spirit, till we can find those who have done a thousandth part of what they did in the cause of humanity, let us reverence their names, and so prove that we are capable of appreciating what is truly great.

SERMON XIX.*



THE ETHICS OF WAR.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL
TOWARDS MEN. — Luke ii. 14.

It is not long since we were deeply excited with the fate of a vessel, which left her harbour at midnight, freighted with those who were hastening to their friends; to spend with them the annual festival of gratitude and joy. She was soon struck and disabled by the storm, — and while we were under our sheltering roofs, with luxurious tables spread before us, they passed their Day of Thanksgiving without food or fire, — fasting and in prayer; for they knew that no human help could reach them, and they were only waiting to die. Behold at eventide trouble, and before the morning she was no more. The next day's dawning showed a wreck, — broken and weltering on the shore, with no sign of life near

* His last Christmas discourse, 1846, soon after the wreck of the steamer *Atlantic* in the Sound. The substance of it was published as a review in the *Christian Examiner* for March, 1847. As it is there mixed up with personal allusions, which take from the gravity of the argument, we have thought best to give it in its original form.

it save the sound of a bell which rose above the shattered ruin, and which the winds and waves were sadly tolling, as if in penitence for what they had done. Our hearts were heavy and our eyes were dim when we thought of the friends of those wayfarers listening for their returning steps, and when they did return, cold, pale, and borne by the hands of others, compelled to welcome, not the living, but the dead.

Compare with this the feeling with which we hear of battles fought and many brave men fallen, — fallen, not like the sufferers of the Atlantic, by the act of God, which is always mercy, but their lives gushing out in blood, shed by the unmerciful passions of men. The tidings of the former awakened deep sadness, even in hearts which were not wounded by the blow; the news of the latter are received with transport, with the sound of bells and the roar of cannon, — not minute guns and funeral knells, but with every demonstration of rapturous joy, our cities blazing with illuminations, the wine-cup sparkling on festive tables, thanks offered up in churches; — and all for what? Because, with great loss of life on our own side, we have sent a larger measure of agony to the nation with which we are at war.

When I consider what anniversary has brought us here this night, and when I see these graceful decorations, — fit emblem of that religion which keeps its freshness and verdure when all is desolate around, — I cannot but remember that its purpose was to es-

tablish "peace on earth." And yet how little has been accomplished! How much of the earth is yet trodden down by armies, shaken with artillery, and drenched with human blood!

Whence is it that men are so blind to their own welfare, and so insensible to the counsels and warnings of the great Teacher? It is owing to the influences which the practice of war has exerted on the common-sense and moral judgments of mankind.

Let us now analyze these influences. Let us see what they are, and how it is that they have the effect to mislead and harden the heart. I shall take no extreme ground on the subject, though I confess I do not see how followers of the Prince of Peace can have much to do with arms. I shall not deal in political allusions. What I say has reference to all wars, — even to just ones, if any such wars can be. I would simply trace out and set before you those traditional influences which the practice of war has made so general and so mighty in what is called, one would think by way of derision, the Christian world.

The first evidence of the power of these influences which war has been exerting is seen in the manner in which it reverses all human relations. The ancient prophet asked, — "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" It was a chief object of all God's revelations to teach us that we are all brethren, — bound together by ties of obligation which can never be undone. But the human heart is ingenious in its evasions of duty, and

when the founder of the Hebrew law had proclaimed the glorious precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," the bloody hand of war wrote over against it, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy," on the same sacred page. The two charges went forth like twins, though one was from above, the other from below, — a sunbeam from heaven side by side with a red gleam from hell; and when the Saviour came, the Jews did not know, till he told them, that the commands had not both proceeded from the same Source of light. The same thing has been done over again. Our Saviour, in order to prevent it, gave the earnest and repeated charge, "Love your enemies," and over against this the bloody hand of war has written, — not indeed in the Bible, but in the hearts of those who read it, — "Kill your enemies"; and they think they can practise upon both, — they do not see any inconsistency between the two. They think they can love them and kill them at the same time; or at any rate, they *will* kill them whenever they are so disposed, and all the while they see no reason why they should not use the prayer, — "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Well it is for them that God does not take them at their word. For my part, I shall not suffer war to expound the Scriptures for me. I deny that any human power can reverse the relations which God ordains. If he says that every man is my brother, no human government shall make him otherwise to me.

But to illustrate the injurious effect of the influen-

ces in question, it may be well to look more closely into the subject, and to consider what are called the *rights* of war. Can there be one moral law for men of peace, and another for those who take up arms? Is there one Gospel for the tent, and another for the tabernacle? Do men by enlisting in an army cease to be under the authority of God? So it should seem, according to the martial theory of morals; and this, too, though it is admitted, at the same time, that the relations of nations to each other are just like those of individuals. One people are bound to another people just as two men are bound to each other. But if I declare war on my neighbour, will that suspend all other obligations, and give me a right to take his life? It seems ridiculous to ask such a question. Yet it is nothing on earth but a simple declaration of war, of one nation against another, which, in the analogous relation of states, is supposed to give the men of each nation a right to shed each other's blood; and they do it with perfect unconcern. In peace, it is thought a serious thing to take life; but in war, every one feels perfectly free to do it, and never troubles himself to know how he shall answer for it; never asks whether it is right or wrong. Whereas the Almighty looks in every thing only at the right and the wrong. No rich and splendid associations can mislead his judgment or dim his all-seeing eye. To him the meeting of armies in battle's magnificently stern array is insignificant as the scuffle round a peddler's wheel; the advantage taken by the strong nation

in the battle-field is no more respectable than the cheating of the knave with his pack of cards, save that he sets the seal of his deepest damnation on those who are most insensible to the wrongs and sorrows of their fellow-men.

It is edifying to see how these "rights of war," as they are called, are made to vary with circumstances. A right is something fixed and unchangeable; but these martial rights are extended so as to cover any thing and every thing which it pleases a powerful nation to do. Does any man in private life believe that his having declared war on a neighbour and slain his children makes him heir at law to that neighbour's estate? But such is precisely the ground taken by Christian nations. England, having opened the market in China for her opium, or, as they phrase it, having cleared the way for Christianity to enter that empire, is now engaged in digging a bloody grave for the poor New-Zealanders, and pouring cannon-balls into living masses of the brave and manly Sikhs, who cannot comprehend how they have lost all right to their own country. Then, too, we see his most Christian Majesty of France asserting the same divine right to the little island of Tahiti, which he happens to want for a naval station, and making the same demand in Northern Africa, expounding to the Arabs that they lost all right to their native country when he declared them enemies of France. We see Russia and Austria, too, in defiance of the most positive engagements, swallowing up the republic of Cracow,

the last remnant of Poland, whose fate had brought lasting infamy upon them before. The statesmen of these great nations, lest peradventure they should be mistaken for ungodly picaroons, are careful to adorn every public document with the Holy Name, calling Him to bear witness to their conscientiousness, and showing how every step conforms to the right;—not to the right as the moral sense expounds it, but to the right as it is interpreted by the brazen voice of war. And who can testify against them? Who can say, “Why do ye so?” There is not a land on the face of the earth which does not maintain, in the face of common sense, common humanity, and common honesty, that one nation acquires a right to the possessions of another nation by the cheap and easy process of declaring war.

This matter of right would be soon disposed of if one nation had to judge in the case of another; it is only when its own imaginary interest is concerned that it shuts the dark-lantern of its conscience, and suffers no light to shine. Where any nation exercises this right which they all claim when they think proper, the rest set up a hue and cry, and see that the right is wrong. Thus England weeps aloud for American slavery, and flames up at the thought of French aggressions, without one misgiving as to any thing wrong in her own. France, too, bears angry witness against what the despotic sovereigns have just done in Poland, when, in fact, they have but paid her the respect of following her own example. Reflect also on one thing.

To every right there is a corresponding duty. Wherever one nation has a right to plunder another people, it must be the duty of that people to submit to it as an act of God. Instead of sending armies, at least before sending armies, how much better it would be to send missionaries to the victim people, to endeavour to bring them to a sense of duty ! Let them take the Scriptures with them ; let them show the benighted race that might makes right. Let them see how soon such doctrine would reach the conscience and subdue the resisting heart. Perhaps in the effort to establish such a mission, if they could not persuade the foreign people, they might get some information for themselves. It would not be long before they would grievously suspect that the Christian civilization, in which they pride themselves, is but a sanctified barbarism after all, which kills, burns, and destroys on week-days, and on the Sabbath talks of forbearance, righteousness, and judgment to come, without being aware of any inconsistency between the words and the deeds.

But enough of the rights of war ; it is sufficiently evident that they are only so many wrongs, — grievous, impudent, intolerable wrongs. Let us look next at some of the *duties* of war, which are of the same parentage and bear the marks of the same ill-favored race. Can any being in his senses persuade himself that it is ever his duty to mangle, plunder, and destroy his brother-man ? What duty can require it ? There is no obligation in Christianity, nor in natural religion, which enjoins this

work upon him. What, then, is it which binds him to do what all religion so expressly forbids? The only answer is, — his duty to his country. Well, no doubt it is a duty to serve one's country. But is this the way to do it? Is there no better way of doing it? Is it a real service to his own country to float another with blood? The real interests of all nations are precisely the same; no nation ever prospers by injury to another. No one would ever have dreamed that such a thing is possible, were it not for the hollow delusion of glory, falling, like a drop-curtain, to cover the ghastly scenes of violence, distress, licentiousness, and all corruption, which even a successful war sends home. Whoever really desires to serve his country will find that the service it needs most is that of educating the minds which lie fallow, of cherishing the moral sentiment which is ready to perish, of laying again the foundations of religious principle, which is the only true strength and safeguard of any country. Or if his view does not rise quite so high, let him serve it by aiding its industry, by taking part in its public works, by helping to plan and execute those physical improvements which minister to the comfort, the intelligence, and general welfare of mankind. In the army of every nation there is a vast amount of science, talent, and energy, which, if the world could be at peace for half a century, would all be wanted, and might all be nobly and happily engaged in services like this. In confirmation of this, let me add what was once said to me by a manufacturer of gunpowder. I told

him, that, if Christianity should succeed in bringing peace on earth, it would spoil his business. "Not at all," he replied; "it would be the best thing that could happen; when industry prospers and public improvements are made, the demand for powder is far better than in times of war."

When men talk thus of their duty to their country, does it never occur to them that they have duties to the men of other countries? They say it is only their enemies whom they kill. Their enemies? why, those are the very persons whom Jesus says they must love. When they call them "enemies," they bring the case under the strictest interpretation of the Christian law. And can they think that they are loving them when they destroy their lives, plunder their property, violate their daughters, and trample down their homes with the blood-shod march of war? Is this Christian affection? Is this Christian duty? One thing is so clear that no one can deny it. It is this. If it is a duty to do these things, it is a sin to refuse to do them. But if any man refuses to shoot others in such warfare, do we call him a sinner? do we exhort him to repent and flee from the wrath to come? I have seen many death-beds, but I never heard a dying man lamenting that he had killed so few. If any have really persuaded themselves of the existence of this duty, I think I may safely promise, that, if they should be remiss in the discharge of it, no great remorse for that neglect will embitter their closing hours.

Another of these perversions of the true idea of

duty is seen in the language of statesmen in Christian nations on the subject of war. They often labor to show that a war is unjust and dishonorable ; they charge the ministry who have plunged their country into it with falsehood to their trust ; but as soon as they take their places in the public councils, where their influence and action can be felt, you hear them say, — what ? Why, surely, — “ Bring this war to a close. Let not another sun go down upon it.” No such thing. You are amazed to hear them say it must be maintained ! Maintained ? and for what earthly reason ? Why, for this reason only, because it is begun. Because it is begun we must carry it through. It was wicked to begin it, but now public virtue requires that we should carry it through. So, then, if a king has told a lie, the people must stand to it, and lie it through. If our children have begun a shameful quarrel, we must not let them be separated ; it is their duty to fight it out. On the contrary, I confess I should have thought, that, if one nation had injured another, it could not stop too soon. If this doctrine of its being dishonorable to commence a work of sin, and then because it is commenced dishonorable to put a stop to it, is a Christian doctrine, it must be that I have not read my Bible aright.

But more. According to these morals of war, a Christian statesman, though as a man he deplors and denounces the war in which his country is engaged, may vote for it in council, or, what is the same thing, for supplies to carry it on. Though

as a man he declares it to be a sorrow and shame to his country, — though he speaks in reprobation of the conduct of the ministry who have brought it on, — still he furnishes the means to sustain it. This is often done in Christian nations; and when the statesman stands thus, lifting up one hand in pious horror, and lifting up the other to vote for supplies, people are not struck with any inconsistency between the word and the deed. Now this may be all right and proper; but no light on the subject of morals which I have ever attained can make it seem right and proper to me. Certainly, no one should offer physical resistance or factious opposition to his government; but without doing any thing of the kind, he may and ought to use all his influence to a right discernment of the subject. He should treat the administration with respect, certainly, but not submit his conscience to theirs. And as for being instrumental in any capacity, in any way, to sustain measures which he considers wrong, — it may be allowed in the Hindoo Shaster, or the Scandinavian Edda, but it is not so written in the Christian Scriptures, if I have read them aright.

Another of the fantastic duties enjoined on men by the ethics of the sword is, that under all circumstances they are to rejoice in the success of their country's arms. Can it be so? Is patriotism ever at war with the moral sense? Must conscience be sacrificed to one's country? If our children go into a neighbour's premises, rifle his property, burn his dwelling, and take possession of his estate, must we

congratulate ourselves on such doings because the crime is committed in the family? Is it unnatural not to rejoice? And yet when things substantially the same are done by armies, if any one cannot rejoice in what is called the success of his country's arms, he loses his influence; he ceases to be a patriot; he is suspected and denounced as a traitor. This point of morals it is not so easy to understand. Must not the true heart take sides with the right? Do not generous sympathies always lean to the injured party? Most certainly no one can rejoice in any misfortune happening to the armies of his country. But if they are doing wrong, the greatest blessing that can befall them is to return; if the service in which they are engaged is indefensible, the sooner they abandon it the better. Those who think the service right may rejoice when it prospers; but why it should be exacted of those who think it wrong, it is not easy to tell.

Besides, when it is said that men must rejoice in the victories of their country, it may be well to consider what a victory is. The gain is, that our troops have driven back the enemy from a barren and worthless plain, sunk some of their ships with the seamen in them, or taken some town which is of no use to any but the owners. In these advantages there is no great gain to any of us. Neither the nation, nor any one in the nation, is better or happier after them than he was before. There is no accession of comfort, improvement, or prosperity to rejoice in. The cause of rejoicing is not to be esti-

mated in any such way ; you must find how much there is to delight in by counting the numbers of the dead. But is it a pleasant thing that so many of our brave countrymen have fallen ? O, no ! For them we must sing dirges and funeral anthems, in all the solemnity of woe. Well, then, while we are mourning thus for our own dead, must we rejoice in the destruction of our adversaries ? If it is a duty, how is it to be done ? That they were cut off from the living, that widows and orphans are weeping for them in their desolate homes, that they were thus hurried into an immortal state with but little or no preparation, — all this does not fill my heart with joy. I cannot rejoice in death and sorrow. I cannot exult in violence and blood. Such rejoicing I must leave to bells and cannon, which care not what language they are made to speak. To me all victories must be mournful things ; I cannot look back with triumph upon a single one in all human history, save the great victory which the Saviour gained over death and the grave ; in which, be it remembered, he shed no blood but his own.

A still more remarkable perversion of the true idea of duty is seen in the military profession, which certainly embraces an immense amount of ability and science. The maxim is, and has been for ages, that it is the duty of a soldier to obey his orders, whatever they may be. In other words, it may be his duty to engage in services which he condemns and abhors in his heart. In plain English, his duty requires of him what he cannot conscientiously do,

and he is bound in honor to take part in what he thinks a dishonorable transaction; so that conscience stands in direct opposition to duty, and baseness becomes a point of honor. One would say that his course in such circumstances is clear enough; it is to quit the service. Others see the matter differently; they have no scruples; he must leave such work to them. He has no right to make a machine of himself; he has a conscience of his own; as a man of spirit and independence, he ought to resent the thought of being made a pliant tool in the hands of others. But unfortunately he is not encouraged by public opinion thus to consult his self-respect and follow his own sense of right; should he do so, he will be called a poltroon; should he throw up his commission, he will be suspected and dishonored as a coward. And it requires more nerve, more determination of purpose, more of every thing which makes a hero, to face this undeserved reproach, than to march up to the heaviest battery that ever blazed in the front of war.

I was never so much impressed with the sad effect of substituting this ethical moonshine in the place of duty, as in reading the account of the last hours of a gallant officer of our army, — a man amiable in character and greatly beloved by all. The friend who was with him says that he talked with deep interest, not of that eternity into which he was sinking fast, — not of the Saviour who died for him, and the judgment where he was soon to stand, — but of the effect of his artillery, the numbers which it

swept down, and of what he would do should he ever join the battle again. In that awful hour when the death-shadow was darkening round him, he was sustained by the thought that he had done his duty as a soldier, though in doing so he had trampled down every other duty. Such was his preparation to meet his God. On such a departure one can think only with sorrowful concern. But that concern deepens into disgust, when we think of a man of another stamp; — Nelson, for example, that monarch of the bleeding deck, living for years in shameless adultery, making himself an assassin for the sake of his vile paramour, and dying at last without one feeling of penitence or kindness for the wife and orphans whom he had deserted, but with a like expression on his lips, — “Thank God! I have done my duty.” Ay! with a weight of guilt heavy enough to sink all the fleets of England, he dies in the persuasion that his duties are done. May God have mercy on the souls of those who die in such delusion! There shall be a fearful waking when the light of eternity flashes in upon the slumbering heart.

The name I have just mentioned reminds me of another of the injurious influences of war. It creates a false *standard of character*, fixing admiration on unworthy objects, and transferring to plunderers and destroyers that enthusiasm which ought to be reserved for benefactors of mankind. Among our Saviour’s wondrous disclosures was that memorable truth, so little dreamed of in his time, so little com-

prehended now, that usefulness is the measure of greatness ; that whoever renders the greatest amount of beneficent service to others is the greatest man, whether so regarded by the world or not. How directly opposed to this the public sentiment generated by war ! Neither moral nor intellectual eminence, no high gift or accomplishment, is required in those whom the multitude delight to honor. They worship physical courage, — often mere toughness and insensibility of nerve, — which is the meanest of all forms of courage.

Really, in this respect the world has been going backward ; the shadow on the dial of history indicates a descending sun. Why, even the chivalry of the Dark Ages, wild and romantic as it was, is now invested with a sort of Gothic grandeur, by reason of the high and generous feelings which it inspired. It demanded courage, indeed, but it demanded it as a thing of course, — as a trait which it was disgraceful not to have, but not an honor to have. At the same time, it set high above it the duties of humanity, — requiring noble and kind affections, gentle and graceful courtesy, an open and manly bearing to all, and, more than this, a desire to raise the fallen, to protect the helpless, and to redress all human wrongs. In our days a man may pass for a hero, on the strength of talent and energy only, without a single virtue to redeem a thousand crimes. Christianity does not see these things as men do, and Christianity represents to us God's judgment on what is passing in the world below. In the eye of our religion, that

poor Mexican woman of Monterey, who went forth when the battle was raging to give water and food to the fallen of both armies and bind up their bleeding wounds, and was there unmercifully shot down as giving aid and comfort to the enemy, was a being more exalted than any chief of the brave army who covered themselves with glory there. Her glory is also incorruptible, undefiled with blood, and shall never fade away.

If we want an instance of this perversion of right feeling on the subject of character, we find it in the enthusiasm which the memory of Napoleon awakens. When he came forward, his country was resisting her invaders, and when he fought the battles of the free, and rolled back the tide of war upon those invaders, all hearts cheered him onward, admiring his bold energy, and wishing success to his arms. But afterwards, when it became clear that he had not the heart to be a patriot, that he was acting the part of a poor and selfish usurper, they could hardly believe that he was no longer the same, and he was still admired and followed by all but the La Fayettees of France. His talent and force of character were wonderful indeed ; the grasp of mind which he showed in discussing the laws of his empire give a most exalted impression of his ability ; but his heart, if he had one, was as barren of all generous affections as December is barren of flowers. His mother said of him, that it was as cold and hard as one of his own cannon-balls. In his younger days of comparative obscurity, he mar-

ried a fine-spirited and queenly woman, who consented to share his fortunes, which were then beneath her own. Afterwards, with the cold selfishness of an evil spirit, in order to ally himself with a royal house, he put her away and left her to die in solitude of a broken heart. So unsympathizing was his nature, that he required his brothers to do the same ; but they happened to have human affections, and chose rather to incur his deep displeasure by resisting his will. Such was the man for whom the world went mad with enthusiasm ; even now there is no bound to the rapture of some of his admirers. The glory of Washington seems to them cold and formal beside this idol of stone. And yet the fame of Washington shall increase, while that of Napoleon shall decrease ; it shall die out like the light of a bonfire, sinking in darkness and ashes, while that of our great countryman shall be, to use the beautiful image of inspiration, as the rising light "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

While the practice of war has thus injuriously affected the moral feeling of individuals, it has done still more to deprave and injure nations, by destroying their good understanding with each other, by making them enemies, though the God of nature had made them friends. As every jurist will tell you, public law assumes as a maxim that nations are enemies to each other. This is doubtless the fact, but it seems strange that it should be the foundation of public law. Our own United States, bound together under a federal government, are taken out

of this vicious position ; but if ever madness and folly should unloose the bands which hold them together, they would at once relapse into the old system. They would become bitter enemies, and so far from any portion of them gaining in prosperity by the separation, there would follow a succession of border wars, as cruel and deadly as the world ever saw. Out of this state of things in Europe has grown what is called "the balance of power." We ask for the balance of common sense and common humanity ; we hear of nothing but the balance of power, — an imaginary restraint upon ambitious and grasping nations, which has been talked about, and written about, but never really existed. Thus England in the last hundred years, and most of all in the wars which followed the French Revolution, has spent lives without number, and run into a debt of a thousand millions, under the influence of this unreal fiction, — maintaining the balance of power, as she calls it ; and now her suffering multitudes, her grinding taxation, and the depths of poverty and distress which her outside magnificence but thinly covers, show what she has gained by her gigantic and exhausting labors. There is hardly a British statesman now, except some lingering remnant of the past, who does not lament this fatal policy of Pitt, — "the pilot that weathered the storm." While they admire his stern disinterestedness and iron strength of heart, they see that, misled by this vision of the balance of power, he had wellnigh ruined the nation. Sadly was he deceived in his

expectation of thus establishing the prosperity of his country. Had he cherished her inward strength, and unfolded her rich resources, the Ocean Queen would have ruled a happier dominion and worn a brighter crown.

Does not every one know how much more may be done by quiet attention to one's own prosperity, than by threatening or striving with others? I do not believe in thorough non-resistance. I believe that there are circumstances in which we should not submit to violent power; but several things seem to show that almost the only thing necessary to national prosperity is peace. The king of France, who is perhaps the ablest statesman of the day, has held back his people from the wars into which they would fain be plunging, in order to favor the industry, bring out the resources, and in that way establish the strength and prosperity, of his country. And mark the result. While in Tahiti a handful of natives resist with success his mean attempt to rob them of their little island, and while in Algiers, where he is bent on the same warlike plunder, a small Arab chieftain of the desert laughs his marshals to scorn, in Europe, where peace is his watchword, he carries all before him; thus affording a marvellous illustration of the truth, that war is weakness, and peace is power.

What a lesson on this subject does history teach! What a comment on the divine wisdom of the Saviour's saying,—“They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.” In the case of individuals

it is apt to be so ; it is always so with nations. If they are built up by violence and oppression, the foundations laid in blood sooner or later give way, and their false glory is trodden into the dust. Remember the awful vision in which the prophet represents the Assyrian conqueror, then in the height of his power, as going down to the regions of the dead. The kings of the earth, who are lying there in glory, every one with his sword under his head, rise up from their slumber to meet him at his coming ; they bend their sullen brows on him in triumph, saying, — “ Art thou also become as weak as we ? ” And well does the Christian poet represent the oppressive nation as sinking in a similar doom, as triumphed over by the nations which it oppressed.

“ Art thou too fallen, oppressor ? Do we see
 The robber and the murderer weak as we ?
 Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
 Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
 Thy pomp is in the grave, — thy glory laid
 Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
 Is this the god, the thunder of whose hand
 Rolled over all our desolated land,
 Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
 And made the nations tremble at his frown ?
 The sword shall light upon his boasted powers,
 And waste them, as his sword has wasted ours.”

But I am again reminded of the light and blessing which this anniversary calls us to remember. Lift up your eyes, and see, high above the joys and sorrows of the passing day, high above the con-

flicts of armies, and the uprising and fall of nations, those words, — those prophetic words, — “Peace on earth.” The Saviour has said it, and he will make it good. His influence is gaining in the world; though the tongues of a people may cry out for war, the deep heart of a people laments it; there is no such interest in it as there was but a quarter of a century ago; men are beginning to feel that in war there can be no real victory, — all is loss and sorrow on every side. Though they may not disband their armies nor give up all military preparation, they will not rally cordially except to the trumpet which gives the certain sound of defensive war. To fight when they must, not when they will, is growing to be their settled purpose; and if they think they must, they will go about the work with serious feeling, with any thing but exulting joy. When war is thus regarded, peace, sure and unbroken peace, is not distant. The morning of the Saviour’s day is drawing nigh. Its light burns already on the mountain, the spires of churches have caught the early beams; they soon will kindle with far-spreading brightness, and illuminate the whole earth. “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

SERMON XX.



WE KNOW IN PART.

WE KNOW IN PART, AND WE PROPHECY IN PART. —
1 Corinthians xiii. 9.

To “prophesy” means, in this place, to make known religious truth to men; and the Apostles, it seems, could do this but imperfectly, because they knew but in part. Even their inspiration did not give them a view of all the great subject which was intrusted to their hands. They could teach all that God thought proper to reveal, all that man needed to know. But the full extent, the utmost bounds, of Christian truth are not to be traced and measured by the human eye. It fills the mind of the religious child; it fills the soul of the adoring angel. All, save the Author and Finisher of our faith, know but in part.

Indeed, our knowledge of every thing is imperfect, — even of the things that stand nearest to the eye. The illuminated page of nature, on which God has written so many disclosures of his power and love, how small a portion of its wonders is man yet able to understand! Look at the tree which rises before

your window, and shields you from the summer sun. You are familiar with its form, its foliage, and its flowers. But can you tell what is going on within it? Can you explain how it is, that, when the winds of autumn are singing their vesper hymn, the tree listens to their warning,—how it forms and folds its leaves and blossoms, to have them ready for another spring? Can you tell by what prophetic anticipation it casts off its yellow drapery, contracts its fibres, collects its might, and stands like a gallant vessel with its sails taken in and all made fast in preparation for the storm? Can you tell how it is that the small bird that found shelter in it the moment the red leaf appeared took its flight to regions where the flowers do not wither nor the verdure fade? No. In the history of the simplest things in the vegetable and animal world, there is much that man does not and cannot understand.

Come, then, to our knowledge of human nature itself, — how imperfect it is! how many new pages are opened from time to time which fill us with wonder and dismay! Perhaps you are able to tell how men will feel and act under the common circumstances of life; but who can tell the measure of the soul, or how deep and far man's powers and passions, in their wild energy, can go? We see the evil spark of anger kindling into a flame, and we wonder that it is not trodden out before it rises and spreads. But can we understand how it burns and rages, till it makes man stab his brother to the heart, though he knows that when he murders another he

is a suicide of his own soul? We can understand the passion of avarice in its common aspect, — the gathering of treasure that death shall take away. But can we understand how it grows and gains upon the heart, till it turns it to stone, — till it makes an Apostle, for a few pieces of silver, sell the blood of his Master? We can understand benevolence in its common measure, when it gives what it does not want to others; but can we comprehend that love which warms and fills the martyr's heart?

Passing finally to the knowledge of the Most High, — are not clouds and darkness round about him as of old? “Canst thou by searching find out God?” Let those who have tried reply. Let the answer come from one who looked through the mysterious enginery of the universe, and saw the clear firmament and the glory of the heavens as it were with an archangel's eye. A short time before his death, Newton said, — “I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.” And such has been the testimony of all the sons of light. The more they were impressed by the Divine majesty, the higher rose their devotion; as they grew sensible of their weakness, their love grew as pure and their praise as eloquent as ever flowed from a seraph's tongue.

Here, then, we shall be told to reflect on human

imperfection and be humble ; for we see how little way the sight of man extends, how little man is able to know. But let us read our own nature aright. There is enough to make us humble ; our unworthiness, our insensibility, our sins, — these should make us humble. That “ we know in part ” is not humiliating ; it is the ground and necessary condition of man’s chief prerogative, and of the only perfection of which he is capable. Consider the difference between human and Divine perfection, and this will be plain to every eye.

Divine perfection consists in attributes, each and all of them unbounded, except by the impossibility of being greater. Divine power extends to all things that power can do ; Divine wisdom embraces every thing that exists, or will exist, or ever has existed ; Divine holiness is holiness which cannot be enlarged nor exceeded. The perfection of these attributes is, that they can be no greater than they are. To God nothing can be added. To him there is no advance nor improvement. As he was in the beginning he is now and evermore shall be. But human perfection, by which I mean the greatest height to which humanity can aspire, is as different as possible from this. I know that human perfection seems like a strange association of words ; still, there is a perfection to which God, by means of Christianity, endeavours to raise his children. And this perfection consists in continual progress, — in continually advancing towards perfection. When all the powers of mind and heart are fully and faith-

fully exerted, when man is making daily gains in religious feeling and intellectual power, when he is thus steadily and surely advancing, he is the perfect man of the Gospel. For human perfection consists in for ever growing more and more like God.

It is plain, then, that to "know in part" is not humiliating; it is not even an imperfection; it is a happy and honorable condition of our existence, for which we should be grateful to Him who made us. Had we been differently created, it must have been like the animals. What they know, they know *in full*; to them there is nothing "in part." What they know, they know as well in the first years of their existence as the last. And if man had not been created as he is, to "know in part," it must have been so with him; he must have had the instinct of an animal, the perfection of animals, for he could not have the perfection of God. It is this partial knowledge which gives him power to improve, to make continual progress. Knowing in part, he has the power to know more; knowing in part, he has the desire to know more; and thus to "know in part" is not a weight, but a spring, — the ground at once of that capacity of improvement and of that yearning after it which together constitute man's highest glory.

Seeing, then, that improvement is the perfection to which human nature must aspire, let us next observe how this limited knowledge tends to induce and encourage it in every field of thought.

Look again at the world of nature. Its wonders do not manifest themselves at once ; if they did, the mind could not embrace them, or if it could, a heavy satiety, a lethargic self-satisfaction, would take the place of that restless energy which makes man labor and suffer to extend his knowledge. Every thing opens gradually, as the sun rises, not full-orbed and fiery red, but gently heralded by the gray light and the kindling clouds. When you first point out to an intelligent child the wonders of nature, he fixes upon you his soft, dark, earnest eyes. The world seems enchanted. He asks where these things were hidden, that he never saw them before. He enjoys a deep delight, he finds a luxury in this gradual illumination of mind, to which he would have been a stranger had not God created him to know but in part. And so in maturer years, if the mind is kept from stagnation, into which it too readily subsides. Let a man give his attention to any department of knowledge, and he soon gives it his heart. He will leave all man loves at home, and encounter all man dreads abroad. In the pursuit of improvement, he is ready to traverse the arctic snow, the burning desert, the stormiest sea. The day is too short for his study ; by night he will outwatch the stars. He will do any thing and suffer any thing. The least new discovery fills him with rapturous joy. The glad energy, the intense devotion, with which he engages in the chase of knowledge, gives an idea of the manner in which the souls of the just will study the works and ways

of God, and find every thing radiant with happiness and eloquent with praise.

It is the same with moral truth; by which I mean all truth which relates to God and to the nature and destiny of men. Our knowing but in part inspires that earnest desire to know more, which is compared to hunger and thirst for wisdom, — a desire of truth which always burns in the breasts of those who are enlightened by the word of God. All truth of this kind may be found suggested in that sacred word; there it has been written for ages, and for ages it has lain open and close under the eye of man; and yet how slow is man to understand, how slow to read the disclosure even of that which he most desires to know! Mark the doctrine, for example, that true greatness is measured by the amount of services rendered to men, and that no lasting renown can be gained by cruelties and wrongs. The world is but just waking to this truth; it does not yet understand it, though the words, “Whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all,” have been written and read for centuries on the sacred page. But now it knows in part, it will feel a growing desire to know all that can be known; and that desire will be the cause of new light breaking forth from the word of God. We say the sun rises; but it does not rise, — it is only the earth rolling us upward where we can behold his light. So, when the Sun of Righteousness rises upon us, the change is in ourselves, and not in him; and thus, as the desire for improvement extends, the light of truth will

rise and spread, and the world's path shall be as described in those beautiful words, — like “the rising light, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.”

With respect to mankind, also, it is true that partial knowledge inspires a desire to know more. I mean a real knowledge, for I would not give this name to that meaner sagacity which teaches us to distrust mankind. Who are they that complain most of men? They are those who dwell apart, who have none but selfish interests and pleasures, who never lift a hand to do good to others; — these are they who talk of the fraud and falsehood of their race. While the lovers of mankind are they who go about doing good. They find in poor, degraded humanity much to reverence and love. He who visited the prisons of the earth to expose their abuses received not a word of unkindness from prisoners, nor from those who kept them. And tender and delicate women have ventured among the most abandoned. They were warned that they would meet with defiance, but they knew better; they knew that kindness would melt the frozen spirit, and, where man had been vainly trying for ages to overcome evil with evil, they tried with success the Christian experiment, and overcame evil with good. They saw the darkest aspects of humanity without hatred or despair; and they were right; for Jesus Christ, who knows what is in men, loves them, though no being ever endured from them half so much as he.

The young always have this desire to know more of others. Alas that this generous affection should be driven back to their hearts, disappointed and dismayed, by what they see and hear! They find their parents talking with cold severity of others, — of all others, — of any others, — even their nearest friends; and they listen with wonder and pain. They are affrighted to learn how much there is unworthy and contemptible in those whom they desired to love, and whom they might have loved, if their warm-hearted confidence had not been changed into jealous suspicion. Thus it is that man resists the will of Heaven. Mankind are thrown apart and kept so; those cords of humanity, which united would have been strong as the sheet-anchor cable, become singly as weak as the silk-worm's thread, and the purpose of Christianity is not answered, which is to reconcile them to each other and make the divided one.

So our knowing God but in part inspires an earnest desire to know more. It leads us on in religious improvement, and it makes that improvement a succession of bright revelations, in which man is continually learning what he thirsted to know. There are many things in the dispensations of Heaven which the thoughtful long to know, as the prophets and kings of ages past desired to look into the mysteries of God. The mother who has lost a child in the brightness of its rising, which is now transfigured in her memory and shines like a morning star, — she will bear witness what deep and agitating questions sometimes rise in the breast. Why should

the dying infant suffer? What moral purpose can be gained by this slow torture through which it passes to the sleep of death? "Commune with your own heart and be still," is all the answer that inspiration gives. But no! there is encouragement. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." This hope of knowing hereafter is an anchor to the soul; it saves it from being wrecked in its own doubts and fears; it keeps it true to itself and its destiny, till it reaches the world where the wonders of Providence are unfolded to its astonished view, and it can read and understand them all.

But why do I attempt to show you the benefit of knowing in part. Inspiration has done it already; it assures us that it is owing to this our imperfect knowledge, that faith, hope, and charity still abide with the children of men. Their home is heaven; but they linger here in compassion to our sorrow, to comfort us in the darkness and doubt of the world below. Faith stands leaning, with divine serenity, upon the Rock of Ages. Hope looks up to heaven with glorious eye, as if impatient to be there. Charity is seen in the dark lanes of want and suffering, her lamp filled with the oil of gladness, looking on the guilty and forsaken with a smile of kindness that makes the death-bed and the dungeon bright. Now they dwell in the world, content to remain so long as there is duty they can do, or a blessing they can give; but as soon as that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part

shall be done away, they will spread their wings for their ascending flight, and they will not fold them till they reach the heaven of the blest.

Above all, I would say that we cannot complain of the limitation of our knowledge till we make a better improvement of what we already know. Enough is already known to make us wise unto salvation. It remains that we apply it to our hearts and lives. And when we consider what a cold welcome has been given to the religion of Jesus Christ, we could not wonder if God should at last grow weary of forgiving the sins of Christians, and take back the gift which is so little valued, — so poorly understood. If this should ever be, if the world should fall back into barbarism and darkness, if the cloud should gather over the tomb again, and every page on which life and immortality are written be burned to ashes and scattered to the winds, not one whisper of complaint would be heard through all the wide borders of the Christian world. For men would remember that they did not improve it while they possessed it, — they sharpened their passions and called it zeal, or they sunk into indifference and called it charity ; there were comparatively few who took it to their hearts and became acquainted with its power. Let us feel, then, that God has revealed enough for our improvement ; we have already enough to answer for to him.

SERMON XXI.



ON READING WORKS OF FICTION.

LOVE THE TRUTH. — Zechariah viii. 19.

I CANNOT think it improper to discuss any subject here in which our improvement is concerned. I therefore propose to speak to you on the use of fiction, which has gained so fast a hold upon the public taste, that it supplies the most common recreation in civilized lands, and has become to many so essential a kind of reading, that they have lost the power to relish any other. The most favorite writers.— those whom the people most delight to honor — are writers of fiction, not of truth. Many think it necessary to administer truth itself in the disguise of fiction, from the impression that in this way alone it can gain a welcome ; and when the young mind opens, fiction is the first thing which it is taught to love, — thus creating a taste which does much to determine its character and destiny in future years, perhaps for ever.

When the use and love of fiction is so general, it would be of little avail to speak against it. I do not propose to do so. God has made the imagination

part of our nature for wise purposes, no doubt ; and so long as those purposes are ascertained and kept in view, there cannot be much danger. I am willing to believe that amusement was one of those purposes, — not one of the highest, certainly, but still one of them. The mind cannot be always on the stretch ; the bow must sometimes be unstrung ; entertainment at such intervals is healthy for the mind and soul. If, then, fiction is occasionally used for this purpose, to refresh the weary powers, to lift up into the world of fancy for a time one who is tired of walking on the dusty road of existence, such an indulgence is not to be blamed ; nor is it inconsistent with that love of truth which is essential to the mind of a man as well as the character of a Christian.

But, obviously, there is danger of excess in this indulgence ; these luxuries cannot be the daily bread of the mind. And here let me say, that the effect of these fictions on the mind exactly resembles the effect of rich and stimulating food upon the body. They are loved, no doubt, as such food is eagerly devoured, and the occasional use of them, like the occasional use of such food, will do no harm ; for it is possible to live too low. But when you come to the daily, constant use of either, it is ruinous, in one case, to the health of the body, in the other, to the health of the mind. This being my view of the subject, — that fictions are harmless and even useful at times, if they can be read with forbearance and without excess, — I trust you will listen patiently

while I point out some dangers into which the lover of such writings is very apt to fall. They are great and serious dangers, — serious enough, in my opinion, to claim the solemn attention of every mind.

In the first place, that caution is necessary may be seen from the tendency of this taste for fiction to become excessive and engrossing. It grows fast, and gains strength fast, crowding in upon the other tastes of the mind. But some one may say, “What if it does grow? what harm is there in that?” I answer, that fact proves it to be an unhealthy taste, and one which cannot be indulged without injury to the mind. It is in this as it is in other things. The appetite for bread is a natural and healthy one, and so is the taste for water; there is no tendency to use either of them to excess. The use of them does not inflame any appetite within you which will ever become hard to put down. But it is not so with the use of stimulating food and drink. Every one knows that they tend to excess; great care and self-control are necessary to prevent our using them to excess; and this tendency is proof enough that they are unhealthy, and that it is dangerous to indulge them. In the same manner do I say, that there is no danger that the taste for reading true history will ever become excessive; — it is healthy in itself, and indicates right action in the mind. One who habitually reads what is true can occasionally resort to fiction with pleasure, whereas the habitual reader of fiction cannot interest himself in truth; it is too simple and unexciting for him, and his indifference

is a bad sign, for the mind when not diseased will always find satisfaction in the truth.

As I said, this taste for fiction, beside being unhealthy, dislodges and removes better tastes from the mind. There is among our feathered tribes one which lays its egg in the nest of some smaller bird. After the young cowbird is hatched, though it has no enmity to the rightful tenants, the nest is soon found too narrow to hold them all, and the result is that the smaller fall over the side; the offspring of the thief becomes the sole possessor, and is sustained by the food which belongs to the ejected young. This is an illustration of the manner in which a taste for fiction takes a piratical and exclusive possession of the mind which harbours it. You think, perhaps, that your children are great readers, and rejoice in it as an indication of activity of mind. But see what it is that they are fond of reading; and if you find it to be fiction, you may as well tell me that they devour great quantities of confectionary as a proof that they are healthy, as infer from their devouring fiction that their minds are in the way to improve. No. In the one case, your child will be diseased and have no appetite for the food which only can make him strong; and in the other, you will find that, when it comes to reading for improvement, he has lost the power to do it; and without utterly renouncing the wrong taste, he can no more recover the right one, than one who allows himself to use strong drink intemperately can relish water from the purest spring. And this is true, whether in

childhood, manhood, or old age. Let your taste for fiction be so much indulged that you can no longer relish reading for improvement, and the injury is done ; the mind is no longer healthy ; the manly, pure, refined enjoyment which comes from the harmonious use and unfolding of the powers is one which such a reader can never know. He may enjoy his fictions when he has them, but in the intervals his mind falls heavily back upon itself ; his vacant hours are dreary ; he knows not what to do. Heavier yet will the hours roll over him in some future day.

There is another danger, arising from the fact that the mind is passive, perfectly passive, in this kind of reading. In reading for improvement it is not so ; in that operation the mind is active. Any one who has ever read for this purpose knows that, while he is so engaged, many questions start up in his mind ; many new trains of thought are suggested ; the mind, instead of tamely receiving the communications of the writer, originates new ideas of its own. This is, in fact, the benefit of such reading. No one can remember a hundredth part of what he reads ; the benefit does not consist in direct attainment so made ; in a word, the benefit of reading for improvement consists in the activity and vigor which it awakens and sustains in the mind. But in reading for amusement, the mind is not in action. It originates no trains of thought ; it gains no new strength nor power of action ; but, on the contrary, subsides into a luxurious, dreamy state, very much

resembling that produced by narcotics, and which, fascinating though it is, destroys all moral and intellectual energy, and makes self-indulgence the ruling principle within. Pleasant, no doubt, it is. How much pleasanter to sail fast over smooth waters than to walk on the rough highway! But look to the results. While the tenant of the pleasure-boat gains no exercise, and grows tired at last of his perpetual recreation, the wayfarer becomes invigorated by his exertions, and, after his first weariness is over, enjoys the sensation of full health, — the most light-hearted and joyous of all physical sensations which it is given to man to know.

Here, also, we see how little force there is in the common saying, that good moral instruction can be given in a fictitious form. Nobody doubts this; but there is another question: — Can such instruction be taken in a fictitious form? Now I say, that if the mind is passive, not active, in such reading, — and it is impossible to deny it, — such instruction, if given, cannot be taken, and will do the reader no good. But experience on this subject abounds, and will settle this question, if there is one. The most common aim of such writing is to excite the benevolent affections; the utmost it ever does is to excite some benevolent emotions, but no impulses, — nothing that leads to action; such emotions, perhaps, as bring some tears to the eye, but no such impulses as make men extend their hands to the distressed. Now these emotions which do not lead to action grow less and less every time they are repeated. The

tears are shed, perhaps, as usual, for they cost nothing, but the heart grows cold ; so that, of all human beings, these persons who weep over fictitious distress are the very last to whom you would go for relief in that suffering with which the world abounds. There must be something graceful and interesting in distress before it can touch their feelings ; and as there is a hard and coarse reality in all suffering that requires relief, they reserve their sympathy for imaginary sorrows, and turn from actual sorrows with disgust. In this way does their fictitious morality affect them. It produces only fictitious benevolence ; it never warms the heart. And if this reading is a self-indulgence, as we know it is, how can we expect any thing self-denying, as all true benevolence must be, to grow out of it ? We might as well expect fires to kindle out of snow. It is often said of fictions, that they give false views of human life. They do not give any views of human life at all. The mind, being passive, is not in a state to receive instruction, however just and true may be the views of the writer. Nothing is communicated to the mind ; so that these views of life, as they are called, are nothing but the reader's own fancies ; they are nothing that he sees about him, but only paintings of the imagination within ; and I need not say how impossible it is that they should be practical, useful, or true.

Because of this circumstance, that the mind is passive in reading fiction, it is exposed to injurious influences, which if it were in action it would hardly

feel. The health of the mind is precisely analogous to that of the body, and depends on similar laws. Let a man be exposed to the evening air in an unhealthy climate ; so long as he is in motion, there is no danger ; but let him sit down to gaze at the moonlight as it sleeps sweetly on the landscape, and he will breathe in disease with the fragrance of the flowers. Still more, if he slumbers under the serene and peaceful influence of that evening sky, it is almost certain that death will be the end of it. Who does not know that the enjoyment of reading fiction resembles this ? It has a soothing and pleasant effect upon the mind. One cannot easily persuade himself that his moral health is in danger ; but certain it is that he is the sure victim of the immoral and unprincipled author whom he reads. His moral and religious sensibility will be impaired ; his hatred of guilt and unworthiness will be put to sleep, and he will become callous to suggestions which he would formerly have regarded with fear and shame.

But you say all writers of fiction are not immoral. No, they are not ; and it is well for the world that it is so. I allow that the best and most eminent of them are not men who will stoop to licentiousness and corruption. But many of them are persons who will descend to any thing for the sake of effect, and, as they have no moral principle of their own, will not regard, nor even be conscious of, the mischief they do ; and if a person of this kind can secure a temporary popularity, he may spread the breath of contagion among thousands, because they

read him with minds too passive to discover the injury he is doing to their virtue. Thus there may be an author so unconscious of moral distinctions, as to represent a common thief as lofty and generous in his sentiments and affections, and so recommend him to the reader's imitation and love. Or he may take a murderer, and invest the base wretch with rainbow colors of fancy, till the bewildered reader shall really feel as if assassination were consistent with refinement and even grandeur of mind, — not perceiving that these are stupid and senseless contradictions, — not conscious that the shallow and rotten-hearted writer is effacing from his mind all the lines which separate vice from virtue, and glory from shame. I allow that the world will at last find out these creatures of a day, and dismiss them to forgetfulness with the contempt which they deserve. But meantime they are read by many. In many young hearts their infamous work is done. They have taught many young and tender spirits to look on crimes without abhorrence, to admire, rather than condemn, the guilty, and have thus brought their minds unconsciously into opposition to the spirit of the Gospel and the laws of God, — not because they write with power, but because a mind not in action is open to every influence, and can be bent and moulded with the light touch of the feeblest hand.

I would say, too, that if there are not many writers of this description, if — though some such have been popular with those who ought to know better — the majority are of a higher order, still the

very best of them may do injury, because they will create a taste for fiction which can only be fed with fiction. Let a youth begin with the most unexceptionable writers of the kind, — writers who would scorn to prostitute their imaginations to low or licentious uses, — still, the more the young are fascinated by them, the more are they in love with fiction; the more do they crave such excitement; the less easily do they content themselves with that daily bread which is the only healthy food for the mind. Now if this appetite is once created, it will soon lose its moral taste and power of selection. It will demand and it will have indulgence. Works of high moral beauty will soon cease to stimulate, and it will begin to devour indiscriminately all such works as lie in its way, without regard to their character, or the effect they may have upon his heart. The epicure may begin with light wines; so long as they exhilarate, he will not ask for any thing stronger; but the thirst for excitement grows within him, and when these will no longer excite, he will resort to those stronger drinks which he once disdained to touch. In the same way it is that even the best writers of this kind create a taste for intellectual excitement, which must and will be indulged. When their works are exhausted, the reader will resort to others less worthy; he will not perceive the degenerating change which goes on within him; he will not be conscious that his moral sense is dead and all his soul in ruins.

This unconsciousness of danger — unconscious-

ness even of ruin — is one of the most fearful things in all diseases of the mind and heart. When the frame is affected with physical disorder, it is plain to every eye ; but no external trembling betrays the palsy which indulgence has brought upon the mind ; no blackness on the surface shows that mortification of the moral nature has commenced within. A man does not even know when his soul is dead, — dead to all living action, dead to all the higher purposes of existence, dead to the claims of humanity and of God. Therefore do I say that a man must look within himself with a sharp, observing eye. He must learn to watch those signs of change which are not obvious to the outward sense ; he must dread that self-satisfaction which is always crying, “Peace, peace,” when, if he knew himself, he would have no peace within.

If any one asks how he may know the signs of danger, I say, as I intimated before, that if he has lost his taste, or never formed the taste for reading for improvement, there is injury already done. If he would know how much is done, let him throw by the news and fiction of the day, and see whether they are essential to his enjoyment ; whether he is listless and dull without them, or whether he can turn with energy and interest to works of a different order, — such as will put the mind in action, and send through it a healthy glow. Let him make the experiment fully and fairly, without submitting to any arts of self-imposture, and if he finds that it gives him no pleasure to exert his powers, that im-

provement alone has no attractions, that he turns to his fiction like the intemperate man to his glass, then the charge, "Love the truth," should be a serious sound to him. It reminds him of a perverted taste, of a neglected duty; and of a change, too, which must be made before the purposes of life can be fulfilled.

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED AT THE CONSECRATION OF THE SPRINGFIELD CEMETERY,
SEPTEMBER 5TH, 1841.*



WHEN I saw this great audience just now, winding up through the glades of the cemetery, to take their places on this ground, I was deeply affected with the thought, how soon we shall take our places in the dust below. With this deep thought upon our minds, with these hills and valleys around us, in presence of these venerable trees and these sparkling waters, with the green earth beneath and God's own bright sky above us, I need not ask your attention, I need not labor to bring you to solemnity ; for I doubt not that a voice is now saying in every heart, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The feeling which leads us to respect the dead, the same feeling which brings us here to-day, is found in every age and country ; ay, in every man who deserves the name of man. The rough soldier,

* The interest which Dr. Peabody took in this cemetery has been noticed in the Memoir. Though an edition of his Address at its consecration was published at the time, for circulation in the neighbourhood, we have thought that it might be appropriately reprinted here.

at the grave of his comrade, feels this strong emotion, and becomes a better man for the time ; the seaman, as he leans over the side of his vessel, to watch the plunge of his shipmate's corpse in the waters, becomes more thoughtful than ever he was before. And ye yourselves do know, that, in every funeral, where the dead lies out before the living, with an air of mysterious reserve upon his brow, with an unsearchable depth of expression which no living eye can read, he is invested, for the time, with the stern majesty of death, and every heart does willing homage to his power.

Nor does this reverence cease when the dead are hidden from our eyes. It follows them to the grave, and makes us regard as sacred the place where we have laid them. The burial-place is the favorite retreat of the thoughtful ; it calms all troubled feelings ; it is the place where many holy lives begin, where the unfortunate are most reconciled to this world, and the gay most concerned for the other. When our friends depart, we hang over these places with profound interest, because here it is that we lose them. Up to this place we can follow them, through all changes of joy and sorrow, of life and death. But "hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther," is written on the portal of the tomb. Here is the boundary, beyond which they cannot return, beyond which we cannot go. No wonder, then, that it chains attention ; it is like the spot in the ocean where we have seen some gallant ship go down.

And now I say, it is nature, that is, the God of nature, who inspires this feeling in the human breast. I have heard some men say, that they care not what becomes of their remains when they are gone. It may be so; they may say so of themselves if they will. But if they say that they care not what becomes of the remains of their friends when they are gone, their hearts are not in the right place; I should doubt if they had friends, — I should know that they did not deserve them. Indifference to these things is not natural to any good mind or heart. Nature says, "Bury me with my fathers." The feeling which nature dictates is, "that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother."

It is true the soul is more than the body; the condition of the soul which has gone into eternity is infinitely more important than that of the tenement of clay which it leaves behind. But whoever truly cares for the one will also care for the other. Whoever follows with his heart the friend who has gone into eternity will surely have some regard to the place where that friend's remains are laid. Why is the body cared for? Is it not because it has been for a time the dwelling of the soul? This reason will be sufficient to keep any one who values the soul from treating it with the least disdain. Have you not known how, when a friend departs, every thing that has been connected with him becomes consecrated in your eyes? The letters he wrote, the dress he wore, the books he read, — every thing is

a sacred memorial to the surviving. Surely, then, the mortal frame which the soul has once illuminated with light and love, — the mortal frame, where the soul has beamed from the eye, breathed from the lips, and shone like a glory on the brow, — surely the remains deserve to be treasured; and I neither envy nor respect the man who can treat them with light regard.

Do you say that this feeling grows out of refinement? that it springs from cultivation, not from nature? To this I have a reply. The land on which we dwell was possessed by a different race two hundred years ago. There is reason to believe that their camps were stationed and their council-fires burned on a part of this very ground. That wild race was never equalled by any civilized people in their attachment to the graves and the memory of their fathers. Was this refinement in them? Was it not rather a natural feeling, which all their barbarism had never been able to extinguish?

Let me ask, too, what portion of a civilized community manifest this feeling in its greatest strength? Is it the refined, as they are called, or is it those who are more true to nature? Who are they who make it so dangerous to violate the grave? Let an insult be offered to the tomb, and all the roughest elements of the community are up in arms. They say that the living can protect themselves; but they must guard the slumbers of the defenceless dead. So far from refinement being the parent of these feelings, it rather tends to weaken and destroy them.

Silver and gold may be refined till they are fit for no useful purpose, and serve only for ornament and show ; and so man may be refined till he becomes cold and heartless, — till all generous impulses and affections forsake his breast for ever.

But you ask, If this feeling is natural, why has it not done more to improve the outward aspect of the grave ? I answer, this is the province of taste ; and it does not follow that, because the feeling of respect for the dead is strong, it shall manifest itself in this way ; though, in coming days, there is encouragement to hope that it will. The proper taste has been inspired ; it is spreading fast and far ; the time is not distant, when Mount Auburn, which for years was almost alone, will be the mother of a thousand fair cities of the dead. It is not so now. In most parts of our land, the burial-place is another name for desolation. Its walls, if it have any, are broken down ; its monuments are leaning with neglect, not with age, — as if they were weary of bearing inscriptions which no one comes to read ; there is no relief to the eye but the rank grass in summer, and the aster and golden-rod in autumn, which nature spreads there as if in shame for the living and compassion for the dead. In such places, every one feels ashamed of his race ; every one feels that the living are unjust and unworthy. Why, the very dog, who has been faithful to his master, deserves a more honored grave.

And now let me say, that religion strongly testifies to the power of this natural feeling. If I

would know what will affect the human heart, the Bible is the authority to which I go. There we find it written that God determined to separate the sons of the patriarchs as a peculiar people. They were then wanderers by habit and profession; it was necessary that they should give up their roving, and settle quietly down in the limits of the promised land. And this was done. Hard as it is to change the manners of a people, in the case of the Hebrews this was so thoroughly done, that these hereditary wanderers became renowned through all the nations for the depth of their attachment to their father-land. In the captivity, by the rivers of Babylon, when their conquerors respectfully desired to hear their far-famed minstrelsy, the songs of Zion were so full of recollections of their country, that it almost broke their hearts to sing them. They hanged their harps on the weeping willows, and could not strike them again. Their feeling is expressed by one of their prophets, in the words, "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

And how was this great change accomplished? It was done by means of this feeling of respect for the dead. It was done by anchoring the affections of the children to the graves of their fathers. From the earliest ages, all who dwelt near to God took an interest in this subject, resolved that the body, which had once been the dwelling of the soul, should not, like common dust, be trodden under foot

of men. When Jacob was dying in Egypt, he could not bear the thought of being laid to rest in the distance and solitude of a foreign land. Joseph, too, bound his children by a promise, that his remains should be borne to the sepulchre of his fathers. This feeling grew and gained strength among them, till it destroyed all inclination to wander, — till it was the heart's desire and prayer of the dying Hebrew, that his ashes might mingle, dust to dust, with his own, his native land.

We should not have expected to find the true taste in times so ancient; nor should we find it in any except the patriarchs and those whose souls were lighted from on high. But we do trace, in those early ages, the same taste which now begins to prevail among ourselves, — the same desire to bring trees and flowers, to remove the dreariness of the place of death. When Abraham bought the fields of Machpelah for a cemetery, he secured the right to all the trees that were in it, and all that grew on its borders. The sepulchre of our Saviour, too, was in a garden, — a place where trees spread their shade above, and flowers breathed incense from their little urns below, — a place not distant from the city, and yet not so near that the noise and business of the living should disturb the silence of the grave. Not anticipating that their Master would rise, they laid him in a place to which they might come in peace and loneliness, to meditate and remember, and where pilgrims in after times might resort, to be strengthened and inspired by the memory of that great friend of man.

The religion of Jesus tends to confirm the feeling of which I speak. It gives us reason to believe that the departed are living, — gone from this world, indeed, but not from existence, — living in some province of creation, where it is not given us to know. If it be so, they must look back with deep interest on all the scenes through which they travelled in their pilgrimage below. And if, from their bright abodes, they look down on their own neglected graves, must there not be sorrow in heaven? But no! sorrow can never enter to disturb the untroubled calm above. Let me ask rather, Will there not be joy in heaven if they can see that their resting-place is honored, and that memorials are planted there by affectionate hands? It will assure them, not merely that they are remembered, but that their surviving friends are faithful, both to the dead and the living, and that they are preparing to meet them in their Father's house on high.

But I am going beyond your patience and my own strength; I will therefore bring the subject directly home to ourselves.

We have made arrangements to leave the burial-place of our fathers. The opening of that small grave yonder was the act by which we bade it farewell. We have done it from necessity and not from choice. If I am told that there is room there yet, I answer, it is true; we may bury our dead there if we will. But if we lay our heart's treasure there to-day, the stranger may be laid at his side to-morrow; and thus they who have been united in life

must be separated in death. Surely every heart will confess that it ought not so to be.

The place "where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep" was originally chosen with true taste and feeling. It was so near the village, that the mourner might follow his dead on foot, as the mourner should, if God gives him strength; at the same time it was so distant as to leave the place in silence and repose. When I came here, twenty years since, it was my favorite resort, at morning, at evening, and sometimes at midnight hours. It was peaceful, — it was beautiful; on one side the eye wandered over the two spires, which were all that then rose in the village, to the high walls of the valley, crowned with the dark pine wood. On the other side it fell upon the bright stream, with the green fringe upon its borders, where there was seldom even a dashing oar to break the smoothness of the tide. But as the village grew, the place was changed. The sounds of busy life came near; the noise of men, on the fields and the waters, was brought into painful contrast with the stillness of the grave. And now, for years, we have heard the quick steps of improvement, as it is called, trampling like a war-horse round it, impatient to tread it down. When Jerusalem was about to fall, a voice was heard at midnight in the temple, saying, — "Let us depart"; and when I have been, in the dead of night, at the place of which I speak, it required little fancy to hear a voice saying to the sleepers, —

“Arise and depart, for this is not your rest; the place where the living buy and sell is no longer a home for you.”

Suffer me to congratulate you now on the success which has attended this enterprise from its beginning to the present hour. Seven years since, I presented this subject to all whom my voice could reach. I did so at the desire of a daughter of this village, who was deeply interested in its welfare; but before her purpose could be accomplished, she was called away; and from necessity she was borne to the very place where she could not bear that the remains of her friends should lie. Last year another effort was made, by those, whom, if they were not present, I might name with the praise which they deserve. The means to conduct the enterprise have been liberally supplied by those who could have no hope of gain, nor even requital for the efforts and sacrifices they made. There were some who would have selected a different place; but with that generosity which it is more common to hear of than to see, they gave up their own preferences, and showed that they cared for nothing but the general good. Have we not reason to hope that this will be secured? Nature has made this place beautiful, and the purpose for which it is now set apart will make it an attractive and delightful resort in every state of feeling, — to the sorrowful and the happy, to the aged and the young. I am persuaded that nothing has been done in this village since its history began,

which will tend so much to improve and refine it, as what you are doing now. Observe that small fountain, whose sweet voice you hear! It gathers the streams, which formerly ran unseen through the meadow, and lifts them up to the eye in graceful silver falls. And in like manner this place and this enterprise will assemble streams of good taste and feeling which formerly ran to waste, and from them produce results which shall be grateful to every eye, and inspiring to every heart. When the native of this town, after long absence, returns to the home of his fathers, he will walk the streets, and all whom he meets there will be strangers; he will inquire concerning familiar dwellings, and the names of their inhabitants will be new; when he meets his old acquaintance, he will find that they know not the Joseph of former days. He will be forlorn and solitary among the living, and will not feel at home till he comes to the mansions of the dead. Here he will find the guardians and the playmates of former years; here will be all whom he used to reverence and love; and here his heart will overflow with emotions, such as no tongue can adequately tell.

Reflect how many tenants will soon be here, to claim their freehold in the dust below. One fair and gentle child has already come, — a fitting herald to take possession in the name of all the dead. Here he has laid himself down on a colder pillow than a mother's breast. Many such will soon be

here — morning stars quenched in the brightness of their rising — before they have known the stains and sorrows of life below. Children, in tender years, will follow their parents to this place ; the domestic circle will be fearfully broken, and thenceforth the wide world will be their home. The husband will follow the wife, — the light and joy of his desolated home ; and the wife the husband, on whose strong arm she had hoped to lean through all her days. The young, sinking under the slow torture of wasting disease, will flee away and be at rest in this holy ground ; the aged, after years of labor and sorrow, will depart to this place in peace. The pale marbles will rise everywhere around us, telling of the dead, sometimes what they were, but still oftener what they ought to have been.

We are here to-day to consecrate these grounds. And we do consecrate them in the name of “ Him that liveth, and was dead.” We consecrate them to the service of our Heavenly Father, to the influences of his Spirit, to the kingdom of his Son. We consecrate them to the sacred repose of the dead, and the religious improvement of the living. We consecrate them to all kind affections, to heavenward hopes, to the tears of love, to the consolation of grief. We consecrate them to the growth of Christian principles, to the power of Christian emotions. Heaven has made it a land of streams and fountains, a land of valleys and hills ; and now may a stronger and deeper interest be given to it than

beauty can ever bestow, and may the blessing of God be upon it from the beginning to the end of the year!

But when we consecrate this place in the Saviour's name, it should remind us of the promises of the Gospel. Many of us have been at his table, to commemorate his dying love, to-day. When he sat with his disciples at the last supper, the bread and the wine passed untasted by him; he said that he would not share them again till they met in the kingdom of God. So, then, happy meetings were yet before them, and that parting was not the last. What a world of bright promise to the faithful do those simple words bestow! It spreads out in a thousand forms of hope, each one of which is a ray of glory to some afflicted heart. The mother, for example, — the Rachel weeping for her children, but not refusing to be comforted, because she has surrendered them to her Father and their Father, to her God and their God, — she may lift up her eyes and look forward to the time when she shall go to those who cannot return to her, — when they shall be the first to meet her at heaven's gate, and with bright and glad voices bid her welcome to their own happy home.

“ O, when the mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy, —
Hath she not then, for all her fears,
The day of woe, the sleepless night,
For all her sorrows, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight? ”

But the hour is wasting ; I see by the lengthening shadows that the sun is sinking low. I see that some, who, when I began to speak, were in the sunshine, are now in the evening shade. And some, who are now in the full sunshine of prosperity and gladness, will soon be covered with the awful shadow of death. We shall soon leave this ground, — never again thus to assemble, till we meet in the dust below. The day is going down ; the darkness of night will soon settle on these hills and vales. The season is declining ; the red leaf is already hung as a signal from the tree, and the winds of autumn will soon be heard singing their vesper-hymn. The year is waning ; the trumpet of the winter storms will soon be sounded ; they will sweep through these leafless woods, and rush and howl over the habitations of death. Let us feel, then, for it is true, that every fading year, every fall of the leaf, every closing day, and every toll of the funeral bell is measuring our dead march to the grave.

Let us prepare, then, since, prepared or not, we must go. Let us have the only preparation that can avail us in the dying hour. Let us “ so number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Let us say to Him who made us, — “ The grave cannot praise thee ; death cannot celebrate thee ; but the living, the living, he shall praise thee as we do this day.” May we so spend our days in his service, that, in the hour which is not far from any

one of us, we may look forward with hopes full of immortality ; and when the cares of this short life are over, through Him who lived, and labored, and died upon the cross to save us, may we serve him in nearer presence and with angels' powers on high !

THE END.





